

HEALTHY PEOPLE 2010 GOAL:

Increase the percentage of high school seniors who remain alcohol and drug free to 29% and 56%, respectively.

Increase to 80% the proportion of adolescents aged 12 to 17 who perceive a great risk associated with substance abuse.

Increase the proportion of middle, junior high and senior high schools that provide comprehensive school health education to prevent tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use and addiction to 95%.

Definition of Indicator

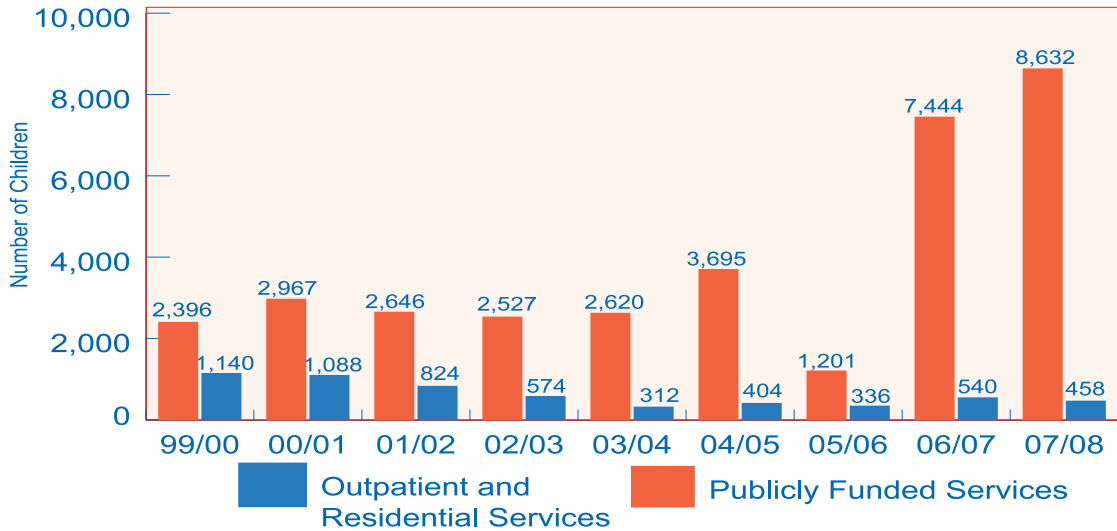
The substance abuse services indicator reports the number and percent of adolescents receiving substance abuse services provided by the Orange County Health Care Agency's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services (ADAS). This indicator reflects the trend of adolescent utilization of services provided by ADAS rather than the absolute number of adolescents needing services or using alcohol or other drugs in Orange County.

Findings

During 2007/08, 8,632 adolescents received publicly funded services for alcohol and drug abuse. The majority, 8,174 (95%) received specialized services, which include all ADAS provided to adolescents, age 17 and under, receiving any services (prevention or treatment) at the camps, or any prevention services in the community including services at Alternative and Continuation schools, services at general high schools and community health and Red Ribbon fairs. Of the remaining 458 youth, 314 adolescents received outpatient treatment and recovery services and 144 adolescents received inpatient residential services, of which 71% were males.

The ethnicity of the adolescents in treatment was 56.5% Hispanic, 33.5% White, 3.7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2.5% Black or African-American, 0.3% American Indian and 3.5%, Other.

Adolescents 17 and Under Receiving Substance Abuse Services, 1999/00* to 2007/08



*Data prior to 1999 did not break out specialized services, therefore it is no longer reported.

Trends

From 1999/00 to 2007/08, there was a 260% increase of adolescents receiving all substance abuse services from 2,396 to 8,632. For the same time period, the outpatient and residential treatment services decreased by 60% from 1,140 to 458.

RELATED INDICATORS:

- Substance-Exposed Infants
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Mental Health Services
- Juvenile Arrests

Why is this Important?

Adolescents who engage in the illicit use of alcohol and other drugs place themselves at increased risk for a variety of adverse consequences including health problems, mental health issues, educational failure, lowered self-esteem, various physical dangers, and involvement in the juvenile justice system.¹ According to a report by the Orange County Probation Department (October 2005), of 3,599 juveniles on probation, 68% admitted “occasional to frequent abuse” of drugs or alcohol.² Adolescents who use alcohol are seven times more likely to engage in sexual activities, putting them at significantly greater risk for acquiring sexually transmitted diseases.³ Of teens that are sexually active, 29% reported that alcohol or drug use influenced their decision to engage in sexual activities—with 24% becoming more sexually involved than they had planned.

What's Happening in Orange County?

According to the 2007/08 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) data, the prevalence rates for alcohol and marijuana usage are similar to those in the 2005/06 report. The 2007/08 CHKS data clearly indicates that access to these substances is not a significant obstacle to young people and is a major risk factor for underage drinking and other drug use. Additionally, a number of national studies and published reports indicate that the intentional abuse of prescription drugs and over-the-counter (OTC) medications among adolescents is a growing concern across the country. Among young people ages 12-17, prescription drugs have become the second most abused drug behind marijuana.

- The 2007/08 CHKS data indicated that 59% of 11th graders reported alcohol usage and 35% reported drinking in the past 30 days. In addition, 33% of 11th graders reported using marijuana with 17% reporting usage in the last 30 days. Additionally, 23% of 11th graders reported at least one episode of binge drinking (having 5 or more drinks in a sitting) in the past 30 days.
- The 2007/08 CHKS data indicated that 59% of 9th graders reported that it is fairly easy or very easy to obtain alcohol and 45% say it is fairly easy/very easy to obtain marijuana; the comparative ease-of-access figures for 11th graders are 74% for alcohol and 65% for marijuana.
- In Orange County, 17% of 11th graders report having used prescription pain killers (e.g. Vicodin, OxyContin) to get high and 19% have similarly used OTC medications (primarily cough and cold medicines containing dextromorphan). These rates are comparable to both statewide and nationally reported usage of these substances by teenagers.

What's working:

- The large increase in specialized services can be explained by the addition of the ADAS Prevention Team and their prevention efforts both in the community and at the camps and the increase in prevention service contacts.
- During this fiscal year, the strategic plan for the prevention team changed from not only holding alcohol and drug awareness community events but to assisting other agencies in holding their own community events, further increasing the Prevention Team's impact.
- Staff of the Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team (ADEPT) implemented community and school-based initiatives to address alcohol and other drug issues impacting youth.
- A targeted awareness effort designed to counter the growing prevalence of prescription and OTC drug use among adolescents is underway.

 See page 150 in Supplemental Tables for additional data

NATIONWIDE:

Eighth, tenth, and twelfth graders across the country are continuing to show a gradual decline in the proportions reporting use of illicit drugs, according to the 34th national survey in the Monitoring the Future (MTF) series conducted by scientists at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research.

There was a decline in the proportion of students reporting use of any illicit drug other than marijuana modestly, statistically significant only in 10th grade, where annual prevalence—the percentage reporting any use in the prior 12 months—declined by 1.7 percentage points to 11.3%. (The comparable rates at 8th and 12th grades stood at 7.4% and 18.3%, respectively in 2008).⁴

DATA SOURCE:

Orange County Health Care Agency, Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services

NOTES:

- ¹ Orange County Probation Research Department, October 2005.
- ² The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA), December 1999.
- ³ The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2006.
- ⁴ Johnston, L.D., et al. (2008). www.monitoringthefuture.org