



▶ TWG ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCH OF ITS NEWLY DESIGNED WEBSITE 1

▶ LEARN ABOUT THE SERVICES TWG PROVIDES THROUGH CORPORATE CONSULTING.....2

▶ LEARN ABOUT TWG'S PROJECTS, AND HOW OUR RESEARCH AFFECTS PUBLIC POLICY2

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Issue Brief

The Walsh Group

ADVANCING PUBLIC POLICY THROUGH RESEARCH

Each issue of the new TWG newsletter will highlight relevant areas of research and policy. The Winter Issue will focus on our projects involving illegal drugs and driving. For this inaugural issue, we provide an overview of the research we conduct and the services we provide.

The Walsh Group: An Overview

The Walsh Group (TWG) is a multi-disciplinary research and consulting firm specializing in a number of diverse areas affected by substance abuse. Our work focuses on drug testing policy, public policy, substance abuse treatment, and government relations. We address issues that arise in traffic safety, the workplace, professional sports, self-help substance abuse groups, and the education sector. Our expertise allows us to not only evaluate existing policy, but also recommend and advocate for policy creation and/or change.

TWG conducts research on both national and international levels through strategic partnerships formed with key substance abuse experts in the United States and the European Union.

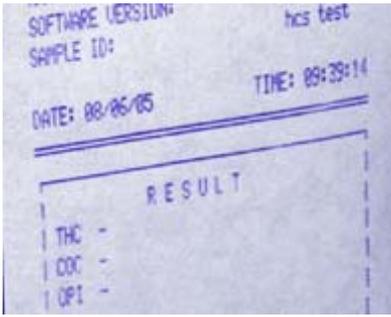
By providing a full spectrum of services, TWG can tailor its work to fit each client's needs. From single program evaluation to the design, implementation, and evaluation of a large-scale policy, TWG's research capabilities and corporate consulting services are flexible, comprehensive, and individually designed.



TWG Launches New Website

The Walsh Group announces the launch of its newly designed website, which is accessible at: www.walshgroup.org

The new website is designed with a user-friendly focus, to provide easy navigation through current, concise information. It includes descriptions of the projects we undertake, identifies our clients and strategic partners, and lists upcoming TWG presentations and events. Current and archived papers, presentations, and articles are available online with abstracts or instructions on how to request a full text copy.



Drug Testing Policy: Consultation for Sport, the Workplace, & Schools

The Walsh Group provides consulting services for businesses and organizations looking to implement or redesign drug testing policies.

The Walsh Group's corporate consulting services are tailored to suit our clients' needs. We have experience consulting for large organizations such as The Washington Post, the National Football League, and Imperial Oil. The following is a synopsis of services we performed for one client, and illustrations of the other services we provide for companies with pre-existing drug testing policies.

Policy Design & Implementation

The Washington Post

For this client, TWG performs a full range of services. TWG assisted in the development of the Post's drug testing policy, assisted with union negotiations, developed an implementation plan, developed a supervisor training program, trained 400 supervisors, and set up a data gathering system for the company's Employee Assistance Program. Once the policy was implemented, TWG was on-call to handle any crises or unexpected situations. TWG attends program

review meetings, and is available when needed to testify in arbitration hearings.

Evaluation & Redesign

Alternatively, TWG can perform an evaluation of a pre-existing program. TWG will examine and determine the overall efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the program in its current state. After analyzing the amount of testing being undertaken, costing, and projected savings, TWG will make recommendations for more effective and efficient testing.

Research Affecting Public Policy

The Walsh Group's research portfolio spans a continuum of research areas involving substance abuse: from in the lab to out in the field, from strategic partner alliances to legislative hearings: TWG is providing the scientific basis for policy change.

Below are brief overviews of three current research projects.

Drugs & Driving

TWG is currently involved in the field of drugged driving at both national & international levels. In addition to working to change current 'driving under the influence of drugs' laws, TWG is overseeing a US/EU funded project collecting saliva, blood and urine from suspected impaired drivers in four US States and six European countries. The project includes lab testing and the evaluation of on-site saliva test devices to determine their effectiveness for use by police. TWG has also been researching the prevalence of illegal drug use among drivers involved in motor vehicle accidents.

Group Matching Project

TWG is conducting research to determine the need/feasibility of matching individuals seeking substance abuse treatment with appropriate self-help groups. As self-help groups use varying approaches, matching individuals with the most suitable group (e.g. a secular vs. religiously based approach) appears to be a critical factor in the improvement of recovery outcomes. In this project, we conducted a national survey in collaboration with The Univ. of Virginia Survey Research Center with mail & web components. The National Institute on Drug Abuse funds this project.

Student Drug Testing

TWG is working on a grant from the US Department of Education to evaluate the effectiveness of random student drug-testing in three public high schools in New Jersey. Students who participate in any extracurricular activity, in addition to students who voluntarily consent are included in the pool of testable students. This project has been undertaken to determine if random student drug-testing programs achieve two goals: 1) to deter students from using drugs; and 2) to get those students who are using drugs assistance to address their problem.



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NOTABLE & QUOTABLE: Recent Publications & Presentations



Publications

Two papers authored by Walsh Group employees were published in international, peer-reviewed journals this summer.

"An Evaluation of Selected Oral Fluid Point-of-Collection Drug-Testing Devices" was published in the *Journal of Analytical Toxicology* (vol. 9, May/June 2005).

In *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, "Drug and alcohol use among drivers admitted to a Level-1 trauma center" (vol. 37 i5, Sept 2005)

To request a copy of the full article, please visit:
www.walshgroup.org

Presentations

Walsh Group Senior Research Scientist Dr. Randy Atkins gave a presentation at the 2005 International Conference for Secular Organizations for Sobriety (SOS) on August 27 in Los Angeles, CA. His presentation detailed his work on the Group Matching project, which involves research to determine the best way to match individuals in treatment for substance abuse with support groups.

A paper co-authored by Walsh Group Road Safety/ Communications Specialist Samantha Snitow was presented at the 2nd Annual Non-Profit & Social Marketing Conference in Melbourne, Australia on September 22. The paper discussed the importance of integrating communications with legislation and social policy enforcement to achieve behavior change.