

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

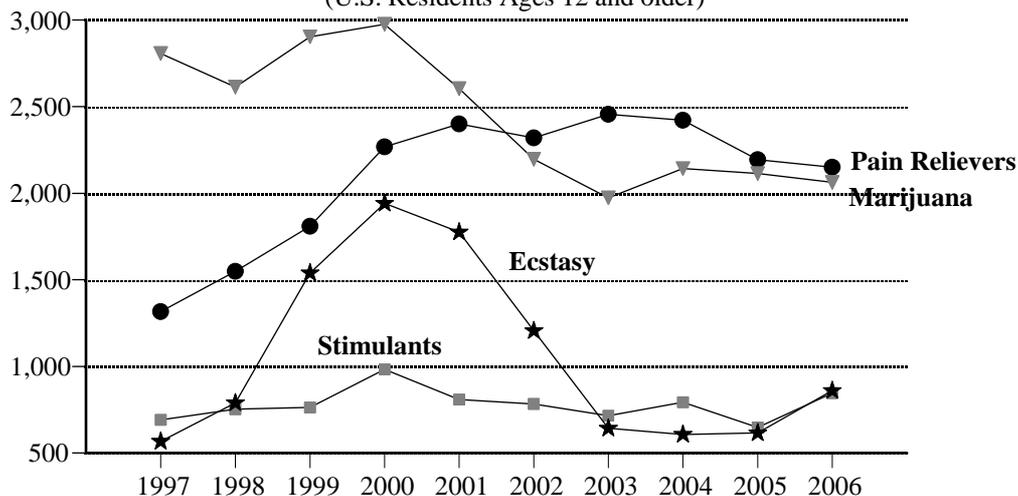
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## *First Time Users of Pain Relievers Continue to Surpass All Other Drugs; Number of New Ecstasy and Stimulant Users Increases*

More than 2.1 million persons ages 12 or older used prescription-type pain relievers\* for the first time in 2006, according to recently released data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). While the number of new users of pain relievers has been decreasing since 2003, it continues to be the drug category with the largest number of new initiates since surpassing marijuana in 2002. The number of first-time marijuana users has declined significantly, from nearly 3.0 million in 2000 to slightly more than 2.0 million in 2006. Other recent changes in the initiation of illicit drugs include increases in the number of first time ecstasy users (from 615,000 in 2005 to 860,000 in 2006) and in the number of first-time nonmedical users of prescription-type stimulants\* (from 647,000 to 845,000). Previous research has found that changes in initiation levels “are often leading indicators of emerging patterns of substance use” (p. 49).

### **Estimated Number (in thousands) of New Users of Pain Relievers, Marijuana, Ecstasy, and Stimulants per Year, 1997-2006**

(U.S. Residents Ages 12 and older)



\*Use of pain relievers and stimulants refers to the nonmedical use of prescription-type pain relievers and stimulants and does not include over-the-counter drugs.

NOTE: Estimates from 1997 to 2001 were produced using data from the 2002-2004 NSDUH and are based on initiation during that year. Estimates from 2002 to 2006 refer to initiation in the 12 months prior to the survey, and are produced independently based on the data from the survey conducted that year.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings, 2007*. Available online at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/p0000016.htm#2k6>.

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