

## NATIONAL FORENSIC LABORATORY INFORMATION SYSTEM

### *Survey of Crime Laboratory Drug Chemistry Sections*

April 2013



### Office of Diversion Control U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

Conducted by:



Data from this survey are being collected for the National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS). The purpose of this survey is to collect up-to-date information about laboratories and laboratory systems that routinely conduct analyses of drug samples submitted by State, local, and Federal law enforcement agencies as the result of seizures, purchases, or finds. This survey is administered approximately every 4 years.

The data provided by your laboratory will be used to support the operation of the NFLIS data system. Your individual survey data will be kept confidential. Analysis of the survey data will be used to enhance the NFLIS and further understand how crime laboratories operate and the issues they face. Survey data will only be presented in aggregate form with data from other laboratories.

You can complete and return the 2012 NFLIS Survey of Crime Laboratory Drug Chemistry Sections in the following ways:

- **Option 1:** By submitting online at <http://www.nflis.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/>.
- **Option 2:** By mail using the enclosed addressed stamped envelope.
- **Option 3:** By fax to the attention of Gina Geercken at 919-485-5555.
- **Option 4:** By requesting an electronic version of the survey by e-mailing [nflis-survey2012@rti.org](mailto:nflis-survey2012@rti.org).

**Please complete and return the survey by May 13, 2013.**

If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please contact Ellen Causey or Gina Geercken at 1-800-285-2186.

**SECTION A: ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**A1. Please review your laboratory information below. If any of the following information is incorrect, please provide the updated information in the space provided.**

**[LABEL WITH INFORMATION PLACED HERE]**

**Updated Information:**

Laboratory/laboratory system name: \_\_\_\_\_

Laboratory/headquarters mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Laboratory/headquarters FedEx address  
(if different from mailing address): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax number: \_\_\_\_\_

Laboratory Website: \_\_\_\_\_

**A2. Please provide the following information:**

Laboratory/laboratory system director name: \_\_\_\_\_

Laboratory/laboratory system director e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Drug chemistry section laboratory contact name: \_\_\_\_\_

Drug chemistry section laboratory contact e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**A3. Which best describes the operation of the laboratory/laboratory system?**

- Operated by a Federal agency
- Operated by a State agency
- Operated by a regional entity/agency/task force
- Operated by a county
- Operated by a city or municipality
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**A4. Does your laboratory/laboratory system have a laboratory information management system (LIMS)?**

- Yes ➡ **CONTINUE TO A5**
- No ➡ **CONTINUE TO A6**

**A5. What type of LIMS is utilized by your laboratory/laboratory system?**

- BARD
  - BEAST
  - Forensic Advantage
  - IBM AS 400 Based System
  - Justice Trax
  - LabVantage
  - Lab Ware
  - NFLIS LIMS (NIMS)
  - Que-Tel
  - R. J. Lee Solutions
  - StarLIMS
  - Other data management system (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - No computerized LIMS (please specify process for documenting case management): \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**A6. Does your laboratory routinely conduct drug chemistry (non-toxicology) analyses?**

- Yes ➡ **CONTINUE TO A7**
- No ➡ **STOP**, thank you for completing questions A1–A6. **Please return this entire questionnaire as instructed in the information box on the front cover of this survey.**





**B2. Does your laboratory/laboratory system have a policy for analyzing/working all drug cases submitted to the laboratory?**

Yes

No ➡ Approximately what percentage? \_\_\_\_\_%  Not Tracked

**B3. What type of laboratory or laboratories were drug chemistry cases outsourced to during calendar year 2012? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)**

Did not outsource ➡ **SKIP TO B5**

Other public or not-for-profit laboratory within your State

Other public or not-for-profit laboratory outside your State

Commercial laboratory within your State

Commercial laboratory outside your State

Federal laboratory

**B4. Why did your laboratory/laboratory system outsource drug chemistry cases for analysis during calendar year 2012?**

To reduce backlog

Lacked capability to conduct the required drug chemistry analysis

Not accredited

Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**B5. At the end of calendar year 2012, how many drug chemistry cases were in backlog (cases that are unanalyzed for 30 days or more after submission to the laboratory)? Please include unassigned cases and cases currently being processed/worked on but not completed through final report.**

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**B6. What were the major contributors to your backlog? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)**

Influx of emerging drugs

Need to develop testing methods

Loss of staff/FTE

Training responsibilities

Increase in testimony time

Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**B7. How does your current drug chemistry caseload compare to your caseload of 1 year ago?**

- Greatly increased (> 20%)
- Moderately increased (10%–20%)
- Slightly increased (5%–10%)
- No change
- Slightly decreased (10%–20%)
- Moderately decreased (10%–20%)
- Greatly decreased (> 20%)

**B8. What is the current average drug chemistry Turnaround Time (TaT) for your laboratory? TaT refers to the time from submission of a case to the laboratory until the report is administratively approved (measured in days or portion of days).**

Number of Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Laboratory Systems Only – please provide range (low and high) for laboratories in your system:  
\_\_\_\_\_ (example: 71–163)

**B9. How does your current drug chemistry TaT compare to 1 year ago?**

- Greatly increased (> 20%)
- Moderately increased (10%–20%)
- Slightly increased (5%–10%)
- No change
- Slightly decreased (10%–20%)
- Moderately decreased (10%–20%)
- Greatly decreased (> 20%)

## SECTION C: LABORATORY DRUG CHEMISTRY POLICIES

**C1. What are the key reasons your laboratory does NOT analyze drug chemistry cases that have been submitted? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- All submitted cases are analyzed
- Laboratory case acceptance guidelines
- Case dismissed/no defendant
- Guilty plea/plea bargain
- Adjudicated without forensic evidence testing
- No formal or specific request for analysis is received from arresting officer, submitting agency, or prosecutor's office
- Items submitted for destruction only
- Presumptive Identification
- Insufficient sample
- Workload pressures
- Insufficient funding
- State statutory guidelines do not require analysis (e.g., only felony-generating substances are analyzed)
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**C2. Are all cases involving drug seizures or drugs found by the agencies you serve submitted to the laboratory?**

- Yes ➡ **SKIP TO QUESTION C4**
- Varies by agency
- No
- Don't know ➡ **SKIP TO QUESTION C4**

**C3. What are the key reasons that a case seized or found by the agencies you serve would NOT be submitted to your laboratory? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- Field tested cases not submitted unless confirmatory testing is needed
- No defendant is identified
- Defendant may plead guilty or plea bargain prior to or without submission to the laboratory
- Case dismissed prior to submission to the laboratory
- Some drug cases are submitted to another laboratory/other laboratories
- Prosecutor has not signed off on the case
- Legislative decision, policy, or law dictates what is submitted
- Laboratory budgetary constraints
- Submitting agency budgetary constraints
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_



**C4. What proportion of a drug seizure is routinely submitted to your laboratory?**

- Only a sample of the total amount seized
- Varying amounts
- The entire seizure ➡ **SKIP TO SECTION D**

**C5. What are the key reason(s) that law enforcement agencies submit only a sample of the amount seized? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- Submitting agency has a policy to retain the evidence
- Laboratory does not have room to store entire seizure
- Laboratory has policy on evidence submission amounts
- Security reasons concerning the laboratory storing the seizure
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION D: DRUG CHEMISTRY TECHNICAL PROCEDURES

**D1. Does your drug chemistry section use the following presumptive identification methods? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- Visual ID with reference source
- Chemical analysis (color tests)
- TLC

**D2. Does your drug chemistry section use the following analytical instruments? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- FTIR
- GC/FID
- GC/IRD
- GC/MS
- GC/MS-MS
- HPLC
- LC/MS
- LC/MS-MS or LC-HRMS
- Microscopic examination
- Spectrophotometer – UV, visible, fluorescence or Raman
- TOF-DART
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**D3. Does your laboratory perform quantitative analyses?**

- Yes, the laboratory/entire laboratory system performs quantitative analyses
- Yes, select laboratories in the laboratory system perform quantitative analyses
- No ➡ **SKIP TO SECTION E**

**D4. Under what circumstances does your laboratory/laboratories perform quantitative analyses for the following drugs? Amphetamine type stimulants are synthetic stimulants including amphetamine, methamphetamine, methcathinone, ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, MDMA, methylphenidate, other phenethylamines, and ecstasy-group substances. (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)**

| <b>Circumstances</b>                               | <b>Cannabis/THC</b>      | <b>Cocaine</b>           | <b>Heroin</b>            | <b>Amphetamine Type Stimulants</b> | <b>Narcotic Analgesics</b> | <b>Other Pharmaceuticals</b> | <b>Other (specify):</b>  | <b>Other (specify):</b>  |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Special request from funding agency                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| State, municipal, or Federal Statutory Requirement | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Laboratory routinely quantitates this drug         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Request from prosecutor(s)                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other:   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## SECTION E: ANALYSTS' NOTES, EMERGING DRUGS, AND NFLIS ACTIVITIES

**E1. Are your drug analysts' notes recorded?**

- Yes  
 No ➡ **SKIP TO E3**

**E2. How are your drug analysts' notes stored? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- Analyst notes (electronic)  
 Analyst notes (hardcopy)  
 LIMS/Data management system  
 Case report to prosecutor (hardcopy)  
 Case report to prosecutor (electronic)  
 Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**E3. Under what circumstances does your laboratory identify non-controlled drugs? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- Do not identify non-controlled drugs ➡ **SKIP TO E5**  
 Clandestine laboratories  
 Criminal Investigations  
 Special requests, by, e.g., a local official; Federal government  
 Drug of interest (not yet controlled): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**E4. If a non-controlled drug is identified, how is the information recorded? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- Analyst notes (electronic)  
 Analyst notes (hardcopy)  
 LIMS/Data management system  
 Case report to prosecutor (hardcopy)  
 Case report to prosecutor (electronic)  
 Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**E5. Does your laboratory routinely test for emerging drugs? For this survey, emerging drugs refer to substances, both controlled and non-controlled, that appeared in your laboratory within the last 5 years.**

- Yes, in-house only  
 Yes, sent to outside laboratory  
 Yes, combination of in-house and reference laboratory testing  
 No, do not test for emerging drugs at this time  
 Depends on the details

**E6. If an emerging drug is identified, how is the information recorded? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)**

- Information is not recorded
- LIMS/Data management system
- Other electronic system
- Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**E7. Please rate the importance of the following issues associated with the testing of controlled and non-controlled emerging drugs (drugs that appeared in your laboratory within the last 5 years).**

| Aspects of Emerging Drug Testing                              | Very Important           | Fairly Important         | Slightly Important       | Not at all Important     | No Opinion               |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Procurement of standards                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Expense associated with custom synthesis                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Identification of appropriate target analytes for metabolites | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Testing based on case history and information insufficient    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Limited analytical/instrumental methodology                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Limited specimen available for testing                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Validation of the procedures                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Limited staffing  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Limited budget  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Time commitments  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify):                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**E8. Please rate the value of the following NFLIS activities contribute to your laboratory.**

| NFLIS Activities                                   | A Lot                    | Some                     | A Little                 | None                     | No Opinion               |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Midyear and Annual Reports                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Special Reports                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Web-based Data Query System                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Web-based DEA Emerging Drug Forum (Bulletin Board) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify):                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**E9. Briefly describe any additional services you would like to see DEA provide through the NFLIS program that you think would bring value to your laboratory.**

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***Thank You for Completing this Survey!***

***Please Return the Survey as Instructed on the Front Cover.***