



New data show Drug Free Communities Program significantly reduces teen substance abuse - Knoxville a Drug Free Communities Grantee since 2001

Rates of current substance abuse by high school students in communities participating in the Drug Free Communities (DFC) program are significantly lower than national rates, according to a National Interim Evaluation of the DFC program, released by John Walters, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP).

The National Interim Evaluation, conducted by Battelle Memorial Institute on behalf of ONDCP, examined trends in current use among communities with DFC coalitions, compared to reported use at the national level using data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBS). The analysis shows that between 2006 and 2007, current use rates for communities with DFC coalitions declined for all three substances measured (alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana) in grades 9-12. Local data support this claim:

- Current youth alcohol use in Knox County is 29.7%, down from 34.4% in 2005;
- Current youth alcohol use in Knox County is 33.6% lower than the national average;
- Current youth binge drinking in Knox County is 16.5%, down from 22.8% in 2005;
- Lifetime use of marijuana among high school students in Knox County dropped to 32.9% in 2007 from 36.9% in 2005;
- Lifetime use of tobacco is reported to be 44.6%, down from 50.2% in 2005.

While youth drug use has been declining across the United States, it has declined more rapidly in communities with DFC coalitions.

Spurred by the successes of the DFC program, and since drug abuse does not stop at county lines, the Metropolitan Drug Commission has successfully mentored other nearby counties. Most recently, the Metropolitan Drug Commission has initiated another mentoring relationship with the **Anderson County Health Council**.

Congressman Zach Wamp endorsed the relationship saying, "The dangers to children and the community are overwhelming. The Metropolitan Drug Commission and the Anderson County Health Council have a proven track record of providing exceptional service to their community and have

established solid groundwork to begin the Anderson County Anti-Drug Coalition."

Over the next two years, the Metropolitan Drug Commission will provide training, technical assistance, and leadership to prepare the Coalition so they will be able to write a successful grant proposal for the Drug-Free Communities program.

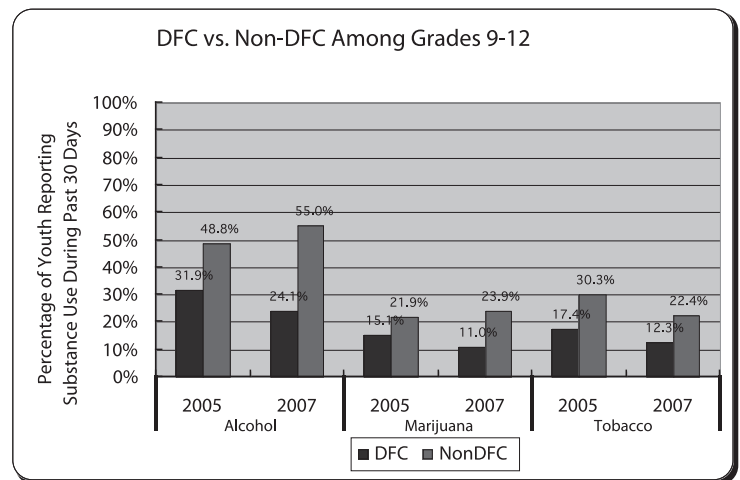


Figure 1: DFC versus Non-DFC Prevalence of Use; Source: *Battelle Memorial Institute. Interim DFC Findings Report, Executive Office of the President; Office of National Drug Control Policy. September, 2008.*

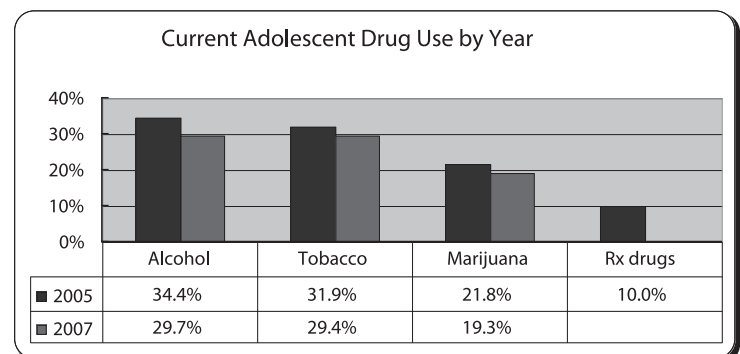


Figure 2: Current Adolescent Drug use by Year; Source: *Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 2007. Conducted by Knox County Schools and the Knox County Health Department.*

Metropolitan Drug Commission, Knox Area Rescue Ministries and Mosaic Ministries to host region's first Genesis Process Training

The Metropolitan Drug Commission, Knox Area Rescue Ministries and Mosaic Ministries will co-sponsor a 40-hour Genesis Process Counselor Training Seminar during the week of Feb. 9-13, 2009. The training will be conducted by Michael Dye, creator of the Genesis Process.

The Genesis Process is a systematic program designed to train professional and lay counselors in Relapse Prevention by treating the person first, the problem second. The Genesis Process is an integration of Biblical precepts for personal change, proven relapse prevention techniques, and the latest neurochemistry research relating to human behavior.

By partnering to host Genesis Process Counselor Training, the Metropolitan Drug Commission, Knox Area Rescue Ministries and Mosaic Ministries hope to increase the number of addiction treatment and relapse prevention programs available through faith based organizations in Knox County..

Genesis counselor training seminars consist of five days (40 hours) of intensive, interactive, classroom style teaching, punctuated with individual and group exercises. The seminar content targets strategies and techniques that have proven effectiveness. It is geared specifically for those who treat people that have

a history of reoccurring self-destructive behavior. During the training each participant will go through the process themselves and will be given a comprehensive counselors manual to assist them after the training.

Although the Genesis Process primarily targets chemical dependency, it is easily adaptable to other unhealthy dependencies such as food, work, sex, anxiety, anger and relationships. It is a successful treatment process because it deals with the universal underlying issues that create destructive coping behaviors. The Genesis Process recognizes that people are at different places in their faith and is designed to fit the client's individual level of spiritual understanding and maturity.

With Genesis Process training, professional and lay counselors alike will refine their skills, increase their effectiveness, and benefit from personal growth, along with their clients.

If you would like more information about how to register for this training, call the Metropolitan Drug Commission at (865) 588-5550. Space is limited. Cost to attend the training is \$445 if registered before Nov. 15 and \$495 after Nov. 15.



New national survey shows continued decline in youth substance abuse

Current illicit drug use among teens is continuing to decline, according to a new report by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) that shows encouraging signs that parents are stepping up and talking to their teens about the dangers of drug use. Among youth ages 12-17, the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), the Nation's largest substance use survey, shows that the significant decline in overall past month illicit drug use that began in 2002 continued through 2007, from 11.6 percent to 9.5 percent. The study also shows positive signs that teens are seeing the dangers of abusing prescription drugs and methamphetamine and are pushing back.

The survey shows reductions in youth drug use have occurred for nearly every type of illicit drug including marijuana, cocaine, hallucinogens, LSD, and Ecstasy. The survey also shows dramatic declines in meth use, down by 67 percent (from 0.3% to 0.1%) and past month prescription drug abuse among teens, which declined overall by 18 percent, from 4 percent to 3.3 percent between 2002-2007. Both declines come in the wake of Federal efforts by the Office of National Drug Control Policy's National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of these specific drugs across communities.

Alarming, despite the decline in overall prescription drug abuse, as a class of drugs, the abuse of these drugs continues to have more past year new users than any other class. In 2007, there were 2.5 million past year initiates of this class of drug compared to 2.1 million initiates of marijuana, the next most initiated drug in 2007. Knox County recently collected a baseline measure of prescription drug use and found that, among Knox County high school students (age demographic differs from previously mentioned national survey sample), 10 percent reported using prescription drugs (non-medically) within the past 30 days. While when used correctly and under the care of a health provider, prescription drugs may provide many benefits, however; there are serious health consequences to abusing these drugs or combining them with other drugs, including alcohol, as many teens do.

"It's imperative that we continue our efforts to alert and educate parents and teens to the dangers of abusing prescription drugs," says Catherine Brunson, executive director of the Metropolitan Drug Commission.

The new NSDUH survey also shows that from 2002 to 2007 there were declines in the rate of current drug use in nearly every category among 12-17-year-olds. Current marijuana use among this age group declined from 8.2 percent in 2002 to 6.7 percent in 2007. Most of this decline occurred between 2002 and 2005, when the rate reached 6.8 percent. The level of alcohol use also dropped among those aged 12 to 17, from 17.6 percent in 2002 to 15.9 percent in 2007.

Download the complete survey findings as well as the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey results from the Metropolitan Drug Commission's website at www.metrodrug.org.

Neighborhood alcohol outlets tied to kids' injury risk

Parental supervision undermined in 'disordered' areas where liquor is sold, study says

The more places that sell alcohol in a neighborhood, the greater the number of injuries that occur to children who live there, a new study reports.

The findings, published in the November issue of *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*, are based on analyzing data from 1,646 California zip code areas and local hospital discharges for childhood injuries, assaults and injuries related to child abuse from 2000.

"First, greater densities of off-premise alcohol outlets may increase the frequency of drinking among parents at home, undermining their ability to adequately supervise their children's activities," Bridget Freisthler, an assistant professor in the department of social welfare at the University of California, Los Angeles, said in a news release issued by the journal's publisher. "Second, greater densities may increase the number of people who travel in and out of the neighborhood to shop or dine at restaurants, making it more difficult for residents to know who lives in the area and who is just conducting business there. Thus, other adults in the area may be less likely to intervene when they see unsupervised children playing."

The study was a joint project between UCLA and the Prevention Research Center, Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, where Freisthler is an affiliated research scientist.

"This study shows that the effects of high concentrations of alcohol outlets are more far reaching than previously thought," she said. "Specific findings indicate that costs associated with injuries among children could be reduced if outlet densities were more carefully controlled. It is important to emphasize that these injuries are only one measurable outcome of the kind of lack of supervision and support that seems to occur in these disordered neighborhoods with high alcohol-outlet densities."

Richard Scribner, D'Angelo Professor of Alcohol Research at the Louisiana State University School of Public Health, agreed. "One's neighborhood environment determines the number and type of risks a resident of a particular neighborhood will be exposed to. This study supports the conceptual model that views the neighborhood environment as an essential component in contributing to population health."

Freisthler said she hopes her findings will lead to tougher decisions about licensing and locating alcohol outlets in neighborhoods.

"They affect the quality of life, the relationships among neighbors, levels of crime, and the safety of all of us. Obviously, we want policy makers to pay attention to these findings. But they are also important for average citizens to understand," she said.

PRIDE Team updates

We are pleased to announce the establishment of a new Metropolitan Drug Commission PRIDE Team at Carter High School. The MDC now sponsors three PRIDE Teams—Fulton, Powell and Carter High Schools. In September, each team held a planning retreat. Major projects planned for the coming year include a counter alcohol advertising campaign with local on and off-premise retail establishments, as well as teaching 5th Graders about the risks of underage drinking through SAMHSA's Reach Out Now program. Each team will also concentrate peer-led prevention efforts with community service, media awareness campaigns and fundraising. The Metropolitan Drug Commission sponsors each PRIDE Team through funding from the **Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, East Tennessee Foundation** and **First Tennessee**.



Insurance loophole increases taxpayer costs, prevents treatment and denies insurance benefits

In 1955, Tennessee’s state legislators passed laws that allow insurers to sell accident and health insurance policies that will not pay for injuries that occur while the insured person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Because of these alcohol exclusion laws (AELs), Tennessee’s courts have ruled that insurance companies can decide not to pay benefits if the insured person’s intoxication caused the injury.

Tennessee’s exclusion laws permit insurance companies to deny benefits in a variety of circumstances. The state laws allow insurance companies to:

- Write policies that include alcohol exclusion provisions.
- Exclude workers’ compensation coverage for an employee’s injuries or death while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Determine that a person’s death while under the influence of alcohol is not an accident, thereby denying the beneficiary life insurance benefits.

On average, more than 510 people in Tennessee lose their lives in alcohol-related vehicle crashes each year. Tennessee’s AELs were passed to force impaired drivers to take more responsibility for their actions and to save insurance companies money. Although AELs clearly protect insurance companies from losses, they do little to deter impaired driving because most insurance purchasers do not know about the exclusions until their benefits are denied.

Savings from Treating Emergency Patients for Alcohol Problems

Payer	Patients in ER with alcohol problems	Costs of not routinely screening and treating ER patients	Savings if screening and brief treatment were routine practice
Private Insurance	47,579	\$62,233,102	\$16,700,167
Medicaid	25,144	\$32,888,319	\$8,825,535
Medicare	6,832	\$8,936,509	\$2,398,100
Other/No Insurance	59,626	\$77,991,356	\$20,928,873
Total	139,181	\$182,049,286	\$48,852,675

Driving Up Tennessee Taxpayer Costs

Alcohol exclusion laws (AELs) in Tennessee directly increase taxpayer cost because:

- AELs can prevent hospitals from being paid if emergency room (ER) patients are identified in medical records as using alcohol or drugs.
- Therefore, hospitals don’t identify patients who have alcohol and drug problems.
- If individuals with substance use problems are not identified, they will not get the help they need.
- AELs threaten the stability of emergency care services by undermining the financial base for trauma care.

Tennessee could save more than \$48 million a year if ER patients were routinely screened for alcohol and drugs – followed by a brief treatment when necessary. (See table.)

Failing to identify and treat substance use in emergency services is likely to cost Tennessee businesses and residents \$182 million each year in extra healthcare expenses. Screening and brief treatment in hospital emergency services yields \$351 in savings per patient through reduced re-injury and re-hospitalization costs.

Time For A Change?

The National Association of Insurance Commissioners voted unanimously in 2001 to recommend repeal of AELs and prohibition of exclusions. Other groups that support elimination of exclusions include:

- National Conference of Insurance Legislators (2001)
- American Medical Association (2003)
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving
- National Commission Against Drunk Driving (2001)
- American College of Emergency Physicians
- America Public Health Association (2004)
- American Bar Association (2005)

FBI reading tutors reach out to Richard Yoakley students to increase literacy

Each year more than 60 percent of the student population at Richard Yoakley Alternative School are admitted for offenses related to drug and alcohol abuse. That is why the Metropolitan Drug Commission’s Drug Free Community Coalition has been working hard to reach out to the students at Richard Yoakley, providing incentives for good behavior and grades in addition to a combination of literacy initiatives and a career explorations program.

The alternative school system services all middle and high school students in the City of Knoxville and Knox County who have been suspended or expelled for a zero tolerance offense. It is important to note that the majority of the students at Richard Yoakley have experienced academic failure beginning in late elementary school. While sixty-five percent currently read well below grade level, thirty-eight percent or almost four out of every 10 students that attend Richard Yoakley read below a fifth grade level.

Illiteracy is just one of many factors influencing the increased risks for substance abuse among the students at Richard Yoakley, but we believe it is the most important factor that we can address. This semester, the MDC will again partner with the local FBI to provide one-on-one tutoring for students struggling with reading. These caring adults are matched with students to work on reading skills for a minimum of one hour every week. This partnership, in its second semester now, has been a great success, giving students the personalized attention they need to master basic reading skills.

Ensuring that materials and an environment to encourage reading are available is important as well, so the coalition has also focused on improving the library at RYS this year. Over the summer, coalition volunteers worked to organize the RYS Library for student use and we are pleased to announce that the **Scripps**

Howard Foundation has awarded \$5,000 for the purchase of new books and materials. The Metropolitan Drug Commission is grateful to the **Knoxville News Sentinel** for their support of this project. Additionally, **Mayor Mike Ragsdale** donated 30 computers to Richard Yoakley School.

In 2007-2008 school year, the MDC engaged 50 community volunteers in more than 250 hours of service at Richard Yoakley School. With caring adults helping to equip students with basic skills, we hope to break the cycle of substance abuse and addiction and bolster their chances for future success. If you can donate time to tutor or share your business expertise with the career explorations programs, call Leah Adinolfi at (865) 588-5550.



Special thanks to the following Richard Yoakley School Reading Tutors: (First row) Leann Lanz, Stacie Bohanan, Patti Mash, Barbara Caudill; (Second row) Wendy Bost, Cindy Slate; (Third row) Pete Kersh, Alacia Harper, Karen Lambert, Tish Harper, Sandra Greene; Not pictured: Roger Stokes, Colin Duffy, Debra White, Mitzi Lavanis and Gene Rosenburg (Community Volunteer).

Announcements

2009 Knoxville Youth Summit to be held on Saturday, Jan. 31 at Bearden High School from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Youth Action Council will take on the issue of student apathy in schools at the 2009 Knoxville Youth Summit. The theme for this year's event is "Who Cares?" and will serve as a call to action for students to get involved in everything from school recycling efforts to state education standards.

Knoxville SPHERE Awards to be held on Friday, Feb. 27 at 5 p.m. at the Knoxville Convention Center and sponsored by HOT 104.5. **Special People Helping Everyone Reach Excellence**—that is the inspiration behind this new and unique awards celebration. The Knoxville SPHERE Awards will recognize outstanding efforts of teens in the area of community service, diversity appreciation and leadership, in addition to the adults and adult groups that reach out to provide opportunities for youth development.

Poisoning and Drug Abuse—Drug Abuse Problems and Prevention in Tennessee

April 6, 2009 at the Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville, TN. Poisoning is the third leading cause of death for Tennesseans. Education is the key to poison prevention. The focus of this one day symposium will be poisoning and poison prevention. There is no fee to attend. Topics include: Types of childhood poisoning; Drugs of abuse; Inhalant abuse; Methamphetamine; Prescription drug abuse, OTC abuse, medication errors; Poison prevention education resources. *Who should attend?* Counselors, School Nurses, Social Workers, Health Department staff, Health Department Educators, Hospital Educators, Extension Educators, Community Health Council members, Nurses, staff of Children's Hospitals, Pediatricians. Sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Health Commissioner's Council on Injury Prevention and Control. For more information, contact: Rose Boyd, (615) 741-2213 or rose.boyd@state.tn.us.

The Metropolitan Drug Commission's Opinion Polling

Community is an opportunity to voice your opinion on local and national topics regarding alcohol or other drug-related issues. By registering to be a member of the polling community your opinions could be used (in complete confidentiality) to drive policies in Knoxville and Knox County. None of the answers you provide will be linked to you and no one at any institution will have access to any of your information. Your contact information will be used solely for research purposes. Feel free to contact the Metropolitan Drug Commission with any questions you may have at (865) 588-5550. To join, visit www.metrodrug.org.

MDC in Action

From Sept. 1 to Oct. 31, 2008, the MDC serviced the community by providing:

53 Treatment Referrals
2361 Prevention Materials & Resources

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To submit an announcement or article to the *Metropolitan Drug Commission's ALERT*, please call (865) 588-5550.



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VISIT OUR WEBSITE for information about starting or maintaining a Drug-free Workplace Program; parent resources; treatment options; general drug descriptions, including warning signs and effects; and local and national research about drug use.

www.metrodrug.org

This project is funded under an agreement with TCCY

