



Unit 43, Eurolink Centre
49 Effra Road
LONDON SW2 1BZ
020 7738 6872
matthew.hodson@gmfa.org.uk
www.gmfa.org.uk/sex

PRESS RELEASE

Gay Men Three Times More Likely To Use Drugs *New Safer Sex Campaign Launched*

LONDON, 30 October 07 -- With party season on its way, GMFA have launched a new campaign to help men plan for safer sex if they're taking drugs or drinking alcohol. New figures show that gay men are over three times more likely to use drugs than other Londoners. While 11.2% of London's population has tried drugs in the last year, the figure jumps to 37.2% for gay and bi men. Alcohol was the most frequently used drug amongst gay men, followed by poppers, marijuana, ecstasy, Viagra and cocaine. The new GMFA campaign highlights the increased risks that gay men may take when using alcohol or drugs and provides tips on planning for safer sex. The campaign also carries details of support and advice services for men who are having problems with their drug or alcohol use.

Taking drugs and drinking alcohol have both been linked with a greater likelihood of unprotected sex. A recent study found that gay men using some drugs (including crystal meth, cocaine, ecstasy and ketamine) were at least twice as likely to report unsafe sex as other men.

“Drugs and alcohol can lower inhibitions and affect your judgment,” said Matthew Hodson, Head of programmes for GMFA. “Men do things when they’re drunk or on drugs that they wouldn’t normally do, and which they know are risky. Planning for safer sex makes it less likely that you’ll end up regretting the decisions you make whilst under the influence.”

The ad uses illustrations that focus on alcohol, drug taking and sex and will appear in gay magazines across London.

As well as the magazine ads, internet banners have also been produced so that guys can click through to information on drugs and alcohol and safer sex at www.gmfa.org.uk/drugsandalcohol.

“Although taking drugs can play a role in HIV transmission, they are not the cause of HIV. Whether you take drugs or not, safer sex is the best way to reduce the risks.” added Hodson.

- Ends -

For more information about this or any other of GMFA’s campaigns and actions, contact:

Matthew Hodson
Day Phone Number: 020 7738 6872
Night Phone Number: 07792 412 834
Email: matthew.hodson@gmfa.org.uk

References:

Drugs and alcohol linked to unsafe sex:

Colfax G et al. *Club drugs and HIV infection: a review*. Clin Infect Dis 42: 1463-1469, 2006

Bolding G et al. *Use of crystal methamphetamine among gay men in London*. Addiction 101 (online edition), 2006.

Donovan C, McEwan R: *A review of the literature examining the relationship between alcohol use and HIV-related risk-taking in young people*. Addiction 90:319-328, 1995.

Cottler LB, Leukefeld C, Hoffman J, et al: *Effectiveness of HIV risk reduction initiatives among out-of-treatment non-injection drug users*. J Psychoactive Drugs 1998; 30:279-290

Burke WM, Dhopes V, Lainfester C: *A brief survey of the current sexual practices of a population admitted inpatient treatment of drug users*. J Sex Marital Ther 1996; 22:203-208

Malow RM, Ireland SJ: *HIV risk correlates among non-injection cocaine dependent men in treatment*. AIDS Educ Prev 1996; 8:226-235

Stall R, McKusick L, Wiley J, et al: *Alcohol and drug use during sexual activity and compliance with safe sex guidelines for AIDS: the AIDS behavioral research project*. Health Educ Q 1986; 13:359-371

Gay men's drug use:

Sigma Research. *Consuming Passions*. Findings from the United Kingdom Gay men's Sex Survey 2005. Published March 2007.

London drug use:

Drug Misuse Declared – Findings from the 2005/06 British Crime Survey

Notes to editor

The *Under the Influence* campaign can be seen in full at:
www.gmfa.org.uk/londonservices/adcampaigns

About GMFA:

GMFA was established in 1992 and is the UK's leading charity dedicated to gay men's health. GMFA's mission is to improve gay men's health by increasing the control they have over their own lives. We believe that the best health promotion for gay men comes from gay men themselves, and so we use the knowledge and ideas of our 170 volunteers (most of them gay men) to design and plan our thought provoking sexual health interventions. Yearly we deliver three new mass media campaigns in the gay press to disseminate up to date information regarding HIV and STIs to the gay male community. Independent surveys have concluded that our campaigns reach up to 60% of the London gay population and we are the most reliable agency at reaching gay men. In addition to this we distribute our own health magazine, FS, free to London's gay bars and clubs to further educate gay men about relationships, their bodies, general health and STIs. Annually, we deliver 1000 hours of group work to educate gay men in safer sex, and over the last fourteen years have provided courses for over 10,000 gay men. We have received international acclaim for our Sex and Sexual Health website (www.gmfa.org.uk/sex). Our other websites include a detailed listing of sexual health services available for gay men in London (www.gmfa.org.uk/londonservices) and a guide to gay sports and social groups in London (www.gmfa.org.uk/theguide). We are continually developing new health websites and are just about to launch a website for HIV positive gay men. All of our sites can be accessed at www.gmfa.org.uk.