

Medford Communities That Care Youth Survey

Executive Summary of Substance Abuse Results (2009)

This document summarizes the substance abuse data presented in the final report of the *Communities That Care Youth Survey (CTCYS)*, a nationally recognized survey, completed by 1,910 Medford students (73% of the student body) in grades 6 through 12 in the spring of 2009. The *CTCYS* provides important information for the City of Medford, Medford Health Matters, and the Northeast Center for Healthy Communities to prevent substance abuse in the community. The *CTCYS* was paid for by the Drug Free Communities Grant awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

SURVEY GOALS

The survey asked youth to respond to questions on risky behaviors (substance abuse, teen pregnancy, delinquency, dropping out, and violence). The survey also asked questions to understand risk and protective factors that either increase risk or reduce protective leading to risky behaviors. Just as eating a high-fat diet is a risk factor for heart disease, and getting regular exercise is a protective factor for heart disease, there are factors that can help protect youth from, or put them at risk for, drug use and other problem behaviors. Addressing risk factors and building on protective factors has been shown to be effective in increasing healthy decision making, including choosing not to use tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs.

Goals of the *CTCYS* were to:

- Identify the levels of risk factors related to substance use, drop-out, delinquency, violence, and teen pregnancy.
- Identify the levels of protective factors related to substance use, drop-out, delinquency, violence, and teen pregnancy.
- Measure the actual prevalence of drug use, violence and other antisocial behaviors among surveyed youth.

SURVEY RESULTS

Results of the *CTCYS* showed both strengths and areas for improvement in preventing substance use among Medford's 6th through 12th graders. Risk and protective factor data are presented on the following page, followed by substance abuse data.

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Areas of success in Medford middle and high schools that received the highest scores include:

- **Community opportunities for positive social involvement**
The availability of activities or organizations that youth can participate in. These programs promote positive youth development and include sports and theater groups.
- **Community rewards for positive social involvement**
This is community and public (e.g. sports coaches, drama coaches, Girl Scout and Boy Scout merit badges) recognition of and awards for youth for their involvement in activities and organizations available in the community.
- **School opportunities for positive social involvement**
Giving students opportunities to be involved in important activities that make them feel empowered and connected to their school environment.
- **School rewards for positive social involvement**
Rewarding and appreciating students for their involvement in school activities and programs.

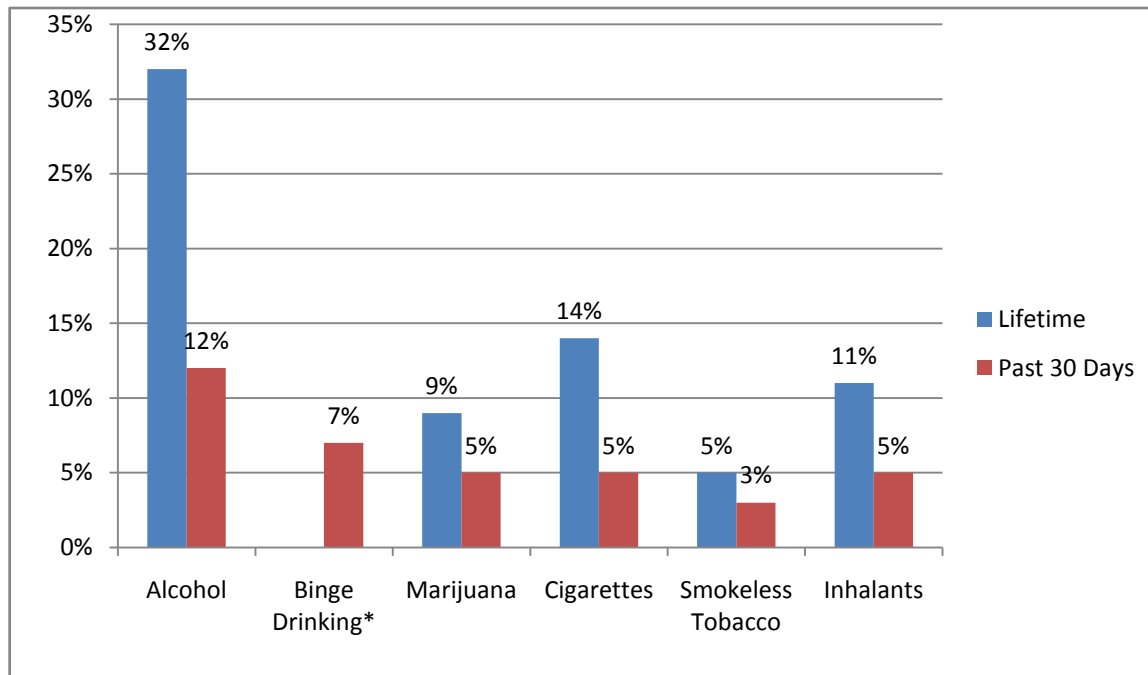
Areas of concern in Medford middle and high schools that received the lowest scores include:

- **Community disorganization**
Students' perceptions of their community's appearance and other external attributes.
- **Family conflict**
This refers to the existence of unhealthy behavior, such as yelling, insults and threats between family members.
- **Peer rewards for antisocial behavior**
Students' perceptions that their peer group engages in risky behavior.
- **Poor academic performance**
Poor academic performance increases risky behaviors.
- **Religiosity**
Level of connection youth feel to a religious/faith-based organization.
- **Family opportunities for prosocial involvement**
Families provide opportunities for youth to make meaningful contributions to their families.
- **Family rewards for positive social involvement**
Family members reward children for positive participation in activities and express pride and support for their contributions.
- **Family attachment**
Youth feeling bonded to family members.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS

This section reports on lifetime use and past 30 day use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs for 6th – 8th graders and 9th – 12th graders separately.

Table 1. 6th – 8th Grade Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use (lifetime and past 30-Day Use)



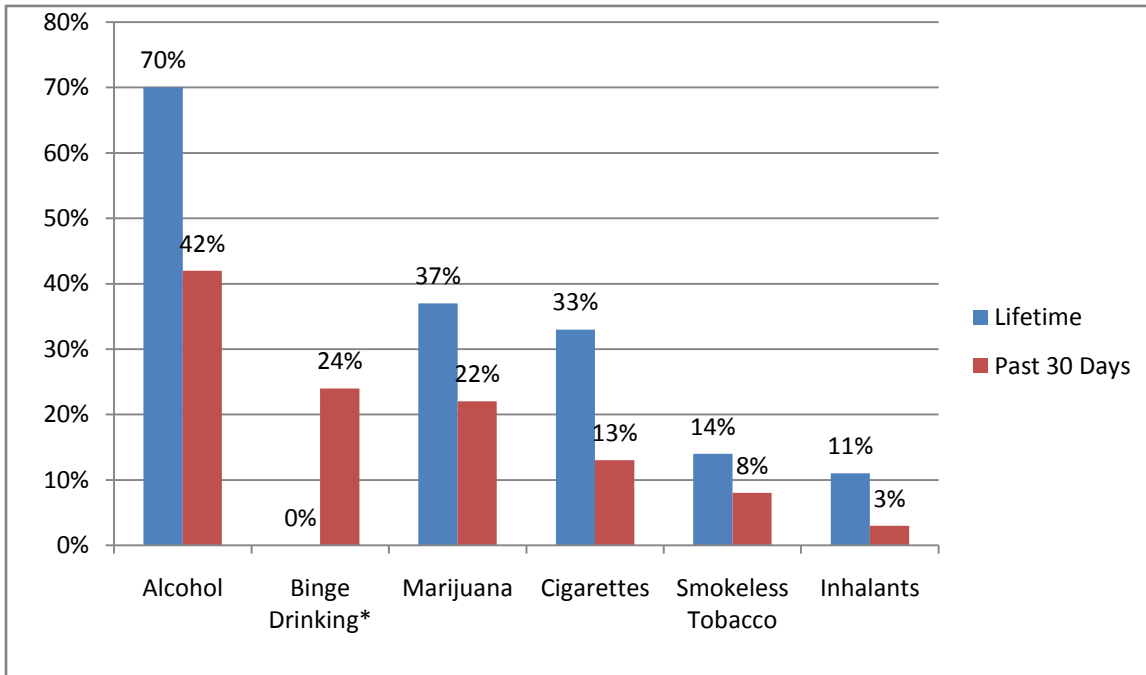
** Binge drinking is calculated for past 30 day use only.

Table 2. 8th Grade Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use Compared to 8th Grade U.S. Norm**

Drug	Lifetime use (8 th grade)		Past 30 day use (8 th grade)	
	Medford	U.S. Norm	Medford	U.S. Norm
Alcohol	49%	39%	23%	16%
Binge Drinking	NA	NA	15%	8%
Marijuana	18%	15%	12%	6%
Cigarettes	26%	21%	12%	7%
Smokeless Tobacco	12%	10%	7%	4%
Inhalants	15%	16%	5%	4%
Heroin	1%	1%	> 1%	> 1%
Ecstasy	2%	2%	2%	> 1%
Methamphetamine	2%	2%	2%	> 1%
Cocaine	4%	3%	2%	> 1%

** Normative comparison based on grade 8 only.

Table 3. 9th – 12th Grade Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use (lifetime and past 30-Day Use)



* Note: Binge drinking rate is calculated for past 30 day use only.

Table 4. 12th Grade Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use Compared to U.S. Norm**

Drug	Lifetime use (12 th grade)		Past 30 day use (12 th grade)	
	Medford	U.S. Norm	Medford	U.S. Norm
Alcohol	78%	72%	47%	43%
Binge Drinking	NA	NA	30%	25%
Marijuana	44%	43%	26%	19%
Cigarettes	38%	45%	18%	20%
Smokeless Tobacco	18%	16%	8%	7%
Inhalants	8%	10%	2%	1%
Heroin	> 1%	1%	1%	> 1%
Ecstasy	9%	6%	> 1%	2%
Methamphetamine	> 1%	3%	> 1%	> 1%
Cocaine	7%	7%	3%	2%

** Normative comparison based on grade 12 only.

Compared to their national counterparts

Alarming, Medford 8th graders reported lifetime use of alcohol, marijuana, cigarette, smokeless tobacco and cocaine use at higher rates than their national counterparts. Ten percent (10%) more Medford 8th graders reported lifetime alcohol use than their national counterparts. With the exception of heroin use, Medford 8th graders reported past 30 day use of all substances, including binge drinking, at higher rates than their national counterparts.

Comparative higher trends in substance use continued from middle school to high school. Medford 12th graders reported higher rates of lifetime alcohol, marijuana, smokeless tobacco and Ecstasy use compared to national counterparts. In addition, with the exception of methamphetamine and Ecstasy, Medford 12th graders reported past 30-day use of all substances, including binge drinking, at higher rates than their national counterparts.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

The *Communities That Care Youth Survey* will continue to be used collaboratively by the schools and community to address risky behaviors and risk and protective factors that affect youth in Medford. The Medford Health Matters, the City of Medford, and the Northeast Center for Healthy Communities will continue to use the information described in this document and in the final *CTCYS* reports to decide the most effective ways to reduce substance abuse among Medford's 6th through 12th graders.

Continued support for programs to be implemented is made possible by the Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant funding provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Medford Health Matters will partner with the Northeast Center for Healthy Communities to prioritize risk and protective factors to be addressed by community partners and coalition members. Through this DFC funding, new efforts will focus on marijuana, and prescription drug abuse prevention to support Medford youth in living long, healthy, happy lives.

Northeast Center for Healthy Communities
Submitted on September 29, 2009