

DESCRIPTION

Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug among adolescents. Youth also misuse a variety of prescription medications which is the fastest-growing substance use disorder in the U.S.¹ Adolescents take drugs because young brains often have difficulty with impulse control, drugs are readily available and many teens believe that drugs aren't dangerous.² Adolescents most often seek substance use treatment for marijuana while adults most often seek treatment for alcohol.³ Currently, the only access point for youth to substance use treatment is by being assessed and labeled chemically dependent. But youth would rather access treatment if substance use/misuse was viewed as a mental health issue.⁴

HOW ARE WE DOING

In Ramsey County, alcohol and marijuana are the most commonly used drugs among teens, followed by prescription stimulants and painkillers.⁵ There has been significant progress in efforts to reduce adolescent use of marijuana. After several years of little change, marijuana use in the past month among ninth-graders fell dramatically from 9.4 percent in 2013 to 6.8 percent in 2016. But it is concerning that 12.3 percent of students reported driving a vehicle after alcohol or drug use.⁵ Five percent of Ramsey County youth (8th, 9th, 11th grade) report using prescription drugs one or more days to get high in the past month, about evenly split between students of color (2.9 percent) and white students (2.1 percent)⁵; the rate is higher for students who identified as LGBTQ (9 percent). More students in 11th grade report misuse of prescription medications, followed by students in eighth grade.⁵ Ramsey County teens had 315 admissions for substance use/misuse calendar year 2016 through June 2017.⁶ Overall in 2016, 2.1 percent of responding 9th grade students reported using marijuana or another illicit substance at least once in the 12 months prior to the survey.⁷

BENCHMARK INDICATOR

Healthy People 2020:

1) Reduce the proportion of adolescents aged 12 to 17 years who misuse substances.

U.S.Target: 6.7 percent

2) Reduce the proportion of adolescents reporting use of marijuana during the past 30 days.

U.S. Target: 6.0 percent

DISPARITIES

In Ramsey County, students of color (5.5 percent) and females (5.2 percent) reported prescription misuse in the past 30 days more often than white students (4.4 percent) or males (4.7 percent) in 2016.⁵ There is a disparity between access to substance use treatment between Saint Paul and suburban areas in the county.⁴

RISK FACTORS

Bullying is a risk factor in substance use: adolescents who bully and those who are bullied are more likely to use substances than their peers.⁵

Information to note

- Marijuana use in the past month among Ramsey County 9th graders fell dramatically from 9.4% in 2013 to 6.8% in 2016.
- 5% of Ramsey County youth report using prescription drugs one or more days to get high in the past month, about evenly split between students of color and white students. 9% of students who identified as LGBTQ used drugs on one or more occasions in the past month.
- Youth would rather access treatment if substance use/misuse was viewed as a mental health issue.

¹ Rise in Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse Impacting Teens. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration Web site. <https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/hpr-resources/teen-prescription-drug-misuse-abuse>. Accessed July 20, 2017.

² Andersen SL, Teicher MH. Desperately driven and no brakes: Developmental stress exposure and subsequent risk for substance abuse. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews* 33(4):516–524, 2009

³ Principles of Adolescent Substance Use Disorder Treatment: A research-based guide. National Institute on Drug Abuse Web site. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-adolescent-substance-use-disorder-treatment-research-based-guide/introduction>. Accessed July 17, 2017.

⁴ How Do We Implement SUD Treatment and Support? Minnesota Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division. Accessed November 3, 2016.

⁵ Minnesota Student Survey. Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health database

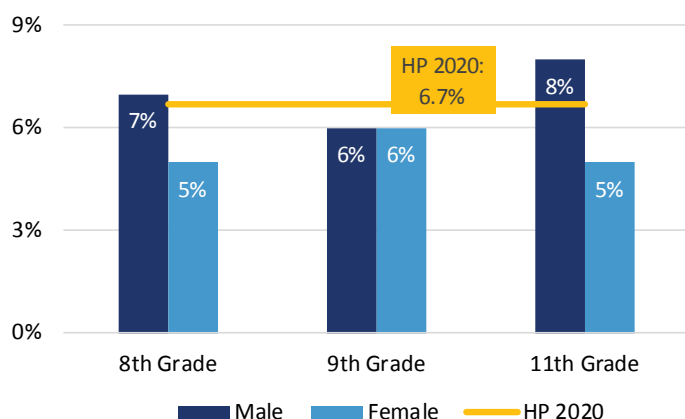
⁶ Minnesota Department of Human Services, ADAD, DAANES. Accessed January 29, 2018.

⁷ Minnesota Student Survey. Minnesota Department of Education Website. <http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/DataTopic.jsp?TOPICID=2>. Accessed May 15, 2018.

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

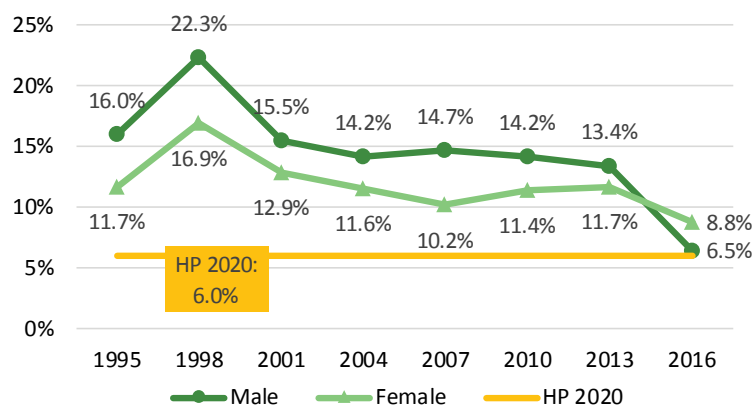
Workforce Solutions provides programming to youth and employment services to parents on public assistance. A primary focus of Workforce Solutions programming is to improve the education of participants so that they are prepared for employment opportunities. Reducing stress on families through increased earnings is at the core of Workforce Solutions programming. In recent years, Workforce Solutions has begun working with the children of parents receiving some form of public assistance. These efforts have included mentoring in the schools and working directly as a liaison with the schools to ensure that children and adolescents receive the most appropriate services while they are in school. County funded cultural consultants have met directly with school administrators and counseling staff to advocate for families from high-risk demographics on public assistance. The county intends to enhance these services over the next five years.

Students Reporting Marijuana or Other Drug Use in the Past Year, Ramsey County, 2016



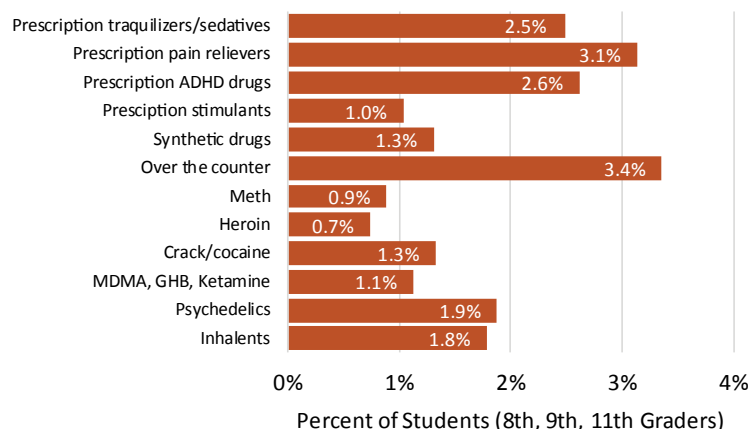
Source: Minnesota Student Survey.⁸

9th Graders Reporting Marijuana Use in Past Month, Ramsey County



Source: Minnesota Student Survey, Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health.

Substance Use/Prescription Misuse, Ramsey County 2016



Source: Minnesota Student Survey, Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health.

Student Substance Use/Misuse, Ramsey County, 2016

	Percent of students (8th, 9th, 11th Graders) reporting alcohol/drug use
Drove a motor vehicle after using alcohol/drugs on more than one occasion.	12.3 %
Needed to use a lot more alcohol/drugs to get same effect.	12 %
Attempted to cut down on use of alcohol/drugs.	7.2 %

Source: Minnesota Student Survey, Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health.

⁸ Minnesota Student Survey. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/mss/countytables/ramsey16.pdf>. Accessed March 1, 2018.