Understanding War on Drugs
Statistics

1. Declare a Perpetual Crisis


The historical existence of a “drug abuse crisis” that justifies the extreme financial and social expenditures of a decades long war on drugs, and the bizarre consequence that the practice of medicine is defacto regulated by federal law enforcement, is almost an article of faith among the drug warriors. It has been so often repeated that it shocks many to hear that evidence for the existence of a problem for which the war on drugs is the solution is very scarce, while evidence of the awful cost of prohibition itself abounds.

History aside, it is extremely difficult, I think, to make a rational argument that there exists a continuing drug abuse crisis complete with periodically declared epidemics. Nonetheless, the relentless dirge and dire warnings of the drug warriors continues, relentlessly. [Leshner, 2001];[Vastag, 2001] It is crucial that one thoroughly grasp the most robust trend in addiction epidemiology: drug use has dramatically declined over the past thirty years. Past month use rates are literally half of what they were in the 1970’s, and there has been virtually no change in past-month drug use for over a decade. Note also that the declining trend was clearly established for a decade before workplace drug testing became routine. [Maltby, 1999]
In 2000, Quest Diagnostics reported that positive urine drug tests were at historic lows, down some 66 percent in eleven years. [Quest, 1999] In that report, 62% of the positives were for marijuana - a group particularly unlikely to cause workplace problems. [DeLuca, 2002]

It's Orwellian: thirty years of steady decline in national drug use but drug abuse somehow remains a "crisis" and an "epidemic" justifying a brutal war on doctors and pain patients.

An investigative reporter might want to ask,

“How come we keep paying more and more for a DEA that earned a score of **ZERO out of 100** on a 2003 Office of Management and Budget analysis when the drug abuse problem in American is demonstrably declining, decade after decade after decade?” [See White House OMB rates the DEA: ZERO out of 100 "DEA is unable to demonstrate its progress in reducing the availability of illegal drugs in the U.S. While DEA has developed some strategic goals and objectives, these goals lack specificity in targets and time frames"]

and,
“Given this strong, long-term societal trend, can we justify the distortion of medical practice caused by the defacto regulation of pain medicine by federal law enforcement (the DEA) and the grotesque effects this has on the millions of our fellow citizens who suffer with chronic pain.”

So how can we have a perpetual drug abuse crisis supposedly requiring the horrific worldwide response that is America’s War on Drugs? The answer is, tragically, lies. Big Lies and bullies.

I hope you found this document helpful. The ‘Understanding the Drug War’ series continues in Part 2 with a discussion of a recurrent phenomena in the War on Drugs: “Big Lies and Bullies Trump Doctors and Scientists.”