

## **Written Questions from Coordinating Council's March 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting White House Conference Center, Jackson Place**

- 1. How does ONDCP measure the success of their Media Campaign? How do they determine if campaign is at all related to changes in drug abuse?**

The ultimate measure of success of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign is in how many youth are illicitly using drugs. Since 2001, drug use among youth in America has declined by nearly 20%. The Administration believes that the message sent to America's youth – that illicit drugs are harmful – is a significant factor in this decline. All advertisements are carefully developed and tested with the target audience before release as to their impact. Only advertisements that result in changed perception regarding drug use among youth are ultimately aired to the public. Further, once the ads are aired, tracking surveys are used to monitor changes in perception of risk, attitudes, and intent to use drugs.

- 2. What is the relationship between high rates of illiteracy among teens and high rates of drug use (as is seen in the criminal justice system for adults)?**

The Office of National Drug Control Policy is not aware of any data which shows a direct causal effect between drug use and illiteracy. However, there is no question that experience has shown a link between youth drug use and propensity to drop out of school or do poorly in studies, and also between dropout rates and failure to become literate.

- 3. About random drug testing: Are we missing the most vulnerable youths because there are high high school drop out rates, particularly in minority communities?**

Random student drug testing programs are an effective tool for preventing drug use among youth. By definition, these programs apply to students, and a high school drop out will not be subject to the benefits of these programs. That is one of many reasons why it is so important to lower the dropout rate and complete high school. It is also a reason why random student drug testing programs are an important component, but not the only aspect, of a comprehensive approach to reducing youth drug use in the United States.

- 4. Unmasking other problems: Aren't there better ways to screen for physical and sexual abuse, and parental substance abuse—to reach children before high school and treat families before damaging effects of abuse?**

Random student drug testing, as noted above, is an important part of a comprehensive approach to reducing drug use in the United States. It is not the only aspect of an effective community approach to reducing, in particular, youth

drug use. It is critically important for teachers, counselors, and other adults who are present in a child's life to be aware of the signs of all types of abuse (including physical, sexual, and parental substance abuse) and initiate appropriate interventions depending upon the circumstances.

**5. Whole concept of parental role does not work for children whose parents, for whatever reason, are uninvolved or unwilling to counsel their children.**

One of the most important factors in reducing illicit youth drug use is parental involvement. That is one reason that a key focus of the Administration's National Youth Anti-Drug Media campaign is encouraging parents to be involved in their child's life, including but not limited to discussing the dangers of illicit drug use. For parents who do not talk to their children about drugs, the Media Campaign reaches them directly through advertising on media that are heavily watched by teens, and in other direct and indirect ways, such as through teachers and community organizations.