

CHAPTER 1

Florida's Drug Control Strategy: An Overview

Introduction

The citizens of Florida are resolved to strengthen democratic structures and improve the opportunities for all of our people to realize their full potential. Successive generations of Floridians have not wavered in their determination to build a stronger, healthier state. This essential wisdom and perseverance can be found in many statewide efforts, an important one of which is the commitment to counter the threat posed to our state by drug abuse. The vast majority of our citizens have repeatedly asserted their desire to rid Florida of the illicit drug trade. The people of Florida have consistently reaffirmed their commitment to reduce illegal drug use and its destructive consequences.

Drug abuse inflicts enormous damage on our state. The pages that follow detail the extent to which Florida suffers from drug abuse and describe what we plan to do about it. Drug abuse is a national problem that demands a national solution. For that reason, the federal government has produced a national drug control strategy, a long term plan that offers a balanced approach to solving the nation's drug problem. But that strategy makes clear that a resolution of the problem can only be achieved if state and local efforts are integrated into the national plan. We know that we can be successful only if we take advantage of the resources that the national government makes available to us and integrate them with state resources and leadership that can support counter-drug activities of our counties, cities, communities, families, civic groups, anti-drug coalitions, law enforcement agencies, the Florida National Guard and other committed organizations.

The first step in resolving a problem is recognizing its existence. We must be clear and honest in admitting that illegal drug use and its consequences—consequences that include crime, disease, social ruin, and family suffering—permeate every corner of our state, afflicting inner cities, affluent suburbs, and rural communities alike. Drug abuse is not a danger from which any of us are secure, a problem that threatens only somebody else. It is a danger posed to all; there is no sanctuary from its threat.

Drug abuse affects the rich and poor, educated and uneducated, professional and blue collar workers. Seventy-three percent of drug users in America are employed.¹ Addict populations include the elderly as well as those—were it not for their drug habit—considered to be in the prime of their lives. Drug use is particularly prevalent among youth (although not as widespread as many of our young people think). In recent years, we have seen the age for first use of drugs decline, many initiating their addictive habits as early as 11 or 12 years of age.² Innocent infants are suffering in great numbers from the chemical dependencies passed on to them by mothers who are addicted to drugs. In short, illegal drugs harm all elements of society in Florida. It is not an isolated problem. By its very nature, drug abuse spreads to reach every part of our state and every segment of our citizenry.

The history of drug use in America over the last hundred years indicates this blight is cyclic in nature. When we fail to pay attention and guard against it, drug use tends to spread. The introduction of cocaine to an unsuspecting America in the late nineteenth century is a prime example of how perception and attitude affect the incidence of drug abuse. Since the psycho-pharmacological effects of cocaine were unknown and its alleged benefits were touted by some of the leading health authorities of the age (whose claims were repeated in commercial advertising), cocaine use sky-rocketed. Actions followed attitudes until the negative consequences of addiction to the drug were so apparent and widespread that the resulting alteration in perception produced a social rejection of drug abuse. Laws were promulgated, medical processes implemented, and values adopted that led to decreased drug abuse and a healthier, less crime-ridden nation.

As the prevalence of the problem faded, people tended to forget the extent of the potential damage and dropped their guard. When we relaxed our vigilance again, extensive drug abuse reappeared. New drugs came on the scene, often more potent and destructive than those that came before. They brought with them subcultures that offered special appeal to different segments of society, too often the young and impressionable. Once again drug abuse spread, and with it deleterious consequences. Three times

in a century we have seen drug use rise and fall. Illegal drug use has never disappeared entirely, although it is clear that we have brought the percentages of Americans who choose to use drugs way down from where they were circa 1980.³

Today, 6.4 percent of Americans use illegal drugs, down more than half from 17.5 percent of the population in 1979.⁴ But that good news must be tempered by two realizations, one national and the other germane to our state. First, drug use is a reflection of attitudes. In that regard, we are concerned for children. Beginning around 1990, youth attitudes towards substance abuse became more permissive. Soon thereafter actions followed perceptions as youth use of illegal drugs increased. That trend continued for the better part of the decade. If we do not reverse it, a generation of our youth will come of age having established a pattern of drug abuse. Florida will be a long time recovering from such a tragedy.

The second caution that we must heed is the sad truth that Florida's drug problem is disproportionately worse than the nation's as a whole. Hard data from across the state is lacking (a problem that will be addressed by this *Strategy*), but regional and local snapshots indicate that Florida's rate of drug use (defined as current drug use, or the use of at least one illegal drug in the past 30 days) is at about 8 percent of the general population; approximately 25 percent higher than the national average.⁵ Moreover, Florida's indicators of drug abuse are alarming. Cocaine related deaths are rising at a steady pace, over 65% in the last six years. Heroin statistics are especially shocking. The death rate from heroin is up over 50% in the past year alone, and many experts believe that not all of the heroin-induced deaths are being captured by the data.⁶ And new drugs are entering the picture all the time. Long believed to be contained in the western and mid-western sections of the United States, methamphetamines are now appearing in large quantities in Florida. Club drugs, especially insidious because they foster in young people an atmosphere of acceptance of large scale drug use while at the same time killing and injuring them, are reaching ever larger numbers of users, some as young as 12 years old.

Why Florida stands out on the negative side of the drug experience in America is unclear. Most likely, one of the reasons is the high volume traffic of illegal drugs that flow from abroad through Florida's air and sea ports and on our roads on their way to the rest of the nation. Florida, for example, in 1998 interdicted at its ports over 60 percent of all of the cocaine seized in America, more a sign of the volume of cocaine coming into Florida than of our efficiency in catching it.⁷ Some of those drugs filter down to our own streets and rural roads as traffickers seek a quick

market. Once in the United States, the less distance the drug has to travel to a buyer, the greater the profit that can be turned. That is why we are seeing so many heroin deaths in central Florida, where the new brand of Colombian heroin (at purity levels higher than 90 per cent) enters our air ports from Puerto Rico and other Caribbean locales and flows into nearby neighborhoods.

But it is not supply that drives the drug trade, it is the demand for them. The only reason drug traffickers supply our citizens with drugs is because we pay for them. Why Florida's demand for drugs is higher than the rest of the country's is hard to explain. Some attribute the phenomenon to the sense of escapism and the vacation atmosphere that comes with a state that attracts 46 million tourists a year.⁸ This begets, some suggest, an attitude that turns away from the rigors and discipline of everyday life and seeks, if only for a while, more exciting and adventuresome activities. But high demand cannot be blamed on our visitors. After all it is Florida residents that are the ones being counted in surveys indicating a high usage rate. Other commentators suggest, therefore, that it is the mobility and energy of our many different populations, spread across a physically large and regionally diverse state, that are creating an atmosphere conducive to greater drug use. But these explanations (and others) that purport to explain why Florida has a higher demand for drugs are all unsatisfactory. None can offer a clear rationale of cause and effect. The fact remains, however, that Florida's demand for drugs is unacceptably high.

So too is its abuse of alcohol. This is especially true for Florida's adolescents. Indeed it is the combination of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana abuse by youth that correlates significantly with cocaine and heroin addiction as an adult. The combination of drug and alcohol abuse also correlates with crime, domestic violence, and child abuse.⁹ The obvious corollary is the more we can lower the incidence of substance abuse, the more we will bring down the negative criminal and social consequences that come with them.

What we do know for sure is that drug use and its consequences can be reduced. By historical standards, present rates of drug use in the United States are relatively low.¹⁰ High though Florida's drug use rates may be, only a generation ago they were at more than twice the level they are now.¹¹ The reason why drug usage rates in the nation as a whole and in Florida in particular came down is that as we became alarmed at the damage wholesale drug abuse was wreaking on our communities, we worked together to bring down the demand for drugs. Indeed, there are specific locations in Florida where drug usage rates are not only well below those for the rest of Florida, but are below the

national average as well. Miami-Dade County is a prime example. Due to the efforts of citizens (in organizations like Informed Families, DARE, Crime Watch, and others) who have pulled together under the Miami Coalition for a Safe and Drug Free Community and other similar groups, we are seeing drug usage rates go down.¹² The message is clear: when we have both the will and a strategy for coordinating our energies, we can effectively bring down the incidence of drug abuse in our state.

The National Perspective

The first duty of government is to provide security for citizens. The Constitution of the United States articulates the obligation of government to uphold the public good, providing a bulwark against all threats, foreign and domestic. The Florida Constitution states the same sentiment in avowing the obligation of the state to provide for public safety. Drug abuse, and the illicit use of alcohol and tobacco by those under the legal age, constitute a threat to the well-being of our citizens. Toxic, addictive substances are a hazard to our safety and freedom, producing devastating crime and health problems. Drug abuse diminishes the potential of citizens for growth and development. Not surprisingly, 56 percent of respondents to a survey conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health in 1997 identified drugs as the most serious problem facing children in the United States.¹³

The traditions of American democracy affirm our commitment to both the rule of law and individual freedom. Although government must minimize interference in the private lives of citizens, it cannot deny people the security on which peace of mind depends. Drug abuse destroys people. It impairs rational thinking and the potential for a full, productive life. Drug abuse, drug trafficking, and their consequences destroy personal liberty and the well-being of communities. Drugs drain the physical, intellectual, spiritual, and moral strength of Florida. Illegal drugs indiscriminately destroy old and young, men and women from all racial and ethnic groups and every walk of life. No person or group is immune.

Furthermore, crime, violence, workplace accidents, family misery, drug-exposed children, and addiction are only part of the price that illegal drugs extract from society. Drug abuse spawns global criminal syndicates that undermine not just the rule of law in the countries they operate from, but the very social fabric of all countries they touch.

A Long-Term Strategy: Comprehensive and Balanced

Strategy determines the relationship between goals and available resources. Strategy guides the development of programs to achieve goals efficiently. Strategy sets timetables that can adjust as conditions change. It also embodies and expresses will. *Florida's Drug Control Strategy* proposes a multi-year conceptual framework to reduce illegal drug use and availability by 50 percent. If this goal is achieved, less than 4 percent of Florida's household population aged twelve and over would use illegal drugs. This level would be the lowest recorded drug-use rate in our history. Drug-related health, economic, social, and criminal costs would also be reduced commensurately. Florida's *Strategy* focuses on education (awareness), prevention, treatment, research, law enforcement, and integration of state efforts with federal initiatives to support domestic programs as well as to cut the drug trade abroad and at our borders. The *Strategy* provides general guidance while identifying specific initiatives. This document expresses the collective wisdom and optimism of Florida's citizens with regard to confronting the problem posed by illegal drugs.

Mandate for a Florida Drug Control Strategy

Florida's history of drug abuse mirrors that of the rest of the nation. So too does its determination to counter the problem. The last great wave of drug abuse, one that surged usage rates to over twice what they are today, with cocaine addiction almost four times what they are now, occurred in the 1970s.¹⁴ By the end of that decade, American families had had enough. Concerned citizens began to band together to put their collective will and resources to work to reverse the rising trends of drug abuse.

Florida contributed more than its proportional share of leadership to this cause – usually parents who were determined to make a stand on behalf of the safety of their own children, and treatment providers who were determined to save as many of their fellow citizens as they could that had become addicted to drugs. Many of those leaders, people like Pat and Bill Barton, Shirley Coletti, Peggy Sapp, Betty Sembler, Marilyn Culp, Bruce Hayden, and others, remain active to this day. Their commitment has been both significant and constant.

State efforts, however, have had a mixed record, seeing years when support was good as well as years when interest and support waned. Such trends are reflective of all levels of government as a whole, from national to local. Indeed, the whole experience of countering drug abuse in America has suffered from a lack of consistent attention to the problem, and whenever that attention has faded, drugs have made a disconcerting comeback.

In 1998, Florida's current Administration included as a major plank in its election campaign a vow to reinvigorate the state's commitment to bringing down drug abuse. That vow was acted upon almost immediately when the Executive and Legislative leadership of Florida convened a Drug Summit in February of 1999. This two-day meeting brought together leading Floridians from all walks of life affected by, and in turn affecting, the states drug abuse experience. The principles produced by that summit for countering illegal drugs in Florida inform this *Strategy* and are discussed in greater detail in later pages. However, Florida laws - as evidenced by just some of the statutory antecedents set forth below - establish a holistic approach to a healthy, enforced, drug free society and sets forth the principles of its citizens that drug abuse and its accompanying evils are not conducive to a healthy, vibrant, dignified state.

- **Section 232.25, Fla. Stat. (1939)** Adds, via a 1997 amendment, sub-section (4), the "school child's daily conduct pledge" to the school attendance and child welfare act which includes the following affirmations: (4)(e) "I will respect my body and not take drugs" and, (4)(f), "I will show strength and courage, and not do something wrong, just because others are doing it."
- **Section 394.65, Fla. Stat. (1970)** Promotes a system of comprehensive, coordinated alcohol, drug abuse, and mental health services via the "Community Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Services Act."
- **Chapter 893, Fla. Stat. (1973)** Codifies the "Florida Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act" which sets forth schedules I through V of controlled substances, delegates authority to the Attorney General to further control substances by rule implementation, restricts the prescription, distribution and administering of controlled substances and proscribes acts of possession, sale, manufacturing or distribution of controlled substances.
- **Section 948.08, Fla. Stat. (1974)** Allows for the Pretrial Intervention program which provides that any first offender or any person previously convicted of

not more than one nonviolent misdemeanor, who is charged with any misdemeanor or felony of the third degree is eligible for release to the program, empowers the state's courts to engage in the Drug Court program.

- **Section 232.246(1)(i), Fla. Stat. (1978)** Mandates one-half credit of the mandatory 24 academic credits required for high school graduation be in the area of "life management skills" to include, among other specific topics, drug education and the hazards of smoking.
- **Section 232.256, Fla. Stat. (1982)** Supports the position, owing to the special relationship between students and school officials and, to a limited degree, the school officials' standing in loco parentis to students, that if a principal of a public school has a reasonable suspicion that a prohibited or illegally possessed substance is contained within a student's locker or storage area, may search the locker or storage area.
- **Section 232.277, Fla. Stat. (1982)** Mandates school personnel to report suspected unlawful use, possession or sale by a student of any suspected controlled substance.
- **Chapter 187, Fla. Stat. (1985)** Sets long-range policy guidance for the orderly social, economic, and physical growth of the state via the "State Comprehensive Plan" which sets forth goals which establish the framework for a healthy, safe, drug-free society by seeking to: advance human dignity; protect the health, safety, and welfare of its children; strengthen the family and promote its economic independence; endorse a healthy environment which does not cause illness; protect the public by preventing, discouraging, and punishing criminal behavior; provide substance abuse treatment programs for impaired offenders; promote coordination of Florida's ports; and, stimulate agricultural research.
- **Section 233.061, Fla. Stat. (1985)** Mandates the inclusion of concepts of substance use and abuse in health education, which is required in Florida public schools.
- **Section 112.0455, Fla. Stat. (1989)** Promotes the goal of drug-free workplaces within government through fair and reasonable drug-testing methods for the protection of public employees and employers via the "Drug-Free Workplace Act."
- **Section 233.0663, Fla. Stat. (1989)** Recognizes the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program, (DARE)

and authorizes implementation of it in the public elementary schools to prevent drug and alcohol use among school age children.

- **Sections 440.101 and 440.102, Fla. Stat. (1990)** Promotes drug-free workplaces in order that employers in the state be afforded the opportunity to maximize productivity, enhance their competitive positions in the marketplace, and reach their desired levels of success without experiencing the costs, delays and tragedies associated with work-related accidents resulting from drug abuse by employees.
- **THE GOVERNOR'S DRUG POLICY TASK FORCE: STRATEGIES FOR 1990, Executive Office of the Governor, Governor Bob Martinez (1990)** Sets forth the work of Governor Martinez' 1989 Drug Policy Task Force, and expounds on a list of 100 recommendations for policy/program coordination, law enforcement, penalties, awareness and education, and rehabilitation presented in a report entitled "Toward a Drug Free Florida."
- **Sections 944.472 (1992), 944.473 (1992), and 944.474, Fla. Stat. (1996)** Promotes the goal of a drug-free correctional system through fair and economical methods of random, reasonable-suspicion substance abuse testing of inmates via the "Drug-Free Corrections Act of 1992."
- **Chapter 397, Fla. Stat. (1993)** Provides for a comprehensive continuum of accessible and quality substance abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment services in the least restrictive environment and allow for an alternative to criminal imprisonment in some cases while providing substance abuse services to impaired offenders incarcerated within the Department of Corrections via the Substance Abuse Services act, also known as the "Hal S. Marchman Alcohol and Drug Services Act."
- **Section 411.242, Fla. Stat. (1995)** Creates the Florida Education Now and Babies Later (ENABLE) program providing a range of pregnancy prevention public education services including a referral service for alcohol and drug abuse in Part IV of the Florida Prevention, Early Assistance, and Early Childhood Act.
- **Section 233.0612, Fla. Stat. (1997)** Authorizes each school district to include drug abuse resistance education in its curriculum.
- **Section 39.001 and 39.0015, Fla. Stat. (1985)** Authorizes the state to contract with community

substance abuse treatment providers for the development and operation of specialized support and overlay services for the dependency system. These services include training and educational programs for children, parents, and teachers directed toward preventing the occurrence of sexual, physical, and drug and alcohol related abuse of children.

- **Section 985.02, Fla. Stat. (1998)** Provides for the authority of the state, along with substance abuse treatment providers, to establish and operate specialized support and overlay services for the dependency and delinquency systems, implemented and utilized as resources permit.
- **Section 414.095, Fla. Stat. (1998)** Determines the eligibility requirements for the WAGES program before an applicant may receive services or temporary cash assistance. Benefits are not denied to an individual solely based on a felony drug conviction, unless the conviction is for trafficking pursuant to s. 893.135. To be eligible under this section, an individual convicted of a drug felony must be satisfactorily meeting the requirements of the WAGES Program, including all substance abuse treatment requirements. Within the limits specified in this chapter, the state opts out of the provision of Pub. L. No. 104-193, s. 115, that eliminates eligibility for temporary cash assistance and food stamps for any individual convicted of a controlled substance felony.
- **Section 414.70, Fla. Stat. (1998)** Provides for the implementation of drug testing and screening in the Work and Gain Economic Sufficiency Coalition (WAGES) to screen and test each applicant receiving temporary cash assistance provided under chapter 414, who the Department of Children and Families has reasonable cause to believe, based on the screening, to have engaged in the illegal use of controlled substances.

In addition to **Chapter 99-187, Laws of Florida (SB 1468/HB 1831)** which creates Florida's Office of Drug Control and the Statewide Drug Policy Advisory Council within the Executive Office of the Governor,¹⁵ the legislature has responded to drug abuse and illicit drug activity in the spring of 1999 by codifying the following into law:

- **Chapter 99-12, Laws of Florida (SB 194/HB 113)** The "10-20-Life" bill, as it is now known, adds drug trafficking to the list of felonies whereupon, if convicted, the possessor of a firearm would receive a minimum mandatory sentence and includes trafficking

in, or capital importation of, cannabis, cocaine, phencyclidine, methaqualone, amphetamine, flunitrazepam, or committing any other violation of section 893.135(1), Fla. Stat., with a firearm.

- **Chapter 99-154, Laws of Florida (SB 134/HB 135)**
Affirms enhanced penalties for the sale or possession of a controlled substance within 1,000 feet of a properly identified, licensed child care facility.
- **Chapter 99-156, Laws of Florida (SB 156/HB 673)**
Subjects anyone under 21 who buys or attempts to buy alcohol to criminal penalties and anyone under 18 who buys or attempts to buy cigarettes faces potential loss or delay of their driver's license and privileges.
- **Chapter 99-174, Laws of Florida (SB 54 & 902/HB 421 & 485)**
Disallows voluntary intoxication, resulting from the consumption, injection, or other use of alcohol or other controlled substance as described in chapter 893, Fla. Stat., as a defense to any offense proscribed by law.
- **Chapter 99-186, Laws of Florida (SB 152/HB 91)**
Adds the controlled substance known as ketamine, or "Special K," to the list of Schedule III drugs in Section 893.03, Fla. Stat., for the purpose of punishing possession, sale and manufacturing of this drug.
- **Chapter 99-188, Laws of Florida (SB 1614/HB 121)**
The "Three Strikes" bill adds the possession of designated numbers of cannabis plants to the trafficking laws, reduces the initial threshold of cannabis possession from 50 to 25 pounds, and reestablishes minimum mandatory sentences for a number of trafficking offenses.
- **Chapter 99-234, Laws of Florida (SB 1056/HB 1270)**
Requires anyone convicted of reckless driving involving alcohol or drugs or who is convicted of DUI to be evaluated as to the need for substance abuse treatment and also subjects a motor vehicle to forfeiture under the Florida Contraband Act if the motor vehicle is driven by a person under the influence of alcohol or drugs and the person's license is suspended as a result of a prior conviction for driving under the influence.
- **Chapter 99-396, Laws of Florida (SB 2388/HB 2003)**
Creates a commission on mental health and substance abuse within the Executive Office of the Governor to review and evaluate the management and functioning of the existing publicly supported mental

health and substance abuse systems and services in the Department of Children and Families, the Agency for Health Care Administration, and all other departments which administer mental health and substance abuse services.

It is the express intent of the law establishing the Office of Drug Control to establish and institutionalize a rational process for long-range planning, information gathering, strategic decision making, and funding for the purpose of limiting substance abuse in Florida. It directs that a drug control strategy be developed and implemented and that decisions regarding the funding of substance abuse programs be based on that strategy. Furthermore, the law specifies that the *Strategy* require performance based measurement and accountability. This *Strategy*, therefore, is one step in the fulfillment of that law. As such it both informs and guides the state of Florida in its collective effort to bring down drug abuse.

The National Antecedents

Florida's Drug Control Strategy is unique among the states. Its principles and precepts reflect the will of our citizens in addressing our specific drug challenge. However, if we are to be effective in taking advantage of federal resources put at our disposal, integrating our own efforts with those of the nations' so that we can reduce the flow of drugs that initiate beyond our borders, it is only practical that Florida's *Strategy* coordinate as much as possible with the national effort to lessen drug abuse. The ways in which the federal government responds to drug abuse and trafficking are outlined in the following laws and executive orders:

- The Controlled Substances Act, Title II of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 provided an effective approach to the regulation, manufacture, and distribution of narcotics, stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, anabolic steroids, and chemicals used in the production of controlled substances.
- Executive Order No. 12564 (1986) made refraining from drug use a condition of employment for all federal employees. This order required every federal agency to develop a comprehensive drug-free workplace program.
- The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 established as a policy goal the creation of a drug-free America. A key provision of that Act was the establishment of the

Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to set priorities, implement a national strategy, and certify federal drug-control budgets. The law specifies that the strategy must be comprehensive and research-based, contain long-range goals and measurable objectives, and seek to reduce drug abuse, trafficking, and their consequences. Specifically, drug abuse is to be curbed by preventing youth from using illegal drugs, reducing the number of users, and decreasing drug availability.

- The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 extended ONDCP's mission to assessing budgets and resources related to the National Drug Control Strategy. It also established specific reporting requirements in the areas of drug use, availability, consequences, and treatment.
- Executive Order No. 12880 (1993) and Executive Orders Nos. 12992 and 13023 (1996) assigned ONDCP responsibility within the executive branch for leading drug-control policy and developing an outcome-measurement system. The executive orders also chartered the President's Drug Policy Council and established the ONDCP Director as the President's chief spokesman for drug control.
- The Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998 expanded ONDCP's mandate and authorities and set forth additional reporting requirements and expectations. It was the sense of the Congress in this Act that substantial progress could be made toward achieving specific reductions in drug supply and demand by the year 2003 as well as during the intervening years. The National Drug Control Strategy set in motion policies and programs designed to make progress toward these targets. It offers analysis of what is achievable by when. It also presents a performance measurement system that links goals, objectives, and mid- and long-term targets.

A Synopsis of the 1999 Florida Drug Control Strategy

This *Strategy* adheres to the view that leadership – from families and communities throughout Florida in conjunction with local, municipal, county, and state organizations – can make the difference in bringing down

the levels of drug abuse in our state. It makes no pretense that state government has all the answers. Indeed, it suggests that the best solutions come from local communities and households where strong but compassionate values can be instituted and maintained.

But government can be a catalyst. To that end, the *Florida Drug Control Strategy* takes a long-term, holistic view of the state's drug problem and recognizes the significant effect drug abuse has on Florida's public health and safety. The *Strategy* maintains that no single solution or entity can suffice to deal with the multifaceted challenge that drug abuse represents; that several solutions must be applied simultaneously; and that by focusing on outcomes — measured in declining drug use, reduced supply, and a lessening of attendant negative social consequences — we can maintain accountability while achieving our goals. We set as our major objective the reduction of Florida's abuse of illegal drugs by 50% over the next five years.

The two major conditions in Florida that the *Strategy* plans to address are the demand for drugs and the supply of drugs. It is only through a balanced array of demand reduction and supply reduction programs consistently executed over the long term that Florida will be able to achieve a substantial reduction in drug use and availability and a corresponding reduction in their adverse consequences.

While both demand and supply reduction efforts must be advanced simultaneously, demand must be the priority. People's desire for drugs is what sets the drug abuse cycle in motion. Traffickers supply drugs only because a profit can be made. Thus demand fuels supply. In a perfect world, if we could bring demand to zero, the economic incentive to traffic drugs would evaporate and supply would disappear. This *Strategy* recognizes, however, that in the real world some demand for illegal drugs will always be present in any given population. Drug traffickers, seeking profit, will attempt to supply that demand. They must be countered.

In a solid, well-defined strategy, demand and supply reduction efforts complement and support one another. We know that cheap and readily available drugs can undercut the effectiveness of otherwise successful demand reduction programs. We know that restricted availability and high prices can help to hold down the number of first-time users, prevent aggressive marketing of illegal drugs to the most at-risk populations by criminal drug organizations, and reduce the human, social, and economic costs of drug abuse. Only through a comprehensive, coordinated approach of both demand and supply programs can we achieve success.

If demand reduction is the primary effort, prevention is key. Clearly, preventing drug use in the first place is preferable to waiting to address the problem later with law enforcement and treatment. The *Strategy* focuses prevention efforts on our young, seeking to educate them about the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco during their formative years. If we can bring Florida's 3.8 million children to adulthood free of substance abuse, the vast majority will avoid drug dependency for the rest of their lives. Accordingly, a primary goal is to educate and enable our youth to reject substance abuse. As part of this effort, we include the education of parents and other developers and mentors of our young. Children, for the most part, adopt the values and character of the adults they look up to.

Unfortunately, during the 1990's the rate of substance abuse by children across the nation rose dramatically until 1997. Although one 1998 survey indicated that there appears to be a leveling off of youth substance abuse, this can not be pointed to as a trend.¹⁶ While Florida's last comprehensive survey dates back to 1995, recent surveys from around the state indicate that we have followed this national trend. This increase is in contrast to the overall declining rates of drug abuse which have come down significantly from where they were in the 1970s and 1980s. Today's problem is rooted in youth perceptions, which began in 1990 and 1991 to reflect less concern for the risk of drug use and a belief that substance abuse was not all that harmful for them. Indeed, today many young people believe that most of their peers are using tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, either singularly or in combination. But this belief does not bear out in fact. Most youth do not use drugs. However, it is true that among youth, there is a strong correlation between smoking, drinking, and taking drugs, and that the more frequently each behavior is practiced, the more likely the others will occur.¹⁷ The *Florida Drug Control Strategy* sets as a priority the prevention of our youth from using any of these substances.

But focusing on youth is not enough. We must develop appropriate prevention, early identification and intervention programs for vulnerable young adults as they leave their homes and families to go to college, enter the military, or come into the workplace as full-time employees. So too must we meet the addiction problems of the mid-life and elderly of our state. We need to treat a population of over 700,000 adults with substance abuse problems who constitute a major portion of Florida's demand for illegal drugs.¹⁸ Without help, these adults will suffer from poor health, unstable family relations, and other negative consequences of substance abuse. Moreover, since parental alcohol and other drug abuse is a significant predictor of youth drug use, and is often the cause of serious child abuse and neglect, treatment for parents is key to breaking the

inter-generational cycle of addiction.¹⁹ Accordingly, the *Strategy* will focus on treating those in need through a variety of means that heighten the chances of successful recovery. Although this is often a long and difficult process, research clearly demonstrates that treatment can and does work. The *Strategy* will take advantage of all opportunities — in the workplace, the criminal justice system, the community, at school and elsewhere — to encourage drug abusers to become drug free. Indeed, there must be a synergy among the anti-drug programs offered by the state's children and family services, health care, educational, criminal justice, welfare, the Florida National Guard, and job-training systems, with neighborhood led efforts to cut drug availability and use.

We must also address substance abuse by offenders. Law enforcement officials from around the state report that the majority of crimes committed are related to substance abuse. Florida Department of Corrections' statistics indicate that approximately half of the 220,000 individuals under their supervision have a drug charge as either their primary current offense or for a prior conviction.²⁰ When committing their crimes, most offenders are either high on drugs, breaking the law to obtain money to get high on drugs, or in possession of such volumes of illegal drugs as to indicate that they are dealing in them. Experience has shown that non-violent, drug-related offenders will respond to a zero tolerance drug supervision program that includes strict and supervised protocols that include mandated treatment for substance abuse as required in lieu of incarceration. Drug courts, testing and sanctions programs, and treatment within the criminal justice system reduce drug consumption and recidivism. This *Strategy* calls for a significant expansion of drug courts at the local level for Florida. Over time, expansion of alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders promises to decrease the overall addicted population and reduce both crime and social costs for Floridians.

However, the ultimate success of any of these programs will be measured by whether or not people with various combinations of substance-abuse problems, welfare dependency, and/or criminal backgrounds succeed in entering the workforce and becoming productive, self-sufficient, tax-paying members of society. Education and job-training programs must include a continuum of prevention, early identification, intervention and supportive services that effectively address the needs of the addicted, and abet recovery in training programs and in the workplace.

At the same time demand reduction programs bring down the consumption rates of illegal drugs, supply reduction efforts must work in tandem to cut their flow to

our communities. Law enforcement is essential to reducing drug use in Florida. The supply of drugs to our citizens is a criminal enterprise harmful to them and injurious to our society. Illegal drug trafficking inflicts violence and corruption on our neighborhoods. It violates the rule of law and cannot be tolerated. Law enforcement is the first line of defense against such unacceptable activity.

The criminal activity that comes with drug trafficking includes local, national, and international components. Domestic traffickers are often linked with international organizations. Our law enforcement efforts must include investigations, operations, and prosecutions to address all components of this criminal enterprise. The principles that guide our law enforcement efforts, therefore, must include coordination and cooperation among many state and local law enforcement agencies as well as with national and international agencies that can reach beyond state jurisdictions and resources to bring illegal drug traffickers to justice.

Florida has a number of professional and competent law enforcement agencies that rank among the best in the nation. Each contributes in its own way to reducing the supply of drugs and educating our citizens as to the dangers of drug abuse. This *Strategy* intends to capitalize on their unique abilities and integrate their counter-drug efforts so as to make them mutually reinforcing of one another.

All of our law enforcement efforts must be guided by good information. We should not – and need not – operate blindly. Not only can national assets help focus our law enforcement energies, so can statewide information networks, fed by both top-down and bottom-up inputs, improve the effectiveness of supply reduction operations. Resources (e.g., human, communications, automatic data processing, technology, and so on) can be combined in such ways that, without any agency sacrificing the autonomy and independence of their operations, the resulting whole can be greater than the sum of its parts. The common goals of reducing the supply of drugs and bringing drug traffickers to justice must bind federal, state, and local efforts together in common pursuit of the rule of law.

Florida demands its fair share of national commitment to secure our borders from illegal drugs. Estimates that more than a third of illegal drugs entering the United States come over across our state's international boundaries require that a proportional share of federal interdiction efforts focus on securing Florida's borders.²¹ We will seek greater federal resourcing of our air and sea ports of entry. And we encourage more interdiction – by the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Customs Service, the Drug Enforcement Agency,

and other federal entities – to cut the flow of drugs through the sea, air, and land transit routes leading directly or indirectly to Florida. In cutting supplies of illegal drugs and prosecuting drug traffickers, Florida's law enforcement agencies and justice system are prepared to work with federal agencies. We welcome an increase in national attention and assistance in helping us reduce the supply of illegal drugs entering our state.

This *Strategy* will base its approach to reducing illegal drug demand and supply on sound research and accurate data. Reliable information will guide the decisions we make in devising effective programs and in sustaining their viability over the long term. Science and knowledge, not ideology, shall inform our commitment to specific policies intended to bring down drug abuse in Florida. Technology will be leveraged wherever it promises – and ultimately proves – to assist us in our efforts. We owe it to our citizens and their commitment to reduce the consequences of illegal drugs to demonstrate accountability for resources expanded to that end. The *Strategy*, therefore, directs state agencies to develop and monitor measures of effectiveness that inform us as to what is working and what is not. Armed with such information, state and local leaders can make intelligent decisions on when to reinforce success and when to discontinue programs that fail to make progress toward intended outcomes.

This *Strategy*, therefore, recognizes that constant reassessment is a necessary component of its approach to reduce drug abuse in Florida. It is prepared to adapt continually as conditions change, new opportunities present themselves, and changed realities become part of the drug threat to our citizens. The *Strategy* remains open to input and feedback from all governmental and non-governmental agencies, organizations, and individuals committed to the lessening of drug abuse. In the end, this *Strategy* has but one purpose – to keep Florida's people safe from the dangers posed by illegal drugs. We want to see a healthier, more secure, less violent, and more stable Florida, one less threatened by illegal drugs and those who traffic in them.

Endnotes

¹ Office of National Drug Control Policy, *The National Drug Control Strategy 1999*, p.1

² Ibid

³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies, *Preliminary Results from the 1997 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse* (NHSDA), 1997.

⁴ Office of National Drug Control Policy, *The National Drug Control Strategy 1999*, p.2

- ⁵ Office of Drug Control estimates utilizing data from the Florida Department of Children and Families Substance Abuse Programs Office
- ⁶ Florida Department of Law Enforcement, 1998 Medical Examiners Commission Report
- ⁷ U.S. Customs Service, 1998 Report on Cocaine and Marijuana Seizures
- ⁸ Florida Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development (OTTED)
- ⁹ Office of National Drug Control Policy, *The National Drug Control Strategy 1999*, p.2
- ¹⁰ *Monitoring the Future* Survey, University of Michigan, 1975-1998
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² The Florida International University/ Miami Coalition School Survey, 1993-1997
- ¹³ Harvard University/University of Maryland, *American Attitudes toward Children's Health Issues* (Princeton, New Jersey: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 1997)
- ¹⁴ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies, *Preliminary Results from the 1997 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse* (NHSDA), 1997.
- ¹⁵ Chapter 99-187, Laws of Florida SB 1468/HB 1831
- ¹⁶ *Monitoring the Future* Survey, University of Michigan, December 1998
- ¹⁷ Merrill, J., Fox, K., Lewis, S. and Pulver, G., *Cigarettes, Alcohol, and Marijuana: Gateways to Illicit Drug Use*, pgs. 1 and 15
- ¹⁸ Florida Department of Children and Families Substance Abuse Program Office
- ¹⁹ National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, (CASA) 1999
- ²⁰ Florida Department of Corrections Fiscal Year 1997-1998 Annual Report
- ²¹ U.S. Customs Service, 1998 Report on Cocaine and Marijuana Seizures



Encourage Your Kid's Habit.

Kids need something better to do than drugs. Like sports. Dance. Or music. Because good things can be habit forming. Too. So get them into a good habit. Today. Or they may get into a very bad one.