

Speech by ROBERT MORGAN, Attorney General
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DRUG ABUSE IN NORTH CAROLINA

I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak with you this evening. The topic suggested is one which continues to cause a great deal of concern in our state and nation. The topic is drug abuse.

What do we mean when we say drug abuse? It is interesting to note that the most widely abused drug in our country has been and remains to be alcohol. Five million Americans, five per cent of the adult population, are alcoholics. The majority of them drive.

Statistics, though inadequate to measure the amount of personal anguish consequent to alcoholism, emphasize dramatically the havoc and devastation to all portions of our society: one-half of all automobile deaths are alcohol related; a quarter of all male admissions to mental hospitals and one-half of all general hospital admissions are associated with alcohol; and nearly one-half of all non-traffic arrests are for the "crime" of public intoxication.

The amount of money lost in our national economy through alcohol-induced unproductivity each year is almost beyond imagination. So you see, when we speak of drug abuse a great enemy continues to be alcohol.

In many states and even at the national level, there have been efforts to consolidate efforts against the problems of alcohol abuse with what we more commonly think of as drug abuse problems. This appears to be the trend of the future, since many specialists believe many of the problems which confront alcohol abusers also confront traditional drug abusers.

This evening, however, I will address myself primarily to what we traditionally think of as drug abuse problems. When we speak of drugs -- and from now on I will be talking about the type drugs you take in capsule form or inject or sniff -- we speak of four major types of drugs: stimulants, depressants, hallucinogenics, and narcotics.