This issue of the RAND Child Policy Newsletter focuses on the new National Drug Control Strategy that was part of the President’s budget submitted to Congress on February 4, 2002. With one in two teenagers having tried an illegal substance by the twelfth grade (University of Michigan’s Monitoring the Future Survey), adolescents make up an important focal point within this national strategy.

The January issue of the RAND Child Policy Newsletter focused on recent RAND studies related to HR1, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Authorization (No Child Left Behind), passed by Congress and signed by the President on January 8, 2002.

HOT TOPICS

School-Based Drug Prevention Programs: RAND Project ALERT

More than 2,000 school-based drug prevention programs are currently in use in the nation’s classrooms. However, only a handful have been scientifically tested. Among the most successful of these is Project ALERT, created by RAND. Project ALERT took a new and creative approach to developing an anti-drug curriculum for 7th and 8th graders. The program was designated “exemplary” by the U.S. Department of Education. The project’s success has led to a second program, Project ALERT Plus, that extends the curriculum through the 11th grade.

FULL REPORT: Helping Adolescents Resist Drugs: Project ALERT
ADDITIONAL READING: ALERT Plus Project Description

Identifying Adolescents at Risk for Hard Drug Use: Racial/Ethnic Variations

When designing drug prevention programs, should racial and ethnic backgrounds of students be taken into consideration? A RAND article published in the Journal of Adolescent Health, titled “Identifying Adolescents at Risk for Hard Drug Use: Racial/Ethnic Variations,” looks at the major risk factors for initiation of hard drug use. The article concludes with several key recommendations for creating prevention programs.

FULL REPORT: Identifying Adolescents at Risk for Hard Drug Use: Racial/Ethnic Variations

Drug Treatment Alternatives—RAND Congressional Testimony

Treatment is another important component in the President’s budget. Martin Iguchi, Director, RAND Drug Policy Research Center, presented testimony before the House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources of the Government Reform Committee in April 2000. The testimony talks about drug treatment alternatives to incarceration and includes personal stories of two adolescents who decided to seek treatment in Los Angeles—only to find that all the treatment slots were occupied. Their stories reflect the critical issue of treatment capacity and availability.

TESTIMONY: Drug Treatment Alternatives to Incarceration, Martin Iguchi. House Government Reform Committee, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources
RELATED TESTIMONY: The Threat Posed by the Illegal Importation, Trafficking, and Use of Ecstasy and Other ‘Club’ Drugs. Testimony presented to the House Subcommittee on Crime of the Judiciary Committee, Oversight Hearing on June 15, 2000

RAND PROJECTS UNDERWAY

Positive Youth Development Collaborative Project and Evaluation

The National Drug Control strategy ties leadership at the community level with the President’s expansion of the Drug Free Communities Support and creation of a new program, Parents Drug Corps. Currently, RAND is conducting a study called The Positive Youth Development Collaborative Project and Evaluation to better understand how to bridge the gap between prevention science and practice in local community settings.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Complete listing of RAND publications on adolescents and drugs/alcohol/tobacco
Complete listing of RAND research projects on adolescents and drugs/alcohol/tobacco

For more information contact RAND Washington External Affairs at wea@rand.org or 703.413.1100 x5363. RAND is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis.