

## DESCRIPTION

This indicator describes alcohol use among Ramsey County adolescents, including students who report any use and those who report binge drinking. People between the ages of 12 and 20 drink 11 percent of all alcohol consumed in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Binge drinking for females is defined as drinking 4 or more alcoholic beverages at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other; 5 or more drinks for males.<sup>2</sup> Youth who drink are more likely to experience a host of problems including difficulties in school, legal issues, illness, unwanted, unplanned and unprotected sexual activity, suicide and homicide, car crashes, burns, falls and drowning, and changes in brain development that could be life-long.<sup>3,4,5,6</sup> Almost half of all teen suicides and more than half of adolescent deaths in Minnesota each year involve alcohol.<sup>7</sup>

## HOW WE ARE DOING

The use of alcohol, including binge drinking, among ninth-grade students in Ramsey County has been steadily declining. The Minnesota Student Survey defines binge drinking as 5 or more drinks within a couple of hours regardless of gender. In 2013, 7 percent of both male and female ninth-graders in Ramsey County reported binge drinking. In 2016, 3 percent of males and 4 percent of females said they binged on alcohol (5 or more drinks in a row) in the past 30 days. Overall, 8.7 percent of Ramsey County 9th graders responding in 2016 reported using alcohol one or more days in the 30 days prior to the survey.<sup>8</sup>

## BENCHMARK INDICATOR

Healthy People: Reduce the proportion of adolescents aged 12 to 17 years engaging in binge drinking during the past month.

U.S. Target: 8.6 percent.

## DISPARITIES

In Ramsey County, a higher percentage of females report drinking in the past 30 days than male ninth-graders. Ramsey County students who identify as “white only” reported higher rates of alcohol use in the past 12 months than students of color.<sup>8</sup> Students who were bisexual, gay, lesbian or questioning their sexual orientation are more likely to drink than their heterosexual classmates.<sup>9</sup>

## RISK FACTORS

There are both individual and community risk factors that contribute to adolescent alcohol use. Evidence shows that traumatic brain injuries in youth can lead to alcohol abuse in later life.<sup>10</sup> Community influences such as laws, cultural norms, extreme economic deprivation

## Information to note

- Alcohol use among 9th-graders in Ramsey County has been steadily declining.
- When they drink, underage youth consume more per occasion on average than adults do.
- Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused substance among youth in the U.S.

<sup>1</sup> Drinking in America: Myths, Realities and Prevention Policy. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. 2005. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=232714>. Accessed August 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Substance Abuse. HealthyPeople.2020. [https://www.healthypeople.gov/node/5206/data\\_details](https://www.healthypeople.gov/node/5206/data_details). Accessed December 5, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Miller JW, et al. Binge drinking and associated health risk behaviors among high school students. *Pediatrics*. 2007;119:76–85. doi:10.1542/peds.2006-1517.

<sup>4</sup> Bonnie RJ, O’Connell ME, eds. Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility. Committee on Developing a Strategy to Reduce and Prevent Underage Drinking. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; 2004.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General. The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking: A Guide to Action for Communities. Rockville, MD. NCBI. 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Fact Sheets – Underage Drinking. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm>. Accessed June 14, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> What’s the Big Deal? Underage Drinking in Minnesota. Minnesota Department of Public Safety. <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/educational-materials/Documents/Whats-Big-Deal-Brochure.pdf>. Accessed December 5, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Minnesota Student Survey. Minnesota Department of Education Website. <http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/DataTopic.jsp?TOPICID=2>. Accessed May 15, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> 2017 Substance Abuse in Minnesota: A State Epidemiological Profile. Substance Use in Minnesota. [http://www.sumn.org/~media/510/2017\\_Minnesota\\_Epi\\_Profile.pdf](http://www.sumn.org/~media/510/2017_Minnesota_Epi_Profile.pdf). Accessed November 2, 2017.

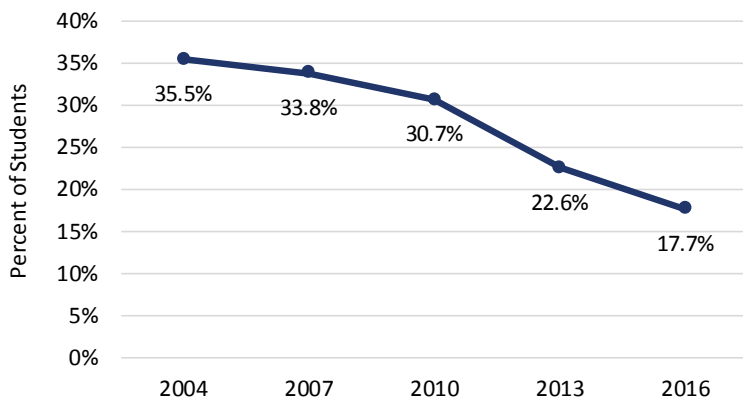
<sup>10</sup> Frontiers. Brain injury in kids might lead to alcohol abuse: Traumatic brain injuries in children and adolescents could lead to alcohol abuse in later life. *Science Daily*. 2017. <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/08/170814121052.htm>. Published August 14, 2017. Accessed August 16, 2017.

and neighborhood disorganization can also contribute to use. Interventions in alcohol use are most successful when they focus on the community in general rather than solely on individuals.<sup>11</sup>

## WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

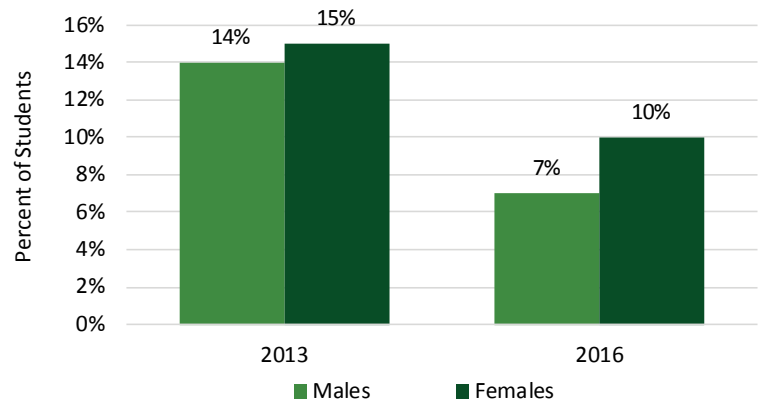
Juvenile Probation offers an on-line curriculum addressing alcohol use and marijuana to those youth on probation with substance use/abuse issues.

Alcohol Use in the Past 12 Months Among 9th-Graders, Ramsey County



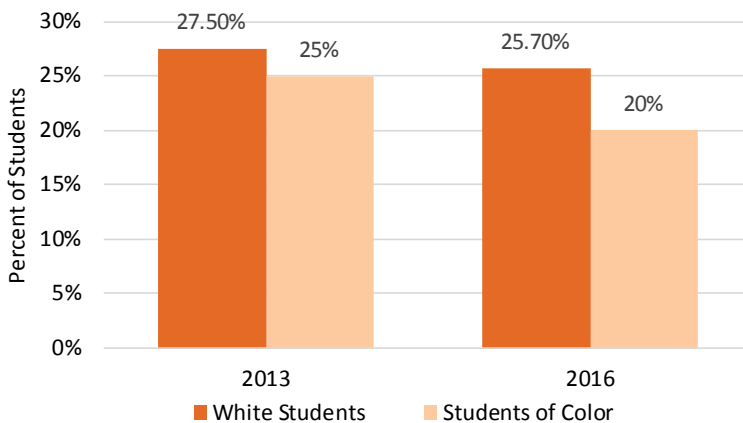
Source: Minnesota Student Survey.

Alcohol Use in the Past 30 Days Among 9th-Graders, Ramsey County



Source: Minnesota Student Survey.

Alcohol Use in the Past 12 Months, Ramsey County Students



Source: Minnesota Student Survey

<sup>11</sup> Hawkins JD, Catalano RF, Miller JY. Risk and Protective Factors for Alcohol and Other Drug Problems in Adolescence and Early Childhood: Implications for Substance Abuse Prevention. Psychol Bull. 1992;112 (1):64-105. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1529040>. Accessed August 2018.