

Michigan Youth Taking Fewer Health Risks *More Work Needed to Stop Teen Smoking*

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LANSING - A new report from the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that the number of Michigan teens engaged in risky behaviors and unhealthy habits dropped slightly since 2001, but much work remains to be done to get teens to quit smoking.

The survey showed that statistics for Michigan teens dropped slightly in behaviors such as smoking, drinking, carrying weapons at school, having physical fights, and riding with drivers who had been drinking.

The Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is part of a nationwide surveying effort led by the CDC to monitor students' health risks and behaviors. The Michigan YRBS is a collaborative effort between the Michigan Department of Education and the Department of Community Health.

“While it is important to note we are seeing a slight improvement in these numbers, it cannot go without saying that Michigan needs to focus more on the health and safety of our young people,” Governor Jennifer Granholm said. “In particular, the fact that 61 percent of Michigan teens have tried smoking is a disturbing statistic, especially with new research showing younger people get hooked on nicotine quicker than adults do. The Departments of Education and Community Health will collaborate on the best ways to reach out to teens and address the need for healthier behaviors that go beyond our present efforts.”

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Watkins pointed out that Michigan is the only state in the country with a state-developed model curriculum in health education for elementary, middle, and high school students that addresses smoking, alcohol use, violence, HIV, nutrition, and physical activity.

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The Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education addresses these vital health issues in successive grades, and provides students with essential knowledge and prevention skills to avoid risky behaviors and improve health.

“We know the positive links between health and academic achievement,” said Watkins. “The survey results point to the importance of continued support for health education programs so that future generations of students will have the essential tools to stay healthy for life and succeed in school.”

More than 90 percent of Michigan school districts use the Michigan Model for Comprehensive Health Education, reaching over one million students and their families.

Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom, Michigan's Surgeon General, said that every day in the United States more than 2,000 children under the age of 18 become daily smokers. Among high school seniors, more than 73 percent of daily smokers are likely to remain daily smokers five to six years later.

“The research we have clearly illustrates that we need to make more rapid progress toward promoting tobacco cessation programs among our children,” Wisdom said. “Michigan has been presented with a unique opportunity to improve the health of hundreds of thousands of Michigan citizens. Higher cigarettes taxes proposed by Governor Granholm in her 2004-05 state budget will mean that 60,000 adults will stop and 94,000 children will never start smoking. From a health perspective, this decision is an important first step toward helping citizens - and especially children - significantly reduce their dependency on tobacco and ultimately create a healthier Michigan.”

Survey results show the percentage of students who ever have tried smoking has dropped steadily from 75 percent to 60 percent since 1997 as well as the percentage that had smoked on one or more of the previous 30 days continuously fell from 38 to 23 percent.

Similarly, downward trends in the percentage of students in a physical fight during the previous 12 months fell from 36 percent in 1997 down to 31 percent in 2003. The percentage of students who carried a weapon on school property has continued to decrease from eight percent in 1997 and 1999 to five percent in 2001 and 2003.

The percent of students who rode in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking has dropped over the series of surveys from 37 percent in 1997 to 30 percent in

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2003. The percentage of students who ever drank likewise has experienced the downward trend from 82 percent in 1997 to 76 percent recently.

The survey, completed by 3,452 students in 41 public high schools in Michigan during the spring of 2003, included questions that address those behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and illness in young people and adults. The high response rates (school 84 percent, student 84 percent), allow results to be generalized to all Michigan students in grades 9-12.

The 2003 Michigan survey included 99 questions covering behaviors grouped by the CDC into six general health risk areas: 1) unintentional injury and violence; 2) tobacco use; 3) alcohol and other drug use; 4) sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy or disease; 5) dietary behaviors; and 6) physical activity.

Michigan is one of only a handful of states with high enough response rates on four consecutive YRBS survey administrations (1997, 1999, 2001, and 2003) to have scientific trend data. Michigan added questions to the 2003 survey to reflect current issues such as soda consumption, diagnosis of diabetes and asthma, and asthma episodes.

To access the 2003 Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey, go online at:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/2003_MI_YRBS_Chart_84900_7.pdf

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The % of Michigan Students Who...

<p><u>Unintentional Injuries and Violence</u></p> <p>8% Rarely or never used safety belts 30% Rode with a drinking driver* 5% Carried a weapon on school property* 12% Were in a physical fight on school property during the past year 6% Missed school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school 18% Considered suicide during the past year 11% Attempted suicide during the past year</p>	<p><u>Tobacco Use</u></p> <p>60% Ever tried cigarettes 23% Smoked cigarettes recently* 18% Smoked cigarettes daily* 21% Tried cigarettes before age 13 58% Are current smokers and have tried to quit</p>
<p><u>Alcohol and Other Drug Use</u></p> <p>44% Drank alcohol recently* 27% Tried alcohol before age 13 27% Reported binge drinking recently* 24% Used marijuana recently* 12% Tried marijuana before age 13</p>	<p><u>Dietary Behaviors</u></p> <p>15% At risk for becoming overweight² 12% Overweight³ 46% Were trying to lose weight 18% Ate more than 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day* 16% Drank 3 or more glasses of milk per day* 40% Drank at least one soda per day**</p>
<p><u>Sexual Behaviors</u></p> <p>44% Ever had sexual intercourse 32% Had sexual intercourse for the first time before age 16 31% Had sexual intercourse during the past three months 63% Used a condom during last sexual intercourse¹ 24% Used alcohols or drugs before their last sexual intercourse¹ 10% Were have ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse</p>	<p><u>Physical Activity/Wellness</u></p> <p>34% Did not participate in the recommended amount of vigorous or moderate physical activity** 11% Did not participate in any physical activity** 61% Were not enrolled in physical education class 35% Watched TV 3 hours or more per day 21% Have been diagnosed with asthma</p>

*during the past month

**during the past week

¹among students who had sexual intercourse during the past 3 months

²Body Mass Index is >85% and <95%

³Body Mass Index is >or= to 95%