

## Coalition Talking Points for Monitoring the Future

- The Monitoring the Future national survey data reminds us that we have a long way to go. Drug use declines have stalled out, and attitudes are softening on drugs like marijuana, ecstasy, LSD and inhalants. Coalitions play a critical role in addressing the local conditions and directing energy toward changing attitudes and availability.
- Marijuana use has been increasing gradually over the past few years, which is in stark contrast to the decline that preceded it for nearly a decade prior to that.
- The recent Monitoring the Future findings show that youth drug use is showing no signs of slowing down. Teens still don't understand the dangers of abusing prescription drugs, such as Vicodin and OxyContin; and they don't realize the harm that marijuana use can cause.
- White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Gil Kerlikowske stated, "Drug use is basically flat...If we're not making progress, we're probably losing ground." Our nation and a generation of young people cannot afford to lose ground on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- The MTF survey is a wake-up call that we ignore at our peril. Beliefs and attitudes are going in the wrong direction. The decrease in perception of harm around marijuana and inhalants are especially concerning because changes in attitude can drive use up. Let's not ignore these warning signs.
- In communities across the country, coalitions are collecting data on their own local drug problems and are poised to address them, whether it is underage drinking, prescription drugs, inhalants, or marijuana. But we need to increase our investment in prevention to get out in front of these problems.
- More young people need to get the message that these drugs are harmful if we are to reverse these trends.
- Our coalition can help address our local substance abuse problems through evidence-based prevention efforts, but we can't do it alone. We need help from everyone in the community.