

TUNE IN TO THE  
SOUND OF DEMOCRACY

## Justice Talking Radio Transcript

**Does Drug Testing Student Athletes Deter Drug Abuse?—Air Date: 8/21/06**

This fall, New Jersey will become the first state in the nation to begin random drug testing of high school athletes. Athletes who qualify for team or individual state championships can be randomly tested for more than 80 prohibited drugs from steroids to amphetamines and will risk disqualification for a year if caught. Join us for this back-to-school edition of Justice Talking as we look at steroids, students and sports and ask whether drug testing is the best way to prevent substance abuse.

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MARGOT ADLER: From NPR, this is Justice Talking. [music] I'm Margot Adler. When we think about drug testing, most of us think about having to take a drug test for a job, or we hear about professional athletes who use performance-enhancing drugs and have failed drug tests. But what about high school students? It's reported that one out of every 20 high school athletes is using steroids. Many schools around the country already have random drug-testing programs, but are they effective? This fall, New Jersey will become the first state to mandate steroid testing of high school athletes. Some student athletes say they support the idea.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: If you're going to cheat, why even play? Everybody on this team's clean; I think it's a great idea. Weed out the cheaters and play a clean, fair sport all across the board.

MARGOT ADLER: Coming up, we'll also talk about teen drug use, and whether the government's anti-drug messages are preventing kids from getting high. This and more after the news.

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MARGOT ADLER: This is Justice Talking. I'm Margot Adler. When we hear about athletes using steroids, we think of professional athletes--runners, baseball players or cyclists, involved in often grueling athletic endeavors where a mere second separates the winners from the losers. We don't often think of kids, high school athletes shooting up steroids before playing against a rival team. However, it's estimated that one out of 20 school athletes is using steroids. But it's not just performance-enhancing drugs that kids are using. They're also abusing prescription drugs, like oxycontin and Ritalin, in increasing numbers. On today's show, we'll look at whether testing teens for drugs is effective. The Supreme Court has already said it's okay for schools to test kids for drugs if they're involved in an extracurricular activity. So we'll hear about New Jersey's plans for testing high school athletes for steroids. Later, we'll find out whether the government's anti-drug campaign really prevents kids from using drugs.

But first, to find out how prevalent steroid use is among teenagers, I spoke with Dr. Linn Goldberg. He's one of the leading experts on steroid abuse among adolescents. He's head of the Division of Health Promotion and Sports Medicine at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland. He's also the principal investigator of a national program called ATLAS, Athletes Training and Learning to Avoid Steroids. I asked him how prevalent steroid use is among high school athletes.

LINN GOLDBERG: Well, in 1993 there was about one user for every 45 kids in high school. That increased to one in 16, in 2003. In 2005 it backed off a bit, to about one in 20 or so.

MARGOT ADLER: Looking at these kids, how are they taking the steroids? Are they taking them by injection, are they taking them orally, by gel?

LINN GOLDBERG: That's a good question. Anywhere from about a third, 25 percent to a third are taking them by injection. Many of them start with pills or gels, and then they proceed on to taking it with the more risky types of taking, and they start sharing needles...

MARGOT ADLER: And they inject this themselves, or each other, friends giving it to each other? I mean, how does that work?

LINN GOLDBERG: Often they'll have friends giving it to each other, so they're not typically injectable drug users, so what they do is they inject each other.

MARGOT ADLER: And most of these high school athletes are getting steroids from the internet, or from where?

LINN GOLDBERG: I think that that would probably be the number one source. However, you can go to Mexico, like was done last year with the kids in Connecticut, and that was where 5 students were arrested on steroid charges in Connecticut. Before that, there were kids from Arizona. More steroid use in the South has been reported in the past, and that's presumably because it comes up through Mexico.

MARGOT ADLER: Are there different health risks for kids who use steroids than for adults?

LINN GOLDBERG: Yes. For an adolescent, it may stunt their height. In late adolescents, what happens is, if you have a boost of testosterone, or testosterone-like drugs, anabolic steroids, it can freeze the epiphyseal or growth plate of the long bones, so the person won't get any taller. So if they were, say, 5-foot-6 or 5-foot-7, and they were supposed to be 6-foot-2 or 3, they may reduce their ability to be athletes later because of this height stunting.

MARGOT ADLER: Now, you've been studying students who are using steroids. Is there a particular profile of that kind of a student?

LINN GOLDBERG: Well, there have been a number of studies done on this, in both young women and young men. In many of these, they use... They're polysubstance abusers.

MARGOT ADLER: In other words, they use many drugs.

LINN GOLDBERG: Many drugs. And that goes for professional athletes as well. They have poorer relationships, they have a greater history of conduct disorders, and they often have a poor body image, less self-esteem. So that's a problem with some of the young men. Girls reporting substance use like this have more cigarette and cocaine use, they have more alcohol use, as do the men. More marijuana use. They're less likely to wear seat belts. They have greater history of being pregnant. They're more apt to carry a weapon. These are women. These are young girls in high school.

MARGOT ADLER: If you're a parent, what should you look out for if you think your child is using steroids?

LINN GOLDBERG: Well, the use of steroids is sort of like a hyper-adolescent. So they can have more acne, they can gain weight much faster, and they can become more aggressive. There can be a change in their personality.

MARGOT ADLER: It occurs to me that, how could a parent not know that their child is using steroids? I mean, wouldn't your child's physique be changing drastically?

LINN GOLDBERG: Well, if you were an aunt, you would be more likely to know, and saw your nephew once every couple of months. But if you're a parent, they're just changing day to day. And the changes are so gradual day to day, you might really not realize it. We had a coach, who was not only a high school coach, but a college coach for football. His son was about 5-foot-4, 5-foot-5. And he was breaking all these records for power-lifting for his size. He played on the football team; he was a running back. His daughter was a medical student. And he was one of our coaches in ATLAS. And he told us that he did not realize that his son was taking steroids. He only found out when he found a vial of steroids between his mattresses when he went into the armed services.

MARGOT ADLER: Wow. Thank you so much for talking with me.

LINN GOLDBERG: Sure, thank you.

MARGOT ADLER: Dr. Linn Goldberg is one of the leading experts on steroid abuse among adolescents. He's the head of the Division of Health Promotion and Sports Medicine at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland.

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MARGOT ADLER: We just heard about the dangers of steroid use among student athletes. Schools are beginning to address this problem. This fall, New Jersey will become the first state to mandate steroid testing of high school athletes. The state has already been a legal battleground over testing for recreational drugs, with schools winning the right to test students in clubs, sports, or extracurricular activities. While over 200,000 students participate in high school sports in New Jersey, only a fraction will have to give a sample, because the steroids-testing program is designed only to screen students who qualify for the championship tournament. Reporter Eugene Sonn has more.

EUGENE SONN: This pre-season football practice at Lawrence High School looks and sounds the same as last year's. But the students have a bit of extra paperwork this fall. In addition to passing a physical, they have to sign a form saying they're willing to submit to a steroids test if their team qualifies for the championship tournament. The testing program is the brainchild of New Jersey Senate President Dick Codey, a big sports fan and youth basketball coach.

DICK CODEY: Incidents with the high school athletes using steroids has doubled in the last ten years. And as a father of teenage sons who compete athletically, it's upsetting.

EUGENE SONN: In December, Codey, who was serving as acting governor, signed an executive order requiring steroid testing of a random sample of high school athletes competing for State titles. Codey says as a coach he sees kids under a lot of pressure, and some look like they're getting an unfair edge.

DICK CODEY: When you see a high school athlete who, over the course of one year, has built himself up tremendously, I say to myself, that's pretty hard to do in one year just by weightlifting. So you've got to ask questions, pointedly and directly, to the athlete and to the parents as well.

EUGENE SONN: National surveys show five percent of high school students admit to having taken steroids. While Codey is confident the testing will help reduce the number of kids taking the drug, the program is starting small. The first year will cover 500 athletes, spread over 31 high school sports, at a cost of about \$100,000. Codey isn't the only one backing the testing idea. Sports Illustrated writer and New Jersey resident Peter King served on a blue-ribbon panel created by Codey to research steroids in youth sports. King says teenage mindsets and the long-term damage done by steroids make this a terrible combination.

PETER KING: As a writer, I can't think of a better word for steroid use among high school athletes than frightening. When you're 16, you don't care about life at 40. And teenagers just don't care about their lives 20 years down the road, which is why cooler heads have to.

EUGENE SONN: Bruce Howard, communications director for the National Federation of State High School Associations, says combating that youthful feeling of invulnerability is a major focus of his group's education campaign and the materials it sends out across the country.

BRUCE HOWARD: DVDs, videos, brochures that show the side-effects and the long-term impact of steroid use. We try to take the focus beyond what, you know, a day or a week or a month of glory could be, versus what it might be doing to you, long term.

EUGENE SONN: Howard says other states have considered testing for steroids, but have decided not to. New Mexico has a pilot program, but it includes just a few school districts. He says people aren't necessarily against testing, but wonder if the \$150-200 per test would be better spent on education, such as showing kids healthy alternatives. Back at Lawrence High School's football practice field, sweat flows off the players' heads in the August heat. At the end of practice, head coach Rob Bradis warns his players to stay away from chips, french fries, and soda, and instead eat bananas, peanut butter, and Gatorade. The basic nutrition message is part of his plan to help his players get bigger and stronger without steroids. The team's center, J.J. Vogel, says the players are taking the message to heart in their bid for a state championship. Vogel says he has no problem submitting to a steroids test.

J.J. VOGEL: If you're going to cheat, why even play? Everybody on this team's clean; I think it's a great idea. Weed out the cheaters and play a clean, fair sport, all the way across the board.

EUGENE SONN: New Jersey's steroid-testing program may have trouble delivering that clean competition. There is a big potential loophole. Since athletes can cycle on and off steroids, and they will know they can't be tested until they qualify for the championship tournament, the program as it's now structured may not catch athletes who have been using steroids earlier in the season. For Justice Talking, I'm Eugene Sonn, in Lawrenceville, New Jersey.

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MARGOT ADLER: Coming up, should high schools be testing kids for drugs?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I don't see why the school now has become a place for random testing, for health decisions, and why are the tax-payers picking up the tab on this? Let parents do their job.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Random student drug testing goes along with prevention and education. It's not an alternative to it. It's an enhancement. They go together.

MARGOT ADLER: Drug testing of high school students: Is it effective, or just a waste of money? Stay with us.

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MARGOT ADLER: This is Justice Talking. I'm Margot Adler. On today's show we're talking

about teenagers and drugs. One of the most controversial issues in combating teenage drug use is student drug testing. Here's what one Philadelphia teen had to say about drug testing at his high school.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Well, I was on a sports team. I did... I was in football. I played... I was a quarterback. And they said that I had to take a drug test, and I quit, because I feel that's invading my privacy.

MARGOT ADLER: In 2002, the Supreme Court ruled that random drug testing of high school students involved in sports and other extracurricular activities did not violate the student's right to privacy. In more than 500 high schools across the country, kids on debate teams, on soccer teams, or in drama clubs, face the potential of being called in for a drug test. But do these measures work? Those in favor of student drug-testing programs argue that the fear of being tested deters drug use, while opponents say that drug testing is an invasive and costly program, one that takes money away from more effective tools, like counseling and drug education.

Joining me to debate this are Dr. Robert DuPont, president of the Institute for Behavior and Health, a public policy organization that seeks to reduce substance abuse. He was the first director of NIDA, the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Also with me is Dr. Marsha Rosenbaum, director of the San Francisco office of the Drug Policy Alliance. She is the author of "Safety First: A Reality-Based Approach to Teens, Drugs, and Drug Education." I asked Robert DuPont, is there any evidence that student drug testing lowers drug use among teens?

ROBERT DUPONT: The schools that have, at least the ones that I know of who have used random student drug testing, are all convinced that it makes a big difference in the quality of the school life. One study that was done by Linn Goldberg found that he compared athletes in two schools, one that used student drug testing and one that didn't, and the school that did use the drug testing had one-quarter the drug use of the school that was not using drug testing. I don't know whether it reduced it by 75%, which is what that study found, but it surely does. And it flies in the face of reason to think that it wouldn't. It would be a little bit like arguing that if you enforce the speed limit on the highway, people won't slow down. The fact is that when there is a reason not to use, in this case random student drug testing, the students do use less drugs. And that's really the goal. Because it's very hard to argue that it's a good idea for kids to be using drugs.

MARGOT ADLER: Marsha, why are you opposed to drug testing?

MARSHA ROSENBAUM: Well, I agree that it's not a good idea for young people to be using drugs. But I think that the way to get young people to reduce their drug use and reduce drug problems if they do use drugs has been a method that we've been using and testing for decades now, and that's drug education. I think there's room for improvement with drug education, but I think the school is a place for education, and that really quality drug education combined with after-school programs which keep kids busy in the highest drug-using hours, which is 3-6 p.m., extracurricular activities, and supervision, are really the key to helping our young people stay out of trouble with drugs.

MARGOT ADLER: Now Bob, you talked about studies, but the various studies that I've read present a very conflicting picture. There's no real clear evidence that drug testing lowers drug use. And, actually, when I think about it, why should it? Most kids think they're immortal, most kids don't think they'll get caught, no matter what you tell them, so why should, in fact, drug testing, you know, lower drug use?

ROBERT DUPONT: Well, let's think about what happens with the student who tests positive, because I think that's a very important concept. Most people who are opposing testing imagine that there is punishment of the student, turning this over to law enforcement, or some other kind of adverse consequence. The fact is that what happens when a student tests positive is that he or she is prohibited from continuing to participate in a particular extra-curricular activity, like football or some other activity, until they test negative. Until they show no drug use. And then their parents are involved, and they're helped to stop using drugs. They're not expelled from school, there's no record kept that is going to follow them in someplace else in their lives, but what happens is there's an intervention. And Marsha was talking about education as if it was an alternative to student drug testing, and in fact they complement each other. What the prevention is about is giving kids a reason not to use it. It's educating them about the dangers. And random student drug testing goes along with prevention and education. It's not an alternative to it, it's an enhancement. They go together.

MARGOT ADLER: Bob, is there any evidence that drug testing reduces peer pressure?

ROBERT DUPONT: I think it changes the peer-pressure, because it establishes the fact that there's seriousness on the part of the adults about the no-use message. An example of this is another school, a study found that after the implementation of random student drug testing, the students were more likely--there was an 11 percent increase in the students who were participating in athletics once the testing was going on.

MARGOT ADLER: Now, Marsha, are there any cases in which you would test a student for drugs?

MARSHA ROSENBAUM: Certainly. I would test for suspicion. If there is suspicion that a student is using drugs, and the suspicion would be based on observation, then I can see that in order to make a determination that a drug test would be fine. But this random, across-the-board student drug testing is not for suspicion. It's random.

MARGOT ADLER: And Marsha, would this be only about using drugs on school property, or just any kind of suspicion about drug use?

MARSHA ROSENBAUM: I think that parents really need to be involved in this kind of an issue and this kind of a decision. I think that school is for education, it's for learning, and that it's at home where medical issues are addressed, and medical problems, and so I would say, if a parent suspects that their child has a drug problem, is using, and they want to find out, it's very simple. You go right down to Rite Aid, or Walgreens, or Sav-On, and for \$20 you pick up a drug test. And you administer this drug test in the privacy of your own home, the results obviously are confidential, or you can go to your own physician. But I don't see why the school

now has become a place for random testing, for health decisions. And why are the taxpayers picking up the tab on this? Let parents do their job.

MARGOT ADLER: Now, Bob, student drug testing programs vary. Some are testing for athletes, some test any student involved in extracurricular activities, some test students who drive to school. First of all, if you had your way, which students do you think should be tested?

ROBERT DUPONT: I think all students should be tested. The limitation to extracurricular activities and athletics is a legal imposition, not a clinical or a practical aspect.

MARGOT ADLER: What do you mean by that? You mean because...

ROBERT DUPONT: Well, because the opponents of testing have taken this issue in public schools, in private schools there's no barrier comparable to the public schools, but it's been litigated to the Supreme Court around two areas. One is with athletes, and that was in 1995, and the other was around random testing for all extracurricular activities, and that was in 2002. And in both cases, the U.S. Supreme Court said this was a legitimate activity of the school to be involved in. And I think one of the things that Marsha's saying, or many things she's saying, I agree with. I'm all for prevention, I'm all for counseling, I'm all for parents getting involved, I thought her statement about parents doing drug testing was a very eloquent one, and I certainly endorse that. I'm not saying that every school in the country should do this. What I'm interested in, and what the federal government, by the way, is interested in, is funding, is evaluations of this. I'm interested in more schools trying this out, and seeing how

it works for them. And schools learning from other schools that are doing this. This will be decided, not by some federal mandate. This will be decided by parents and school communities together, about what they want to do. And what I'm interested in is having a wider experience with this. And I think, based on my contact with schools that are doing this, that as that happens, the fears about this, including the concerns about cost, are going to diminish, and people will see this as a useful component, but I'm prepared for people to decide otherwise. That's fine.

MARGOT ADLER: Now, how costly is it?

ROBERT DUPONT: Well, it's going to cost something in the neighborhood of \$10-20 a test to deliver the test, and if you did 25 percent of the students, if you had 1,000 students, you'd test 250 of them a year, for example. It's not a lot of money in terms of the overall school budget. It's not insignificant, and I think Marsha's right about that. The school has to think about this in terms of other, alternative uses of the funds. I think when schools make that calculation, many of them, I'm not going to say most, even, but many of them will decide that this is what they want to do. I think you've got to remember what the consequences are for kids using drugs and not knowing about it, not intervening. Oftentimes, the consequences are very severe, including death.

MARGOT ADLER: Marsha, a lot of anti-drug testing advocates say that drug testing violates the student's right to privacy. But there are a lot of rights that children don't have, you know, they

can't vote until they're 18, they can't drive until they're 16. Can they claim a right to privacy? The Supreme Court has certainly said that students have only a limited right to privacy.

MARSHA ROSENBAUM: I think that, and the Supreme Court's decision, of course, stands, but the question is, what does random student drug testing... Setting aside the privacy issue personally, for the kids, what message does that send to them about the Constitution, about innocent until proven guilty? What is that message? I think that what's really important to kids is relationships with adults, with teachers, and I think that what across-the-board student drug testing says is that, no matter what you're doing, no matter what you're saying, I don't trust you. It's saying, I am going to test your bodily fluids to make sure you're telling me the truth, and I don't think that sits well with teenagers. I think in order for them to become trustworthy, they need to be trusted. We need to give them an opportunity to make responsible decisions.

MARGOT ADLER: Bob, what do you think?

ROBERT DUPONT: You'd have a hard time selling that idea to a parent whose kid has died from a drug overdose, for example, that you need to trust them. The problem is, when people are using drugs, honesty is one of the first things that's gone. But let's go back to the larger issue. I got off an airplane this morning, flying to Washington from Chicago. I couldn't get on that plane until I went through a search. Is that saying that people didn't trust me? What was that saying? That was a search that was random. I mean, they're not random, it's universal, it's more than random. But it certainly was not indicated. There wasn't any individualized suspicion. This is a normal part of life in a community. And the experience of kids in schools that are doing random student drug testing is not that they feel untrusted. They feel valued more. Now, I'm not going to say everybody. There are some people who have exactly the view that Marsha is talking about, but when you do studies and ask the students, what do they think about it, the large majority of them have positive feelings about the testing, partly because they're... Most of them don't use drugs, and they're concerned about their friends and other students who do use drugs, and so they're very happy to have somebody finally acting in an adult way about the drug problem with kids.

MARSHA ROSENBAUM: Coming to school is different than getting on an airplane when we have just been threatened with a terrorist attack. These kids are students, they're teenagers. So I think that analogy is absolutely wrong. And if we're going to look at research, let me just note that the largest, largest study ever done on student drug testing--96,000 kids in 900 schools, nothing like that has ever been done--published in a reputable peer review journal, found that, in fact, they looked at schools with and without drug testing, and guess what? No difference. No difference.

MARGOT ADLER: In some schools, drug tests are used for kids that are in extracurricular activities. And yet, it seems to me that those students might be the ones that are least going to use drugs. The ones that are busy, and active, and part of the school community. Isn't that unfair?

ROBERT DUPONT: The reason that happens is because of the opponents of testing.

MARGOT ADLER: Marsha?

MARSHA ROSENBAUM: Wait a second. I think that the kids who are in extracurricular activities ought to be in extracurricular activities, and many of them don't use drugs, in fact, most students don't use drugs. Let's face it. Or if they do, they don't do it on a very regular basis. So I think extracurricular activities, that's the one place that you don't want to put up barriers for. You don't want to find ways to exclude kids from extracurricular activities, because what we know about those, and again, it's an issue of resources and bringing the kids into the school environment, what we know is that kids who participate in after-school activities and extracurriculars are the ones who have the least number of drug problems, they're the ones who get in the least amount of trouble generally, including violence, they're the ones who get better grades, they excel. So why would we put up a barrier like drug testing to extracurricular activities?

MARGOT ADLER: Should students who test positive for drugs be taken out of extracurricular activities?

ROBERT DUPONT: Until they stop, not using, absolutely. I think that that's very important. And...

MARGOT ADLER: Why?

ROBERT DUPONT: Because they need a reason not to use. They want to participate in the extracurricular activities. You know, Marsha calls it a barrier, but the studies that have been done about participation in extracurricular activities with and without drug testing is that when drug testing is done you have higher rates, not lower rates. It is not a barrier to the participation of students.

MARGOT ADLER: Wouldn't they feel marginalized and, in fact, start using more if they were cut out of extracurricular activities?

ROBERT DUPONT: Well, what happens is the people stop using the drugs, and they go back to their extracurricular activities, and who loses in that deal?

MARSHA ROSENBAUM: Well, that would be ideal, but in fact, what happens, what we have already, we have a third of American teenagers dropping out of high school, so what happens is they get excluded from extracurriculars, they are marginalized at school, and eventually they are suspended, and they drop out of school altogether. There are people who believe that drug testing is going to increase the number of student dropouts, including the National Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors, who say that drug...dropout rates will soar.

ROBERT DUPONT: Drugs...Drug use gets kids to drop out, not drug testing. Reducing drug use will reduce dropouts. So it's not drug testing that gets kids out of school, it's drug use. And it's people who are not attending to the drug use of those students that are encouraging the dropouts that are a national embarrassment, and a tragedy for so many people.

MARGOT ADLER: I think this is where we're going to have to leave the debate. Thank you both so much for joining us.

ROBERT DUPONT: Thank you very much.

MARSHA ROSENBAUM: Thank you very much.

MARGOT ADLER: Dr. Marsha Rosenbaum is director of the San Francisco office of the Drug Policy Alliance. She is the author of "Safety First: A Reality-Based Approach To Teens, Drugs, and Drug Education." Dr. Robert DuPont is president of The Institute for Behavior and Health, a public policy organization that formulates policy to reduce substance abuse. He was the first director of NIDA, the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Okay, last time. This is drugs. [sizzling noise] This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?

MARGOT ADLER: It was a memorable ad, and it was fun to parody. But did it keep kids from using drugs? We'll talk about which anti-drug ads work, and which are counterproductive. Stay with us.

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MARGOT ADLER: This is Justice Talking. I'm Margot Adler. Today we're talking about kids, drugs, and the controversy over student drug testing. Although the Supreme Court ruled in 2002 that drug testing students in extracurricular activities was legal, many parents still think student drug testing invades their children's privacy. Holly Hammett is one such parent. Holly and her family live in a small community in Silex, Missouri. Her children, Taylor, age 14, Evan, age 12, attend the town's K-12 school. This past June, she learned that they both would be required to take a drug test if they wanted to participate in any extracurricular activities this fall. Holly allowed her children to make their own decisions about whether to submit to a drug test. She nonetheless views the programs as an infringement of her children's rights. Justice Talking's Julie Mashack talked with her about her position.

JULIE MASHACK: Tell me how the drug-testing program at your children's school came about.

HOLLY HAMMETT: Well, at the end of the year last year, we got a letter home from school, the last day of school, saying that the school board had implemented this mandatory drug testing policy for any student wishing to become involved with extracurricular activities. We knew nothing about this at all. We had no idea that they were even considering this. Then a letter came home about a month ago, saying that on the 17th, anybody who wanted to participate would come in and take the test at the school on the 17th, with a signed consent form.

JULIE MASHACK: These are students that are enrolled in any extracurricular activity?

HOLLY HAMMETT: Yes.

JULIE MASHACK: What activities do your children currently participate in?

HOLLY HAMMETT: My son was elected student council president, which he will not be able to do, and my daughter, in the past, last year she was a cheerleader, she's played basketball, she's involved with SADD, Students Against Destructive Decisions.

JULIE MASHACK: Tell me why you don't want your children to take the test.

HOLLY HAMMETT: Our family ... We feel that it is an invasion of their privacy. That it's not the school's business to police what the children are doing outside of school. They're there to educate the children.

JULIE MASHACK: Now, tell me why your daughter in the end has opted to take the test?

HOLLY HAMMETT: First of all, without being involved in extracurricular activities, your chances of getting scholarships are pretty low, so we need those scholarships, since she's now going into the 9th grade, so that's something that she's looking at. Also, she wants to be with her friends. You know, she wants to be involved in all the fun things that every child has a right to be able to do in school. You know, I'm trying to tell her one thing about standing up for your rights, but on the other hand, if I do that, she's the one who has to pay the price.

JULIE MASHACK: And your son? On what grounds has he refused to take the test?

HOLLY HAMMETT: Because he feels that he has nothing to prove. That his... Two of the teachers, two administrators at the school, signed papers saying that they thought that he was a fine student, he'd make a good student council president, his classmates felt that he would be a good student council president, why does he need to prove himself? He's done nothing wrong.

JULIE MASHACK: And how big is the school body to begin with?

HOLLY HAMMETT: Kindergarten through 12th grade. There are only about 300 students, maybe a few more. Very small. Very small school.

JULIE MASHACK: And now, do you think that drugs are a problem in your child's school?

HOLLY HAMMETT: No. There are drugs. There, no doubt... There are drugs. But is it a problem? No. The money... The school is paying for the drug testing, there are more positive ways to address this issue, not through the wasting of money on drug testing. The children that they need to be helping are not the children that are going to be taking the drug test anyway. We have a D.A.R.E. program in the 5th grade, and that's a wonderful program. But that's 5th grade. And then, when they get into high school and all, there's nothing. There's nothing.

JULIE MASHACK: Well, thanks so much, Holly.

HOLLY HAMMETT: Okay, well thank you.

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MARGOT ADLER: Many schools around the country already have student drug testing programs in place. The Bush administration wants to increase its 2007 budget for student drug testing in schools. I spoke with Dr. Bertha Madras, the deputy director for Demand Reduction in the Office of National Drug Control Policy. I asked her why the administration wants to increase the budget for student drug testing now.

BERTHA MADRAS: Because there is a need for student drug testing. Let me try to explain the reasons for it. There... 50 percent of high school seniors have tried an illegal drug in the past...in their lifetime. This is an inordinately high number. There is a need to try to reduce drugs by prevention methods. Student drug testing is an effective prevention method. It's one of others that should be used in schools, but it is an important one. It serves as a deterrent for children to say I can't use drugs, I may be tested. It also serves to identify students who may be abusing drugs, and therefore give them the help that they need. And finally, for those who are in fact on the slope to addiction, it can identify them, and it helps steer them into appropriate treatments.

MARGOT ADLER: Now, most surveys show that drug use is down among teens. It's been declining slowly for a number of years. Why increase testing in schools when drug use is declining?

BERTHA MADRAS: The very positive news is that drug use is declining. And we're very encouraged by it. In fact, it's declined by 19 percent in the past four years, and in fact, that represents 700,000 fewer new drug users in the past few years. The number who are using drugs is still a significant proportion of our youthful populations, and the consequences of early drug use are alarming, from my point of view. First of all, the younger a child starts using drugs, the more likely it is that they're going to become addicted. Drug use is associated with increasing risky behaviors in adolescents. It's associated with poor school performance. It's associated with increased violence, increased accidents. For so many reasons, there is a compelling need to prevent drug use in high schools, for every child.

MARGOT ADLER: With student drug testing, who do you think should be tested, and when?

BERTHA MADRAS: The federal programs are quite specific as to who should be tested. It is students, and I call them children, because they're not age of majority, students who engage in extracurricular activities that are sponsored by the schools, which means athletes, or other extracurricular activities like debating teams, competitive activities that they represent the school. And so the federal programs are targeted towards this cohort. But schools make their own decisions as to who they test. I think the most critical criteria is that it should be random. It should not be for cause. And there are 2 reasons why it shouldn't be for cause. One is that parents and teachers and nurses, as well as physicians, believe it or not, are not very good at identifying people who are using drugs.

MARGOT ADLER: Thank you so much for talking with me.

BERTHA MADRAS: You're very welcome.

MARGOT ADLER: Dr. Bertha Madras is the deputy director for Demand Reduction in the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

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MARGOT ADLER: Each year, the National Institute on Drug Abuse funds a study looking at teen drug use. In 2005, it looked at the drug use of 50,000 students in 8th, 10th, and 12th grades, in 400 public and private schools. I talked with Dr. Nora Volkow, the director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIDA, to find out the results of the study. She is an expert on drug addiction and brain imaging. I asked her how the 2005 study compares to those of years past.

NORA VOLKOW: Well, we have... The latest results we have are the ones from 2005. And what we saw in 2005 was that continued decrease in the abuse of illegal substances in high school individuals. And some of the changes were more dramatic for certain drugs than others. For example, interestingly, we saw significant decrease in methamphetamine abuse in 12th graders. On the other hand, we've continued to see increases in the abuse of prescription medications across 8th, 10th, and 12th graders.

MARGOT ADLER: And in the places where you saw an increase in student drug use, in inhalants and prescription drugs, why do think that increase is occurring?

NORA VOLKOW: Well, in terms of the abuse of inhalant compounds, we believe that these may be due to the fact that we have not paid as much attention in these particular type of compounds as we have in the past.

MARGOT ADLER: Give us some of them. Which are some names that we would know?

NORA VOLKOW: Well, to start with, gasoline can be inhaled, and you can have cement. A wide variety of products can be extracted, like in sprays or cream, you can extract the chemicals that allow you to volatilize the substances, and you can inhale them, and that can make people feel high. So they are really widespread.

MARGOT ADLER: What prescription drugs are students in high schools abusing?

NORA VOLKOW: Well, the... They are abusing 3 general classes of prescription medications. Pain killers, stimulant medications, and sedative hypnotic drugs. The most frequently abused are pain killers, such as oxycontin, Vicodin, Demerol, so that's one. The other one, the stimulant medications, those are drugs like Ritalin, like Adderall, that are typically used for the treatment of Attention Deficit Disorder.

MARGOT ADLER: One of the things I noticed in the survey that we were talking about

is that there were some very interesting findings about student drug use by race. I was struck that, when it comes to race, blacks use fewer drugs than whites and Hispanics.

NORA VOLKOW: Yeah, and that's a fascinating finding, because in the African-Americans, we have lower rates of abuse of drugs, both legal and illegal, and this has been documented not just by monitoring the future survey, but also by other epidemiological surveys.

MARGOT ADLER: As you've been looking at teens' attitudes towards drugs, what do you see as changing?

NORA VOLKOW: For one, we're seeing the change in the greater awareness that there are detrimental effects to the use of both legal and illegal substances. On the other hand, we're seeing the sense that it's all right to use some of these prescription medications. We live in a culture where there is an increased utilization of medications, not only to treat diseases, but actually to improve performance. So in this culture, this leads to the false perception that if a medication is prescribed, it's safe, when in fact, it is not safe at all, and it entails many of the same risks as some of the illegal substances.

MARGOT ADLER: Thank you so much for joining us on our show. NORA VOLKOW: You're very welcome.

MARGOT ADLER: Dr. Nora Volkow is the director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, or NIDA, and is considered a leading expert on drug addiction and brain imaging.

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MARGOT ADLER: As we heard, the government has funded a number of ad campaigns over the years to prevent teens from using drugs. Some work, and some don't. To find out which ads are more effective, I talked with Joe Cappella, a professor at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. He has studied the effectiveness of the government's anti-drug campaign. I asked Joe Cappella what makes for an effective drug ad?

JOE CAPPELLA: The one class of ads that we did find that worked pretty well were ads that really informed kids about what other kids were doing. These ads addressed a particular belief that young people have about marijuana use that's incorrect, and that is that...

MARGOT ADLER: That everybody's doing it?

JOE CAPPELLA: Correct. They... Kids really overestimate how many of their friends and peers are users on a regular basis of marijuana.

MARGOT ADLER: Let's listen to an example of an anti-drug ad that worked particularly well.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: The average kid doesn't get straight As.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Doesn't get straight As.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: The average kid eats french fries.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I could live on pizza and ice cream.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Gummy bears.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: The average kid trusts their friends more than anybody.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The average kid is totally bored.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Totally bored.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The average kid has a lot more on their mind than you think.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: The average kid is pretty strange.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The average kid has been offered pot.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Has been offered pot.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The average kid thinks everybody else smokes it.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: But the average kid doesn't.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The average kid is anything but.

MARGOT ADLER: So, why was this ad successful?

JOE CAPPELLA: We think it was successful for a couple of reasons. One is, it doesn't preach to kids. It doesn't tell them what to do. And it focuses specifically on a belief that a lot of kids have that's incorrect, and that is the belief that so many other kids are using that if they're not using, they're somehow very different, not a part of the norm.

MARGOT ADLER: Let's listen to an example of an anti-drug ad that didn't work particularly well.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The first drug I did was pot. I didn't think I would ever, like, have a real problem with it. I thought I would just hang out with my friends, smoke pot and drink or whatever, on the weekends, things like that. But after a while it got worse, and I started doing it more, and then I started doing it by myself, it led me into other drugs. It's like a doorway, because once I started and then, there wasn't nothing I did more. I also smoked crack, hash, angel dust, everything. I never thought I would be like that. Like, I was stupid. You have to think about your consequences.

MARGOT ADLER: Well, I'm going to ask you why you thought this one didn't work, but my assumption is that so many kids' experience is different from that particular person in the ad, that I would imagine they just didn't believe it.

JOE CAPPELLA: They didn't believe it. The argument that's made here is a classic argument about marijuana, that it's a gateway drug to other drugs. And that belief, in our research, has been shown to be reasonably well-accepted by the low-risk kids, but denied by the high-risk kids. When this ad was shown to a sample of adolescents, the ad had deleterious consequences, with intentions to use actually increasing in the high-risk group.

MARGOT ADLER: So you found that it actually led people to do more drugs?

JOE CAPPELLA: We don't have behavioral data, because we weren't going to gather information about people that was indicative of illegal activity. But it was associated with measures of intention to use, or intention to try. Yes, those intentions were increased.

MARGOT ADLER: Are there different messages for print versus audio versus video in these ads?

JOE CAPPELLA: I think that's certainly true. In the print domain, you're going to see, obviously, more elaborate messages that essentially make the argument that is present in the ads, the reasons for not using drugs. And part of what is central to a lot of the ads that are created for television and to some extent radio, is the ability to make sure that their ad gets noticed, whether that's a lot of fast editing and intense music and vibrant colors, there are a variety of techniques that are used to break through the clutter and gain the audience's attention.

MARGOT ADLER: If you were in charge of producing an anti-drug ad, what message would you emphasize, and who would you target?

JOE CAPPELLA: There's no question that the kind of ad that gets made and who gets targeted are completely dependent on the drug that is being targeted. If you were to target inhalants, which is a kind of drug that tends to appeal to younger kids, you really need to make ads that are going to appeal to, and put ads into places where kids who are in 8th grade are more likely to see them than kids who are in 12th grade. I would make sure that my ads were never over-the-top, making claims that were unreasonable, that were exaggerated.

MARGOT ADLER: Joe, thanks for talking with me.

JOE CAPPELLA: It was my pleasure.

MARGOT ADLER: That was Joe Cappella, a professor at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. He studied the effectiveness of the government's anti-drug campaign.

What do you think about testing students for drugs and steroid use? Tell us your view. You can share your thoughts on our web site, [justicetalking.org](http://justicetalking.org). While there, you can also listen to past shows, or sign up to podcast our show. Thanks for joining me. I hope you'll tune in next week. I'm Margot Adler.

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