

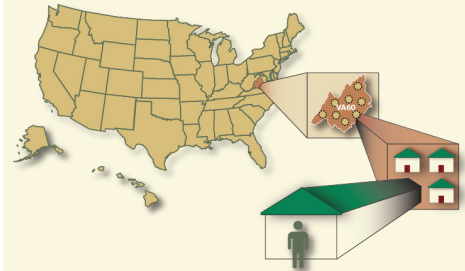
# The NSDUH Report

February 7, 2013

## Trends in Exposure to Substance Use Prevention Messages among Adolescents

Adolescents are subjected to influences that may increase their risk for substance use or protect them from it.<sup>1</sup> Substance use prevention programs are designed to reduce the influence of risk factors and increase the influence of protective factors. Parents can also affect substance use through conversations that they have with their children. Substance use prevention messages and programs are also provided through the media, schools, and other sources that have all been shown to have an association with alcohol and illicit drug use.<sup>1,2</sup> Providing adolescents with credible, accurate, and age-appropriate information about the harm associated with substance use is a key component in prevention programming because youth perception of the risks associated with substance use are related to their rates of substance use. Prevention programming can be made more effective by gaining a better understanding how youths receive prevention messages. Similarly, prevention programming can be better targeted to address underserved populations if the demographic characteristics of youths not exposed to prevention messages or programs are known.

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) asks adolescents (i.e., youths aged 12 to 17) whether they have been exposed to prevention messages in the past 12 months through parental sources (i.e., talked with at least one of their parents during the past year about the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, or drug use) and media sources (i.e., seen or heard any alcohol or drug prevention messages from sources such as posters, pamphlets, radio, or television). In addition, adolescents are asked whether they have been exposed to prevention messages in the past 12 months through school sources (i.e., special classes about drugs or alcohol in school; films, lectures, discussions, or printed information about drugs or alcohol in regular school classes such as health or physical education; or films, lectures, discussions, or distribution of printed information about drugs or alcohol outside of regular classes such as in a special assembly), as well as whether they have participated in the past



### IN BRIEF

Between the early 2000s and 2011, the percentages of adolescents reporting exposure to drug or alcohol use prevention messages in the past year through media and school sources generally declined

In 2011, 40 percent of adolescents did not talk with their parents about the dangers of substance use, and one quarter did not receive prevention messages through media or school sources

Adolescents aged 12 to 14 were less likely than those aged 15 to 17 to have received prevention messages through media sources and to have talked with a parent about the dangers of substance use but were more likely to have received messages through school sources and to have participated in a substance use prevention program outside of school

12 months in an alcohol, tobacco, or drug prevention program outside of school.

This issue of *The NSDUH Report* examines trends in adolescents' exposure to substance use prevention messages from 2002 to 2011. It also uses 2011 data to examine exposure to prevention messages by key demographic characteristics.

### Trends in Exposure to Prevention Messages

The percentage of adolescents who talked with their parents about the dangers of alcohol has been relatively stable at about 58 percent between 2002 and 2011, although it peaked at 60.3 percent in 2004. The percentage who participated in a prevention program outside of school reached a high of 13.9 percent in 2003 but after a decline in 2004, the percentage remained relatively stable between 2004 and 2011 (at about 11.5 percent). These same general patterns were seen for both age groups and for males and females (Tables 1 and 2).

The percentages of adolescents reporting exposure to drug or alcohol use prevention messages through media sources in the past year remained stable between 2002 and 2004 (at about 83 percent) and then decreased to a low of 75.1 percent in 2011 (Figure 1). The percentage of in-school adolescents (students) reporting exposure

to prevention messages in the past year through school sources remained stable between 2002 and 2006, decreased between 2006 and 2007, and then remained relatively stable through 2011 with about 75 percent of students receiving prevention messages through school sources. Similar patterns were seen among both genders and both age groups of adolescents (i.e., those aged 12 to 14 and those aged 15 to 17).

### Exposure to Prevention Messages in 2011

The majority of adolescents received prevention messages through media and school sources in 2011 (75.1 and 74.6 percent, respectively), 57.8 percent talked to their parents about the dangers of substance use, and 11.7 percent participated in a prevention program outside of school. Although this indicates most youth are exposed to prevention messages, it is important to note that 40 percent did not report talking with their parents about the dangers of substance use, and about one quarter of adolescents indicated that they did not receive prevention messages through media and school sources.

Adolescents aged 12 to 14 were more likely than those aged 15 to 17 to have received prevention messages through school sources and to have participated in a substance use prevention program outside of school

**Table 1. Exposure to Substance Use Prevention Messages in the Past Year among Adolescents, by Age Group: 2002 to 2011**

Source of Message and Age Group	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Media Sources: 12 to 14	81.1 <sup>a</sup>	81.1 <sup>a</sup>	80.1 <sup>a</sup>	78.3 <sup>a</sup>	77.0 <sup>a</sup>	74.9 <sup>a</sup>	74.9 <sup>a</sup>	72.9 <sup>a</sup>	71.7	70.4
Media Sources: 15 to 17	85.4 <sup>a</sup>	86.0 <sup>a</sup>	86.0 <sup>a</sup>	83.8 <sup>a</sup>	81.5 <sup>a</sup>	80.6	80.7	80.5	79.7	79.5
School Sources*: 12 to 14	82.5 <sup>a</sup>	81.8 <sup>a</sup>	82.0 <sup>a</sup>	81.6 <sup>a</sup>	80.5 <sup>a</sup>	79.1	79.8 <sup>a</sup>	78.6	78.9	77.7
School Sources*: 15 to 17	75.2 <sup>a</sup>	74.5 <sup>a</sup>	74.6 <sup>a</sup>	74.5 <sup>a</sup>	73.8 <sup>a</sup>	72.8	72.9	72.2	72.8	71.9
Parents: 12 to 14	59.7 <sup>a</sup>	60.2 <sup>a</sup>	62.2 <sup>a</sup>	61.3 <sup>a</sup>	61.4 <sup>a</sup>	60.6 <sup>a</sup>	60.1 <sup>a</sup>	59.5 <sup>a</sup>	59.4	57.7
Parents: 15 to 17	56.4	57.5	58.3	58.3	58.3	58.6	57.3	56.8	56.7	58.0
Prevention Program Outside of School: 12 to 14	14.3 <sup>a</sup>	15.6 <sup>a</sup>	14.2 <sup>a</sup>	13.7	13.1	13.4	12.3	13.6	12.8	12.8
Prevention Program Outside of School: 15 to 17	11.1	12.2 <sup>a</sup>	10.3	9.8	9.9	9.4 <sup>a</sup>	10.0	10.7	10.3	10.8

\* Only includes adolescents who were in school or on vacation from school at the time of the interview.

<sup>a</sup> Difference between estimate and estimate for 2010 statistically significant at the .05 level.

Source: SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2002 to 2010 (revised March 2012) and 2011.

**Table 2. Exposure to Substance Use Prevention Messages in the Past Year among Adolescents, by Gender: 2002 to 2011**

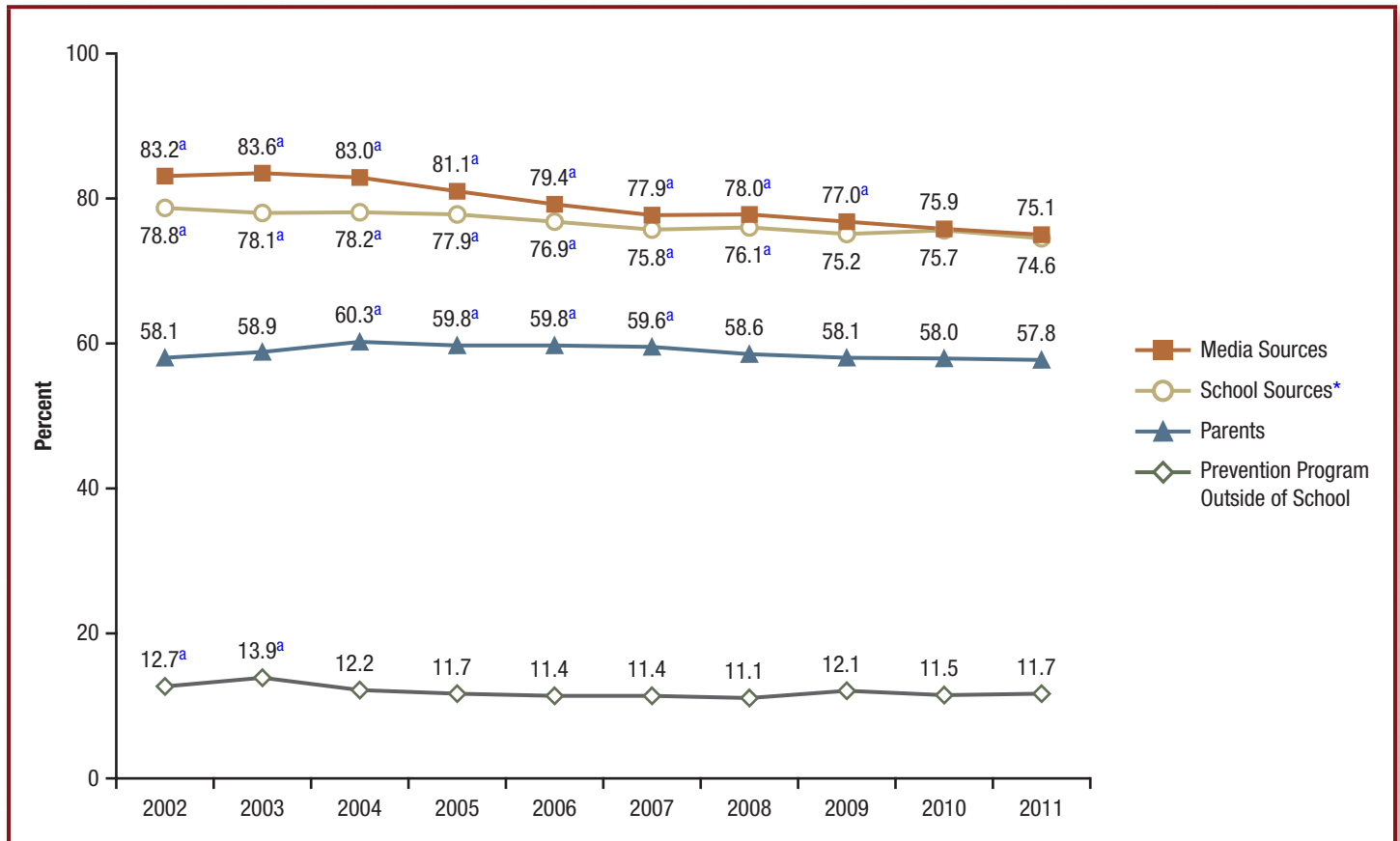
Source of Message and Gender	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Media Sources: Male	81.4 <sup>a</sup>	81.4 <sup>a</sup>	81.2 <sup>a</sup>	80.1 <sup>a</sup>	77.5 <sup>a</sup>	76.1 <sup>a</sup>	76.2 <sup>a</sup>	75.8 <sup>a</sup>	73.8	73.8
Media Sources: Female	85.1 <sup>a</sup>	85.8 <sup>a</sup>	84.9 <sup>a</sup>	82.1 <sup>a</sup>	81.3 <sup>a</sup>	79.7 <sup>a</sup>	79.8 <sup>a</sup>	78.1 <sup>a</sup>	78.0 <sup>a</sup>	76.4
School Sources*: Male	76.7 <sup>a</sup>	75.2 <sup>a</sup>	75.8 <sup>a</sup>	75.4 <sup>a</sup>	75.0 <sup>a</sup>	74.5	74.4	73.0	74.2	73.3
School Sources*: Female	81.1 <sup>a</sup>	81.1 <sup>a</sup>	80.7 <sup>a</sup>	80.5 <sup>a</sup>	78.9 <sup>a</sup>	77.2	77.9 <sup>a</sup>	77.4	77.3	76.0
Parents: Male	55.6	56.5	58.3	58.6	57.8	57.5	57.6	57.5	56.8	56.9
Parents: Female	60.6 <sup>a</sup>	61.3 <sup>a</sup>	62.4 <sup>a</sup>	61.1 <sup>a</sup>	61.9 <sup>a</sup>	61.7 <sup>a</sup>	59.7	58.7	59.2	58.8
Prevention Program Outside of School: Male	12.5	13.5	12.1	11.8	11.5	11.7	11.3	12.1	11.8	12.4
Prevention Program Outside of School: Female	12.9 <sup>a</sup>	14.3 <sup>a</sup>	12.4 <sup>a</sup>	11.6	11.4	11.0	10.9	12.0	11.2	11.0

\* Only includes adolescents who were in school or on vacation from school at the time of the interview.

<sup>a</sup> Difference between estimate and estimate for 2010 statistically significant at the .05 level.

Source: SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2002 to 2010 (revised March 2012) and 2011.

**Figure 1. Trends in Exposure to Substance Use Prevention Messages in the Past Year among Adolescents: 2002 to 2011**



\* Only includes adolescents who were in school or on vacation from school at the time of the interview.

<sup>a</sup> Difference between estimate and estimate for 2010 statistically significant at the .05 level.

Source: SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2002 to 2010 (revised March 2012) and 2011.

(Table 1). For example, 77.7 percent of adolescents aged 12 to 14 received prevention messages through school sources, compared with 71.9 percent of those aged 15 to 17. Adolescents aged 12 to 14 were less likely than those aged 15 to 17 to have received prevention messages through media sources (70.4 vs. 79.5 percent) and to have talked to a parent about the dangers of substance use (57.7 vs. 58.0 percent).

In 2011, females were more likely than males to have talked with a parent about the dangers of substance use, to have received prevention messages through media sources, and to have received prevention messages through school sources in the past year (Table 2). For example, 76.4 percent of females received prevention messages through media sources compared with 73.8 percent of males. Males and females were equally likely to have participated in a substance use prevention program outside of school.

## Discussion

Between the early 2000s and 2011, the percentages of adolescents reporting exposure to drug or alcohol use prevention messages in the past year through media and school sources generally declined; however, in each year of data presented in this report, the majority of adolescents received substance use prevention messages through these sources. The percentage of adolescents

who talked with their parents about the dangers of substance use remained relatively stable over the 10-year period, but 40 percent of adolescents did not have such conversations. Although it is encouraging that the majority of adolescents are receiving prevention messages, practitioners, policymakers, educators, and parents should note the percentage of adolescents who did not receive prevention messages through these sources. For example, about 25 percent of in-school adolescents did not receive prevention messages through school sources. These findings suggest the need for continued vigilance to ensure that our Nation's adolescents are receiving prevention messages.

## End Notes

1. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2003). *Preventing drug use among children and adolescents: A research-based guide for parents, educators, and community leaders* (2nd ed.; NIH Publication No. 04-4212B). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health. Retrieved from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/preventingdruguse.pdf>
2. Skiba, D., Monroe, J., & Wodarski, J. S. (2004). Adolescent substance use: Reviewing the effectiveness of prevention strategies. *Social Work, 49*(3), 343-353.

## Suggested Citation

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The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their place of residence.

*The NSDUH Report* is prepared by the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality (CBHSQ), SAMHSA, and by RTI International in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. (RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.)

Information on the most recent NSDUH is available in the following publication:

Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2012). *Results from the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of national findings* (HHS Publication No. SMA 12-4713, NSDUH Series H-44). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Also available online: <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH.aspx>.



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