

Press Releases: 1999-2000  
CASA\* RELEASES ADOLESCENT COMMISSION REPORT  
CASA Analysis Supports Gateway Drug Theory  
August 13, 1997

\* See page 4

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CASA ADOLESCENT COMMISSION REPORT:  
AMERICA'S CHILDREN ARE SMOKING, DRINKING, AND USING DRUGS AT  
THE YOUNGEST AGES EVER - ALCOHOL REMAINS, BY FAR, THE DRUG  
TEENS MOST WIDELY ABUSE

NEW CASA ANALYSIS SUPPORTS GATEWAY DRUG THEORY

1997 CASA TEEN SURVEY SHOWS NUMBER OF 12-YEAR-OLDS KNOWING A  
FRIEND OR CLASSMATE WHO USES ACID, COCAINE OR HEROIN HAS MORE  
THAN DOUBLED SINCE 1996

The Commission on Substance Abuse Among America's Adolescents, established two years ago by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), released its report, *Substance Abuse and The American Adolescent*, today and revealed that the age that children are beginning to smoke cigarettes daily, drink alcohol, and use marijuana and other illegal drugs, including cocaine and hallucinogens like LSD, is the youngest ever.

In releasing the report, the Commission Chairman, Rev. Edward A. (Monk) Malloy, president of University of Notre Dame, and Joseph A. Califano, Jr., former HEW Secretary and CASA President, noted the grave threat this poses to our children during their most critical formative years. They underscored the Commission's finding that parents and families are key to winning the struggle against substance abuse and its recommendation that the nation commit at least \$1 billion a year to research on addiction, and greatly step up biomedical and social research on adolescence. In its report, the Commission gave a frightening signal of illegal drug use among America's younger teenagers by releasing a finding from CASA's third annual national survey of teens and their parents (to be released in its entirety on September 8). The survey of 1115 teens (ages 12-17) conducted in June and July (margin of error is +/- 3.1%) by The Luntz Research Companies found that the percentage of 12-year-olds who know a friend or classmate who has used illegal drugs like acid, cocaine or heroin jumped by 122% from 1996 to 1997. In 1997, 23.5% of 12-year-olds knew of a friend or classmate who used such hard drugs, while in 1996, only 10.6% knew a friend or classmate who used them. For all teens ages 12 to 17, there was an increase of 44%, from 39% in 1996 to 56% in 1997.

The Commission report stressed that alcohol remains the drug of choice among teenagers, the one they use and abuse most frequently, and the drug most associated with risky behaviors such as drunk driving, teen pregnancy, suicide and violence. The percentages of teens who have tried alcohol have remained steadily high since 1990 and the percentage of 8th graders who are binge drinking is increasing.

"Never before have American adolescents been asked to grow up amid such a combustible and dangerous mix of substance abuse conditions--use and abuse by their peers, experimentation and abuse at younger ages, the widespread availability of all kinds of drugs to children and teens, the cultural glamorization of cigarettes, alcohol and drugs, drug-infested public and private schools. Most disturbing is the fact that children are being exposed to these substances at younger and younger ages and are therefore more vulnerable to their tragic effects," said Father Malloy. "The younger the child using these substances, the more likely his future life course will be seriously damaged by them."

A distinguished panel of 14 Americans, the Commission was established two years ago to look at the crisis in substance abuse among America's adolescents. Commission members include: Sen. Jeff Bingaman, (D-NM), Harvey Fineberg, M.D., Ph.D., former dean, Harvard School of Public Health, now Provost, Harvard University, Howard Fuller, Ph.D., Director, Institute for the Transformation of Learning, Marquette University, George F. Garcia, Ed.D., Superintendent, Tucson Unified Schools, Rep. Nancy L. Johnson (R-CT), Thomas G. Labreque, President, Chase Manhattan Bank, Arthur Levine, Ph.D., President, Columbia Teachers College, Frank Macchiarola, Ph.D., former Chancellor, New York City Schools, now President, St. Vincent College, Joseph V. Paterno, Head Football Coach, Penn State University, Herbert Pardes, M.D., Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, Pamela Ann Rymer, U.S. Circuit Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, Pasadena, California, Diana Chapman Walsh, Ph.D., President, Wellesley College, and Kevin White, Dean of Students, Gonzaga College High School.

The Commission found that the age of initiation of substance use by American children has never been lower:

The peak time for initiation of smoking is in sixth and seventh grades (24%), when children are usually ages 11 and 12. Many children start smoking at younger ages. In 1995 17% of 8th graders reported smoking by fifth grade. Between 1992 and 1996, the proportion of 8th graders who reported smoking during the past 30 days jumped by more than a third, from 15.5% to 21%.

Between 1991 and 1996, binge drinking (having five or more drinks at one sitting) among 8th graders rose from 12.9% to 15.6%. In 1996, more than 55% of 8th graders had

tried alcohol; more than 75% found it easy to get and nearly 27% admitted being drunk.

Nearly 1 million 8th graders admit getting drunk; almost 2 million 12th graders have used alcohol in the past 30 days and 1.2 million are binge drinkers.

From 1992 to 1996, the proportion of 8th graders who said they had used marijuana during or before 7th grade rose from 7.7% to 12.7%. The average age of first marijuana use has steadily declined from 24.2 in 1963 to 16.3 in 1994. Last year, 47% of 14-year-olds said they could buy marijuana within a day.

From 1991 to 1996, the percentage of 8th graders who tried crack, powder cocaine or heroin, though small, has been rising. Use of heroin by teens doubled from 1991 to 1996. Heroin appears to be the only illegal substance used by more 8th graders than 10th or 12th graders in 1996.

From 1995 to 1996, the percentage of 9- to 12-year-olds trying marijuana doubled, from 2% to 4%, and from 1993 to 1996, those trying cocaine increased from 2% to 3%. More 9- to 12-year-olds were offered drugs in 1996 than in 1993, and in 1996 these children are less likely to believe that "using drugs is dangerous" and to say they "don't want to hang around people who use drugs."

The Commission report found that use of alcohol and drugs in early and mid-adolescence interferes with physical, intellectual and emotional development and noted that even experimental use increases the chances of accidents, illness and death. In 1994, CASA published a report which concluded that the younger and more frequently a teen uses cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana, the greater is the likelihood that teen will subsequently use other illicit drugs like cocaine, heroin and acid. In the 1994 report, CASA was unable to isolate teen use of cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana from other problem behaviors.

In its work for the Commission on Substance Abuse Among America's Adolescents, CASA has, for the first time, been able to analyze the statistical relationship between the use of gateway substances (cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana)--in and of themselves-- and the use of other illicit drugs, like cocaine, heroin and acid. Through its Substance Abuse Data Analysis Center (SADAC), CASA analyzed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's data from the 1995 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 10,900 9th to 12th graders. The new CASA analysis, which controlled for such other problem behaviors as fighting, carrying a weapon, attempting suicide, having multiple sexual partners or driving drunk, uncovered stunning statistical correlations:

Among 12- to 17-year-olds with no other problem behaviors, those who drank alcohol and smoked cigarettes at least once in the past month are 30 times likelier to smoke marijuana than those who didn't. These correlations are more pronounced for girls than boys: for girls, 36 times likelier; for boys, 27 times likelier.

Among 12- to 17-year-olds with no other problem behaviors, those who used these three gateway drugs (cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana) in the past month are almost 17 times likelier to use another drug like cocaine, heroin or acid. These correlations are stronger ~~for boys than girls:~~ for boys, 29 times likelier; for girls, 11 times likelier. ✖

The Commission found that recent neuroscientific studies support these statistical relationships. These studies suggest a biomedical link between use of alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, cocaine and heroin because all these substances produce the same kinds of changes in brain chemistry, affecting dopamine levels through common pathways to the brain. There is also new evidence that marijuana, like alcohol, cocaine and heroin, is physically addictive, and that the stress and anxiety brought on by marijuana withdrawal might nudge a user toward other drugs including alcohol, cocaine and heroin.

"Adolescents who play with the fire of nicotine, alcohol and marijuana increase their risk of getting burned by the flames of acid, cocaine and heroin," said Califano.

In view of these findings, the Commission called for an investment of at least \$1 billion a year in research on addiction and greatly stepped up investments in biomedical and social research on adolescence. "The declining age at which children are smoking, drinking and using drugs makes these research investments a matter of utmost urgency," said Father Malloy.

The Commission recommends additional actions to help curb the widespread availability of nicotine, alcohol and drugs to teens. Its report calls for an increase of \$2.00 a pack in the cigarette tax and a substantial increase in the tax on beer, the overwhelming alcohol choice of teens who drink. A \$2.00 a pack tax on cigarettes is estimated to reduce teen smoking by 70 percent. Reducing smoking could have a salutary effect on reducing marijuana use. Increases in beer taxes have been demonstrated to reduce the level and frequency with which teens drink beer and to reduce fatal traffic accidents among young drivers.

The Commission deplored the widespread availability of these substances to America's children and urged the government to increase activities designed to reduce availability. But it noted that even with stepped up actions by the government, such substances are likely to be available to any teen who wants to get them. Thus the Commission devoted most of its recommendations to actions those who have the greatest influence on adolescents--parents, teachers, peers, clergy, doctors, the entertainment, fashion and advertising industries--can take to help teens develop the skill and will to say no.

"How our teens deal with substance use and abuse will be determined in the first instance in their homes, schools, and communities, among their peers and in their extracurricular and religious activities and leisure pursuits. The responsibility parents, teachers and others who influence what teens do and how they act cannot be overstated," said Father Malloy.

The Commission's work was funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, Primerica Financial Services and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The report is dedicated to David A. Hamburg, M.D., President, Carnegie Corporation of New York from 1983 to 1997, for his commitment to improving the lives of adolescents.

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University is the only national organization that brings together under one roof all the professional disciplines needed to study and combat all types of substance abuse as they affect all aspects of society. CASA's missions are to: inform Americans of the economic and social costs of substance abuse and its impact on their lives; assess what works in prevention, treatment and law enforcement; encourage every individual and institution to take responsibility to combat substance abuse and addiction; provide those on the front lines with the tools they need to succeed, and remove the stigma of substance abuse and replace shame and despair with hope.

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Other Press Releases...

MORGANSTERN NAMED VICE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF HEALTH AND TREATMENT RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

December 1, 2000CASA\* NATIONAL SPORTS COMMISSION RELEASES FIRST-EVER REPORT ON DOPING/OLYMPICS

September 8, 2000CASA\* RELEASES WHITE PAPER ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND LEARNING DISABILITIES

September 7, 2000CNN'S LARRY KING DEVOTES PROGRAM TO THE FACES OF HOPE--CASA's\* 2000 ANNUAL REPORT THEME

July 3, 2000U.S. SENATE PASSES CASA\* INITIATIVE

June 1, 2000CASA\* OFFERS FATHER'S DAY MESSAGE

June 1, 2000CASA\* RECEIVES GRANT TO FOLLOW UP GROUNDBREAKING PRISON STUDY

June 1, 2000CASA'S\* DR. JOHNSON JOINS NBC TEEN ACTORS IN ONLINE DISCUSSION

June 1, 2000CASA\* AND SPEEDO PARTNER IN SUBSTANCE ABUSE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

June 1, 2000CASA\* RELEASES PHYSICIAN SURVEY

May 10, 2000STATEMENT BY DRUG CZAR BARRY MCCAFFREY ON CASA\* SURVEY

May 1, 2000CASA'S\* 8TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER RAISES RECORD \$2 MILLION

April 11, 2000CASA\* AND REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY TO HOST UNPRECEDENTED NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ALL SUBSTANCE ABUSE

March 1, 2000CASA\* BOARD MEMBER NAMED BANK ONE CEO

March 1, 2000OPENING REMARKS FROM CASA'S\* CONFERENCE BY JOSEPH A. CALIFANO, JR.

March 1, 2000CASA\* PAPER: RURAL 8TH GRADERS USING DRUGS, SMOKING, DRINKING AT HIGHER RATES THAN URBAN 8TH GRADERS

January 26, 2000CASA\* RELEASES 2000 TEEN SURVEY ON FEBRUARY 21

February 21, 2000CASA\* STUDY REVEALS DANGEROUS CONNECTION BETWEEN TEEN SUBSTANCE USE AND SEX

December 7, 1999CALIFANO FEATURED IN TLC DOCUMENTARY TOBACCO WARS

October 1, 1999CASA\* PARTNERS TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE PROGRAM TARGETING SUBSTANCE ABUSE

September 30, 1999CASA\* SURVEY: MANY DADS AWOL IN THE BATTLE AGAINST TEEN SUBSTANCE ABUSE

August 30, 1999CASA\* RELEASES REPORT: NON-MEDICAL MARIJUANA - RITE OF PASSAGE OR RUSSIAN ROULETTE?

July 13, 1999STATEMENT BY HHS SECRETARY SHALALA ON CASA\* REPORT

July 1, 1999CASA\* NAMES NEW VP FOR PROGRAM DEMONSTRATION

July 1, 1999MAKING A DIFFERENCE: CASASTART\* IS LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD CITIES

July 1, 1999PBS TO RE-AIR SPECIAL ON TEEN DRUG ABUSE

June 1, 1999TIME NAMES A.A. FOUNDER AMONG CENTURY'S MOST INFLUENTIAL

June 1, 1999CASA\* BOARD MEMBER TO BENAMED AMEX CHIEF EXECUTIVE

April 27, 1999NANCY REAGAN HONORS CONG. CHARLES RANGEL AT CASA\* AWARDS DINNER

April 13, 1999NEW SURVEY MIRRORS CASA\* TEEN SURVEY REGARDING PARENTAL INFLUENCE

April 1, 1999CASA'S\* DR. KLEBER DISCUSSES INNOVATIVE DRUG INFORMATION NETWORK ON NIGHTLINE

March 9, 1999STUDY OF TOBACCO/ALCOHOL USE IN CHILDREN'S FILMS HELPS FOSTER ACCEPTANCE

March 1, 1999VIDEO CLIPS FROM CASA'S\* CONFERENCE ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE

March 1, 1999CALIFANO PRAISES EFFORT TO COMBAT DRUGS IN RURAL /SMALL TOWN AMERICA  
February 1, 1999CASA\* AND NCLD CHALLENGE SCIENCE COMMUNITY  
February 1, 1999CASA\* IMPACTS NEW YORK MAYOR'S DECISION TO  
RETHINK CONTROVERSIAL PLAN  
January 16, 1999CASA\* RELEASES NO SAFE HAVEN REPORT  
January 11, 1999PRIMERICA CEO, JOSEPH PLUMERI, NAMED TO CASA\*  
BOARD  
December 17, 1998TEENS WHO SMOKE CIGARETTES MUCH LIKELIER TO TRY  
POT  
December 7, 1998NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN LOS ANGELES  
November 20, 1998CASA\* LAUNCHES GROUNDBREAKING NATIONAL  
PROGRAM  
September 16, 1998CASA\* RELEASES 1998 BACK TO SCHOOL TEEN SURVEY  
September 1, 1998RELIGION PLAYS KEY ROLE IN PREVENTING TEEN DRUG,  
ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO USE  
September 1, 1998NOTRE DAME PRESIDENT MONK MALLOY TO CHAIR CASA\*  
NATIONAL COMMISSION ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND SPORTS  
August 26, 1998CASA\* RELEASES REPORT, UNDER THE RUG: SUBSTANCE  
ABUSE AND THE MATURE WOMAN  
June 4, 1998CASA\* PRESIDENT AND FORMER HEW SECRETARY, CALIFANO,  
TO VISIT WASHINGTON HEIGHTS ON MARCH 11  
March 5, 1998CASA\* RELEASES SHOVELING UP: THE IMPACT OF SUBSTANCE  
ABUSE ON STATE BUDGETS  
January 29, 1998CASA\* RELEASES REPORT: BEHIND BARS  
January 8, 1998THE SECOND CONCERT OF HOPE  
November 21, 1997CASA\* DRUG PREVENTION PROGRAM WINS DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION GRANT  
November 3, 1997CASA\* RELEASES ADOLESCENT COMMISSION REPORT  
August 13, 1997ALYSE BOOTH ELECTED VICE PRESIDENT OF  
COMMUNICATIONS AT CASA\*  
June 13, 1997CASA\* TESTIFIES BEFORE MICHIGAN HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES  
February 26, 1997CASASTART\* -- NATIONAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE  
PREVENTION PROGRAM GRANTED EXEMPLARY AWARD FROM  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
January 1, 1992