Governor Dan McKee’s Overdose Task Force
April 12, 2023

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Richard Charest, MBA; Director, Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals
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Cathy Schultz, MPH; Task Force Director, Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services
2022
Rhode Island Student Survey
BARRINGTON  BRISTOL–WARREN  BURRILLVILLE  
COVENTRY  CRANSTON  CUMBERLAND  
EAST PROVIDENCE  EXETER–WEST GREENWICH  
JOHNSTON  LITTLE COMPTON  MIDDLETOWN  
NEWPORT  NORTH KINGSTOWN  
NORTH PROVIDENCE  PAWTUCKET  
PORTSMOUTH  SCITUATE  SMITHFIELD  
SOUTH KINGSTOWN  TIVERTON  WARWICK  
WEST WARWICK  WOONSOCKET

Background and Purpose

- The Rhode Island Student Survey (RISS) is a collaboration among BHDDH, RIDOH, and RIDE

- Examines risk and prevalence of topics such as substance use, bullying, violence, parent support, and mental health in middle and high school students throughout RI

- Aims to identify areas of needs among students and inform the allocation of resources for prevention programs

- The 2022 RISS took place from 3/11/2022 to 6/11/2022

- Data was collected from 51 schools in 23 school districts throughout RI

- The full 2022 RISS report can be found here: 2022 (ri.gov)
Demographics

20,411 students participated in the survey*

Grade

8th grade had the most responses

Sexual Orientation

- Bisexual: 14%
- Gay or Lesbian: 5%
- Heterosexual: 72%
- Not Sure: 9%

Gender Identity

- Female: 44%
- Male: 49%
- Other: 3%
- Prefer not to answer: 4%

Race

- American Indian/Alaska Native: 16%
- Asian American: 6%
- Black/African American: 2%
- Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander: 74%
- White: 2%

Hispanic or Latino

- No: 80%
- Yes: 20%

741 (4%) of students identified as transgender
Among all students, there was a statistically significant decrease in use of alcohol, marijuana, ENDS, and tobacco yet a significant increase in use of inhalants.
Among high school students, there was a statistically significant decrease in use of alcohol, marijuana, and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), also known as e-cigarettes or vape pens or devices.
Access and Availability
Alcohol

Among high school students...

- **36%**
- **33% ↓**

Exactly 1/3 (33%) reported having ever consumed an alcoholic beverage.

High school students are consuming less drinks on average compared to previous years.

- **< 1**
- **1 - 3**
- **4+**

- 40% 46% 42% 37% 18% 16%

↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020

Most reported obtaining alcohol from a family member for free:

- **A family member gave it to me for free**
- **A friend gave it to me for free**
- **Other**
- **I took it from someone**
- **I bought it from a friend**
- **I asked someone to buy it for me**
- **A store sold it to me without an ID**
- **I bought it from a family member**
- **I took it from a store**
- **I bought it from a store with a fake ID**
- **I bought it on the Internet**

- 30% 32% 34% 31% 17% 15% 14% 18% 11% 10%
## Access and Availability

### Marijuana

Among high school students...

Most students reported obtaining marijuana from a friend for free.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access and Availability</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A friend gave it to me for free</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I bought it from a friend</td>
<td>38% ↓</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A family member gave it to me for free</td>
<td>19% ↑</td>
<td>16% ↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I took it from someone</td>
<td>12% ↑</td>
<td>9% ↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I bought it from a medical marijuana cardholder</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I bought it on the Internet</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I bought it from a family member</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9% ↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got it from a medical marijuana cardholder for free</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020

Just under ¼ reported having ever used marijuana.

28% in 2020, 23% ↓ in 2022.
Among high school students...

Most students reported obtaining ENDS from a friend for free

- A friend gave it to me for free
- I bought it from a friend
- A store sold it to me without an ID
- Other
- A family member gave it to me for free
- I took it from someone
- I bought it on the Internet
- I bought it from a family member
- I took it from a store
- I bought it from a store with a fake ID

Just over 20% reported having ever used ENDS

Access and Availability

ENDS

Just over 20% reported having ever used ENDS

28% 22%
Most students reported obtaining prescription drugs for free from a family member.

5% reported having ever used prescription drugs not prescribed to them.

Students reporting use of prescription drugs not prescribed to them listed:
- pain relief pills
- ADHD medications
- sedatives

Access and Availability

Prescription Drugs

Among high school students...

↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020
The percentage of students reporting ease of obtaining substances has decreased over time, particularly for alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco.

*Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020
Under the Influence
Percentage of high school students who have ever:

- Driven under the influence of alcohol? 3% 3% 2%
- Driven under the influence of marijuana? 8% 5% 4% ↓
- Been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone under the influence of alcohol in the past 30 days? 10% 9% 8% ↓
- Been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone under the influence of alcohol? 22% 19% 16% ↓
- Been a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone under the influence of marijuana? 24% 20% 17% ↓

↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020

The percentages of students who report driving or riding with under the influence continues to decrease, with rates falling below 20%
Peer Disapproval

Percentage of high school students who believe peers would disapprove of using the following:

Peers are much less likely to disapprove of marijuana use compared to other substances.

*Alcohol use = 1 or 2 drinks nearly every day

↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020
Perception of Risk

Percentage of high school students who agree that people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they:

- Use marijuana once or twice a week: 37% (2018), 38% (2020), 38% (2022)
- Have 5 or more drinks of an alcoholic beverage once or twice a week: 64% (2018), 64% (2020), 62% (2022)
- Smoke one or two packs of cigarettes a day: 76% (2018), 75% (2020), 72% (2022)
- Use prescription drugs not prescribed to them: 76% (2018), 77% (2020), 74% (2022) \(\downarrow\) Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020
- Use any other illegal drugs such as cocaine, LSD (acid), methamphetamine (meth), or club drugs (ecstasy, roofies): 82% (2018), 81% (2020), 79% (2022)

Compared to other substances, students report a low risk of harm with using marijuana, while risk for illegal drugs, prescription drugs, and tobacco remains above 70%.\(\uparrow\) Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
Mental Health

In the last 30 days...

Were you very sad?

- 21% in 2018
- 24% in 2020
- 26% ↑ in 2022

Did you feel hopeless about the future?

- 15% in 2018
- 17% in 2020
- 20% ↑ in 2022

Compared to 2020, there was a statistically significant increase in negative feelings surrounding mental health among middle schoolers.

↑ Statistically significant increase compared to RISS 2020
↓ Statistically significant decrease compared to RISS 2020
Mental Health - Pandemic

Percentage of middle school students who...

Struggled with mental health issues during the pandemic?
- Yes, 39%
- No, 61%

Talked with a school counselor either in-person or on zoom?
- Yes, 31%
- No, 69%

Of the 40% of middle school students who reported struggling with mental health, roughly 1/3 spoke with a school counselor.
Among the 50% of high school students who reported struggling with mental health, only 25% spoke with a school counselor.
Suicide rates have started rising back to pre-pandemic levels and has increased significantly among high school students compared to 2018.
Thank you!

The Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals would like to acknowledge the cooperation and effort of all the schools and students who participate in the Rhode Island Student Survey each administration year.

Dan McKee
Governor

Anna Novais
Acting Secretary

Richard Charest
Director

Dr. Utpala Bandy
Interim Director

Angelica Infante-Green
Commissioner, RI Department of Education

Promoting Positive Change in Rhode Island Communities

Prevention and Health Promotion for Life

Student Assistance Services
Prevention Strategy Work Group

Co-Chairs: Elizabeth Farrar, Tara Cooper, and Obed Papp
**Prevention Strategy Work Group Priorities: May 2022-May 2023**

**Goal:**
The mission of the Prevention Strategy Work Group is to prevent overdoses, overdose deaths, and opioid misuse by identifying, developing, and evaluating multi-level strategies and interventions. The Prevention Strategy Work Group is a collaboration of state and community partners.

### Top Evidence Update Priorities

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Invest in mental-health and community resiliency: <strong>Trauma-informed behavioral health services</strong> across the lifespan, with a focus on addressing ACEs, toxic stress, family and community violence-reduction programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Pursue policies around social determinants or social experiences that help <strong>reduce desires to turn to drug use</strong>. Also, pursue prevention policies that safeguard against social isolation (i.e., against cyber bullying, or to promote grief supports).</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Invest in proven <strong>prevention educational programs</strong>, including updated facts about the crisis (i.e., significant rise of fentanyl), the existence of harm reduction strategies (Narcan and fentanyl test strips), and strategies for mental health resilience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Prevention programs should be <strong>across the lifespan</strong>, with focus on youth (high school and middle school) as well as older adults, including seniors who may be at risk of casual opioid, benzodiazepine, or alcohol misuse.</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Prioritize prevention strategies that <strong>recognize race equity, eliminate structural racism and disparities</strong> based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, and ability.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Many partners around the table
- Treatment organizations
- Recovery organizations
- Individuals with lived experience
- Prevention organizations
BHDDH-Funded Prevention Providers

Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals (BHDDH)
BHDDH-Funded Prevention Partners

- RI Substance Abuse Prevention Act (RISAPA) Regional Prevention Task Forces (RPTF)
- Student Assistance Program (SAP) – Project Success
Regional Prevention Task Forces (RPTF)

- Funds 7 Regions
- Promotes comprehensive, community prevention programming
  - Local needs assessment and strategic plan created with community input
  - Planning, capacity building, and implementation of evidence-based programs
  - Evaluation of strategies, policies and programs to produce long-term reduction of substance use and misuse and wellness promotion across the lifespan
#1: Southern Providence County
Cranston, Foster, Glocester, Scituate, North Providence, Smithfield, Johnston

#2: Northern Providence County/Blackstone Valley
Burrillville, Woonsocket, Cumberland, Lincoln, Pawtucket, North Smithfield, Central Falls

#3: Providence

#4: Kent County
Coventry, Exeter, West Greenwich, East Greenwich, West Warwick, Warwick

#5: East Bay
East Providence, Barrington, Warren, Bristol

#6: Newport County
Portsmouth, Tiverton, Little Compton, Jamestown, Middletown, Newport

#7: South County
North Kingstown, Narragansett, South Kingstown, Hopkinton, Richmond, Charlestown, Westerly, New Shoreham
Rhode Island Student Assistance

- Utilizes the evidence-based program Project Success
- Implemented in 39 High Schools and 31 Middle Schools
- In 2022, more than 10,000 students were served by Master’s-level counselors
- Use an early identification and referral strategy
Questions

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Student Assistance Programs: An Effective Strategy for Preventing Youth Substance Use and Promoting Mental Health

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Chief Executive Officer
Rhode Island Student Assistance Services

Samantha Rosenthal, PhD, MPH
Epidemiologist Consultant
Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals
Rhode Island Student Assistance Services (RISAS) is a statewide school and community-based substance use prevention/early intervention program operating since 1987.

RISAS is funded by the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals (BHDDH) and Rhode Island school districts.
By fall 2023, Project SUCCESS will be operating in **80** middle and high schools, representing **32** school districts.

Over 53,000 students have access to a student assistance counselor in their school.
WHY IS PREVENTION IMPORTANT IN THE EFFORT TO END THE OVERDOSE EPIDEMIC?

• Early age of onset is an important predictor for the development of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) later in life.

• The majority of individuals diagnosed with SUD, including Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) started using substances before age 18.

National Drug Control Strategy Report from The White House Executive Office of the President, 2022

Ensuring access to multi-tiered school-based prevention programs is “essential to support the health, well-being, and futures of the nation’s 74 million children”

“Student Assistance Programs play a key role in the effort to prevent and reduce youth substance misuse.”

*National Drug Control Strategy Report from The White House Executive Office of the President, 2022*
Project SUCCESS: Schools Using Coordinated Community Efforts to Strengthen Students

• Project SUCCESS is multi-tiered student assistance program model.

• Project SUCCESS is located in schools where adolescents have easy access to highly trained student assistance counselors and where substance use-related risk factors are more likely to be detected.
Prevention Strategies

- **Universal**, all youth
- **Selected**, vulnerable youth
- **Indicated**, youth already engaged in substance use
UNIVERSAL STRATEGIES
Prevention Education Series

Topic 1: Being an Adolescent
Topic 2: Alcohol, Marijuana, opioids and other drugs
Topic 3: Relationships: Family and Friends
Topic 4: Skills for Coping
Objectives-RISAS Opioid Module

• **Raise awareness** about the opioid crisis.
• **Identify** who is at risk.
• **Define** opioid, medical uses and illicit opioids.
• **Discuss** the dangers.
• **Describe** how opioids work in the brain.
• **Examine** how people become addicted.
• **Discuss** problems associated with addiction.
• **Learn** to avoid risks associated with opioids.
• **Teach** dangers of taking another’s prescription.
• **Identify** support systems and how to seek help.
• **Recognize** that rescue and recovery is possible.
Selected Strategies

Target children and teens at elevated risk for developing substance use disorders

• Individual and group support for children living with a parent or sibling with SUD

• Interventions with youth exhibiting multiple risk factors
  e.g., Lack of school bonding, parental neglect/abuse, parental rejection of child’s sexual identity/orientation, anxiety, depression
Target children and teens who have started using substances.

- Motivational Interviewing
- Screening Brief Intervention Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)
- Brief Challenges
- Groups for students who are using substances
How are Students Referred to the Student Assistance Counselor?

- Self Referral
- School Administrators
- Guidance Counselors
- Teachers
- Parents
- Friends
Assessment and Brief Intervention: Individual and group sessions
Referral and Case Management
Suicide Prevention

- Screening
- Use of the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale
- Referral
- Follow up
What are the Qualifications of Student Assistance Counselors?

- Student Assistance Counselors have a master’s degree in social work, psychology or other counseling field
- Expertise with adolescents and the ability to connect and engage with substance-using teens
- Certified or working toward certification for Student Assistance Counselor (CSAC)
NOTE: Results are from the Rhode Island Student Survey 2020-2021 administration. Depressive symptoms were measured by the Modified Depression Score, a continuous score ranging from 0 to 24. Percent difference was calculated by adjusted logistic and linear regressions controlling for age, sexual and gender identity, pre-post COVID lockdown, %White, %Free/reduced lunch, urban classification, and school level. All results are significant at p<0.05. Analyses conducted by SR Rosenthal, 1/1/2023.
A positive youth development approach identifies formal and informal leaders involved, in both positive and negative activities. It trains, mobilizes, and motivates youth leaders to become prevention advocates.
APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED FOR
RI TEEN INSTITUTE!

August 21-25, 2023
Camp JORI, Wakefield, RI

Leadership training for RI youth entering the 9th-12th grade. Youth are nominated by an adult “sponsor” who recognizes leadership abilities or potential in the teen.

$25 fee includes:
5 days/4 nights lodging and food, team-building, action planning, Project Adventure, workshops, talent show, general sessions, dance, process groups, and optional activities such as swimming, athletics, crafts, and more!

Scholarships available!
Email RITeenInstitute@gmail.com for a youth application, adult staff application, or adult sponsor form.

@RITeenInstitute@gmail.com  risas.org/our-programs/teen-institute/
WE WILL NOT ADDRESS THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC LONG TERM UNLESS WE PREVENT AND REDUCE YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ARE AN EFFECTIVE, MULTI-TIERED STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND REDUCE YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING.
- Sarah C. Dinklage, LICSW
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Public Comment