



Healthy Alaska



December 2009/January 2010

2009 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Inside This Issue:

Page 1

- 2009 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- Traditional High School YRBS Key Findings

Page 2

- Traditional High School YRBS Key Findings Continued
- Alternative High School YRBS Key Findings

Page 3

- Alternative High School YRBS Key Findings Continued
- Healthy Reading Kits Available
- Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Grant

Page 4

- National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month
- Youth Alliance for a Healthier Alaska Art



Brain Booster:

What phrase is hidden here?

Bid becomes biRd
Ran becomes raIn
Bug becomes buNg
Sin becomes siGn
Pan becomes paIn
Dug becomes duNg
Doe becomes doGe

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is part of a national surveillance system developed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Administered every other year by the Department of Education & Early Development and the Department of Health and Social Services in conjunction with Alaska's public high schools, the YRBS is used to evaluate and address the prevalence of health risk behaviors among Alaska's youth that contribute to the leading causes of death and disease.

Due to the hard work of teachers and the high participation level of high school students, enough surveys were collected for the state to be able to draw conclusions about the level of youth risk behavior in Alaska.

Alaska 2009 results compared to 2007: In general the 2009 results were very similar to those of 2007, which is not surprising since changes are usually gradual.

Alaska trends over time: In general the prevalence of many risk behaviors have decreased over the last 14 years. The prevalence of smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, using marijuana, physical fighting, and contemplating suicide seem to be going down. The percent of students who have ever had sexual intercourse or reported having sexual intercourse in the past three months has stayed about the same. The percent of students reporting they did not go to school one or more days in the past month because they felt unsafe at school seems to be increasing.

Alaska compared to the US: The 2009 Alaska YRBS results are very similar to the national YRBS data from 2007 (which is the last available data — 2009 national survey results will be released this summer). Fewer students in Alaska reported being in a physical fight in the past 12 months compared to the national results (27.8 percent vs. 35.5 percent), but more students in Alaska reported being hit, slapped, or physically on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend in the past 12 months (13.3 percent vs. 9.9 percent). The percent of high school students attending daily PE is less than the national. Only 17.7 percent of high school students attend daily PE in Alaska compared to 30.3 percent of those in the national YRBS survey (2007).

Other Points:

Suicide is the leading cause of death of Alaska youth age 15-19

- ◆ 11.7% have made a plan about how they would attempt suicide and 8.5% actually attempted suicide one or more times in the past 12 months.

Motor vehicle crashes are the second leading cause of death among Alaska youth

- ◆ 21.3% report having driven in a car driven by someone who had been drinking and 8.9% reported driving a car when they had been drinking.

The obesity epidemic in Alaska and the nation contributes to the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and other chronic diseases. Health habits such as good nutrition and being physically active are the key to maintaining a health weight.

- ◆ 81.8% of high school students do not eat the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables.
- ◆ 57.6% did not get the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day for most days of the week.
- ◆ 82.3% did not attend daily PE classes.

Traditional High School YRBS Key Findings

The following key findings compare the 2009 traditional high school survey results to the 2007 results.

Weight Issues:

- ◆ 14.4% of students are overweight, compared to 16.2% in 2007.
- ◆ 11.8% of students are obese, compared to 11.1% in 2007.

Results continue on next page...



Brain Booster—

Answer:

Ringing in the Changes!

Anchorage Association for the Education of Young Children (Anchorage AEYC) Conference

February 4-6, 2010
Downtown Hilton
Anchorage Hotel
Anchorage, Alaska

For more information,
contact 907-696-5884

Or visit: <http://www.anchorageaeyc.org>

Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference (ASSEC)

February 6-12, 2010
Downtown Sheraton
Anchorage, Alaska

For more information,
contact 907-465-2972

Or visit: <http://www.assec.org>

Traditional High School Key Findings Continued...

Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Usage:

- ◆ 15.7% of students smoked cigarettes one or more of the past 30 days, compared to 17.8% in 2007.
- ◆ 21.7% of students had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row on one or more of the past 30 days, compared to 25.8% in 2007.
- ◆ 22.7% of students used marijuana one or more times during the past 30 days, compared to 20.5% in 2007.
- ◆ 24.8% of students were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug by someone on school property during the past 12 months, compared to 25.1% in 2007.

Safety Behaviors:

- ◆ 12.1% of students never or rarely wear a seat belt when riding as a passenger, compared to 7% in 2007.
- ◆ 21.3% of students have rode one or more times within the past 30 days with a driver who had been drinking, compared to 23.5% in 2007.
- ◆ 8.9% of students drove drunk within the past 30 days, compared to 9.7% in 2007.

Violence and Suicide:

- ◆ 27.8% of students were involved in a physical fight one or more times during the past 12 months, compared to 29.2% in 2007.
- ◆ 13.3% of students reported being hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the past 12 months, compared to 12.4% in 2007.
- ◆ 13.9% of students seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months, compared to 16.5% in 2007.

Sexual Behaviors:

- ◆ 43.5% of students have ever had sexual intercourse, compared to 45.1% in 2007.
- ◆ 30.4% of students had sexual intercourse with one or more people during the past three months, compared with 30.9% in 2007.
- ◆ 17.1% of students who had sexual intercourse during the past three months drank alcohol or used drugs before last sexual intercourse, compared to 22.1% in 2007.

Connectedness:

- ◆ 59.4% of students agree or strongly agree that their teachers really care about them and give them a lot of encouragement, compared to 56.1% in 2007.
- ◆ 83.3% of students feel comfortable seeking help from one or more adults besides their parents if they had an important question affecting their life, compared 87% in 2007.

Alternative High School YRBS Key Findings

Alternative High Schools were selected to participate in a statewide YRBS for the first time in 2009. EED determined that capturing risk-behavior data on Alternative Schools was essential for 2 reasons: 1) Alternative Schools are intentionally excluded from the Traditional Schools YRBS and therefore no data on their levels of risk behavior was being captured 2) several of the programs the Department manages require it to dedicate resources to Alaska's greatest at-risk youth so data confirming Alternative Schools serve this population was needed.

The data to follow is quite compelling, and indicates significantly higher levels of reported risk behavior in Alternative Schools students than is reported by their Traditional Schools peers for almost every measure. The following data represent key findings from the Alternative High School YRBS only. To view a side-by-side comparison of the Traditional high school responses and the Alternative high school responses, visit: http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/school/pubs/COMPARISON_TRAD_ALT_2009.pdf

Weight Issues:

- ◆ 18.3% of students are overweight.
- ◆ 18.9% of students are obese.

Results continue on next page...

**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum
Disorder (FASD)
Southeast Alaska
Regional Conference**

February 18-20, 2010
Centennial Hall
Juneau, Alaska

For more information,
contact Donna James at
907-463-7169

Or visit: [http://
www.cethita.org/2010fas
dconference.html](http://www.cethita.org/2010fasdconference.html)

Alternative High School YRBS Key Findings Continued...

Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Usage:

- ◆ 58% of students smoked cigarettes one or more of the past 30 days.
- ◆ 42.7% of students had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row on one or more of the past 30 days.
- ◆ 50.5% of students used marijuana one or more times during the past 30 days.
- ◆ 32.4% of students were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug by someone on school property during the past 12 months.

Safety Behaviors:

- ◆ 13.6% of students never or rarely wear a seat belt when riding as a passenger.
- ◆ 29.9% of students have rode one or more times within the past 30 days with a driver who had been drinking.
- ◆ 12.3% of students drove drunk within the past 30 days.

Violence and Suicide:

- ◆ 9.1% of students were involved in a physical fight one or more times during the past 12 months.
- ◆ 21.3% of students reported being hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the past 12 months.
- ◆ 18.1% of students seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months.

Sexual Behaviors:

- ◆ 82.2% of students have ever had sexual intercourse.
- ◆ 65.5% of students had sexual intercourse with one or more people during the past three months.
- ◆ 27.7% of students who had sexual intercourse during the past three months drank alcohol or used drugs before last sexual intercourse.

Connectedness:

- ◆ 72.4% of students agree or strongly agree that their teachers really care about them and give them a lot of encouragement.
- ◆ 84.2% of students feel comfortable seeking help from one or more adults besides their parents if they had an important question affecting their life.

Healthy Reading Kits Available

Healthy Reading is an initiative that seeks to promote K-12 health education sponsored by the Department of Education & Early Development (EED). Healthy Reading offers teachers the ability to teach about important health issues while simultaneously supporting reading practices.

Healthy Reading is comprised of a collection of age appropriate books that are selected and field tested by Alaskan teachers. Each kit contains 9 pieces of children's literature. These books cover an array of health issues that emerge naturally as children grow and develop and allow students to connect reading and writing skills to relevant life thinking skills. Ultimately, Healthy Reading is meant to empower and inform students about health issues, leaving them better able to obtain information, set goals, and develop skills that will promote their individual health.

Currently, the Department of Education & Early Development has three Healthy Reading kits available, Grades 2-4, Grades 4-8, and Grades 9-12. These kits are available to teachers, **FREE** of charge. For more information or to request a kit, please contact Kiara Alexander (907) 465-2304 or kiara.alexander@alaska.gov



Readiness and Emergency Management For Schools Grant (USDOE)

The US Department of Education recently announced the opening of the FY 2010 Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Grant (REMS). Grants are available to local education agencies. For information regarding the REMS grant, view the USDOE REMS website at <http://www.ed.gov/>

Did You Know?

According to research by the NHTSA, teens are involved in 5 times as many fatal accidents as adults.

SUBSCRIBE

To subscribe directly to our newsletter, visit us at:
www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/schoolhealth/subscribe.htm

FEEDBACK

We are looking for feedback! If there are any changes you would like to see made and/or suggestions for content of the newsletter, please send them to Meghan Nelson at meghan.nelson@alaska.gov

School Health Partners:



www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/schoolhealth/



www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/school/default.htm

National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention (3D) Month

Alcohol-related car crashes rise in frequency during the holiday season, making this season the deadliest season of the year. Due to the increase in events involving alcohol, more people are more likely to find themselves driving while impaired. Unlike other types of accidents, drunk and drugged driving is one of the most preventable tragedies on the road.

Because of this, December has been designated, by presidential proclamation, as the National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month (or 3D Month). 3D month strives to bring public awareness to and prevention of alcohol and drug related crashes by campaigning for tighter laws and for alcohol checkpoints and by educating youth and adults about the perils of driving under the influence.

In 2008, 45% of all vehicular fatalities in Alaska resulted from alcohol-related incidents. Of all the fatalities and major injuries that occur on Alaska's roads and highways, teen drivers account for approximately 20% of incidents, most caused either by not wearing a seatbelt or by driving under the influence.

Traffic accidents are the leading cause of death among the United States teenage population and, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), more than one-third are alcohol related. Furthermore, drunk driving often results in the injury or loss of life among passengers and individuals outside the vehicle.

A recent study by the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities found a link between minor consuming and future DUIs (Driving Under the Influence). This study compared 1995-1999 minor consuming cases in Alaska to 1995-2006 DUI cases and found that 24% of youth charged with minor consuming will go on to have a DUI charge before their 31st birthday (Evaluation of Risk Factors for Repeat DUI Offenses, Preliminary Draft Report, November 2008).

The State of Alaska has developed a plan to reduce and prevent underage drinking, based on the national strategy put forth by the National Research Council, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science, and Congress. This plan highlights the national strategies as well as strategies that state and local agencies can employ.

To view state's plan, visit: http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/hwysafety/assets/pdf/2009_underagedrinkplan.pdf

Youth Alliance for a Healthier Alaska Art Contest

The Youth Alliance for a Healthier Alaska presents: *Make Art. Not Babies. An art contest to promote healthy teen relationships and sexual responsibility.*

Rules and Regulations:

Winning entries for each category will receive: \$150 VISA gift card for first place, \$50 VISA gift card for second place, \$25 VISA gift card for third place

Categories: 1. Video/radio 2. photography/graphic art

There will be a total of 6 winning entries.

Guidelines:

- The competition will be open to teenagers 14 through 19 years of age.
- Participants may enter one entry per category. Participants can only win in one category.
- Entry deadline is **February 19, 2010**. Entries received after this date will not be evaluated.
- Email submission to Sophie Wenzel: Sophie.wenzel@alaska.gov OR Mail to: YAHA, 4701 Business Park Blvd, Suite 20, Bldg J, Anchorage, AK 99503
- By entering the contest the entrant is giving YAHA and the State of Alaska the right to: (1.) publicly display his or her artwork. (2.) The right to photograph or otherwise reproduce the artwork for the use in connection with promotional or advertising activities by YAHA.
- All artwork must be original. All photographs must have been taken by the contestant. All videos and radio announcements must have been produced by contestant
- All entries must be "PG-13"- entries that are not appropriate will not be considered.

Regulations:

Video: Must be 2 minutes or less, Must be on a decrypted disc

Audio: Must be 30 seconds or less, Must be in MP3, WIM, or MPEG4 format

Photograph/Graphic art: Must be no less than 4" x 6" and no bigger than 11"x 17" in JPEG or Adobe format, Must have caption/name on entry

Criteria to Judge: Must have reality, originality and creative pizzazz, and relevancy to the issue.

For questions, please write Sophie.wenzel@alaska.gov