



Dateline: Ohio

January 2008-June 2008

## Drug Abuse Trends in Rural Ohio: A Targeted Response Initiative Part II: Crack and Powdered Cocaine

### High Availability of Cocaine

The OSAM Network has consistently documented high levels of crack abuse in all urban regions of the state. According to the Rural TRI, availability of crack was also rated high in most rural areas except Preble, Fulton and Medina counties (Figure 1). For example, a law enforcement officer from Meigs County commented, *“Crack is like wildflowers growing down here.”* A user from Pickaway County noted, *“I used to go out looking for OxyContin, and they’d say ‘I got crack.’ I can get crack anywhere in this town. They take one person down, and another sets up a shop.”*

Availability of powdered cocaine was generally rated lower than that of crack (Figure 2). However, some participants in Medina, Meigs, Defiance, and Fulton counties reported that powdered cocaine was at times more readily available than crack cocaine.

### Rural-Urban Differences

Users reported that in rural areas cocaine dealing is more discrete, and “street corner” sales are uncommon. Compared to urban regions, cocaine prices in rural areas are typically higher and the quality reportedly lower. For example, a gram of crack sells for \$30-\$70 in Toledo and for about \$100 in Defiance County. Powdered cocaine sells for \$50 per gram in Columbus, but up to \$80 in Pickaway County. As a result, cocaine users from rural communities often travel to urban regions to obtain drugs. A user from Pickaway County indicated, *“You got a lot of major dealers there [Columbus]. It’s all small time here [Pickaway County], that don’t buy a whole lot, and you got to jack the price up a little bit more...”* Crack users in Defiance County reported difficulty obtaining crack paraphernalia (i.e. glass pipes, “rose stems”) and saw this as a barrier to use. As one user commented, *“I’m not gonna waste the rock [crack] by letting it roll around on a piece of foil...”*

Results of the Rural TRI suggest that cocaine use has spread beyond the urban centers of the state and presents a serious public health issue in many rural communities.

Figure 1. Availability of crack in selected rural and urban counties.

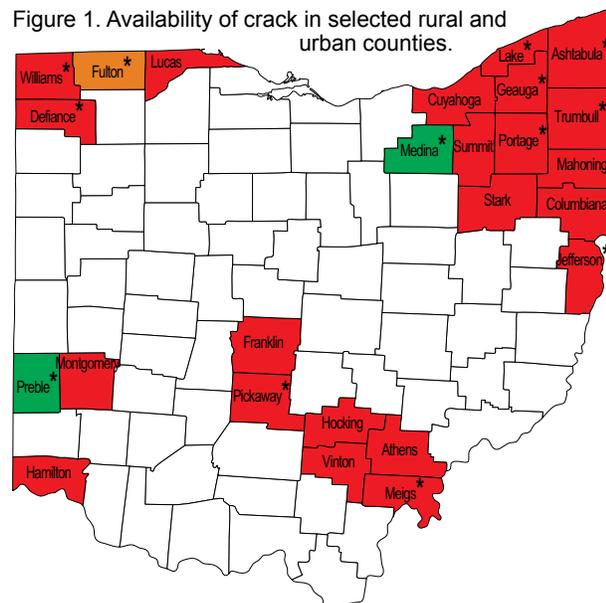
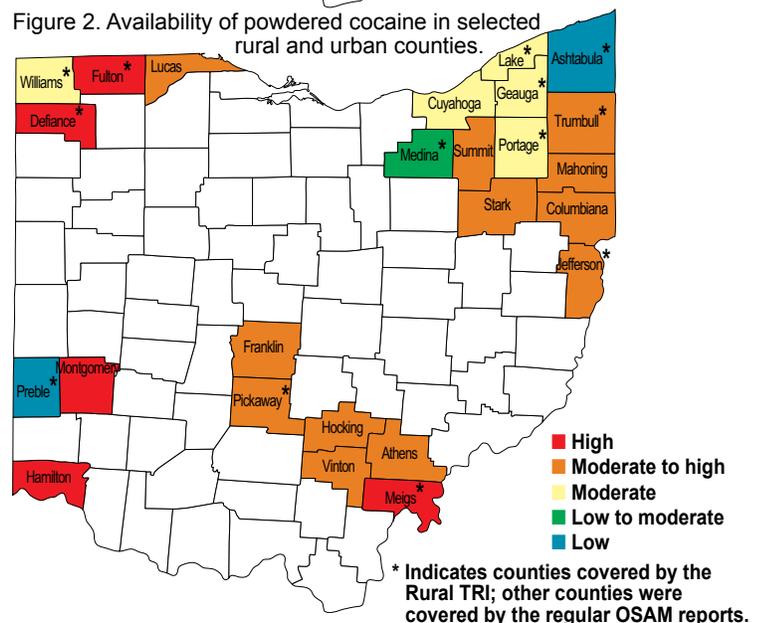


Figure 2. Availability of powdered cocaine in selected rural and urban counties.



OSAM-O-GRAMS report key findings of the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring (OSAM) Network. Regional Epidemiologists located throughout the state use qualitative and quantitative data to provide semiannual reports of substance abuse trends. The OSAM Network is funded by the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services by contract to Wright State University and by subcontract to the University of Akron. This OSAM-O-GRAM is based on the June 2008 OSAM Network meeting.

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