

IN AFTERMATH OF 9/11 STUDENT DRUG USE FALLS DRAMATICALLY
“Best report in over a decade,” says author of Pride study

- Overall illicit drug use fell to lowest level in eight years
- Drinking and smoking at lowest levels in 15 years
- Schools, parents, nation taking more responsibility for prevention

WASHINGTON, July 17 – Following the September 11 terrorist attacks some had worried that Americans might deal with the resultant anxiety by consuming more alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Among U.S. students that feared consequence failed to materialize.

The 2001-2002 Pride Survey of 101,882 students nationwide in grades 6-12 shows that alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use by students declined significantly following the terrorist attacks. The survey covers data that was collected from August 2001 until June 2002.

Combined annual use of any illicit drug fell from 24.6 to 22.3 percent – a rate of decline of nine percent, while combined annual use of any alcoholic beverage fell from 52.1 to 50.4 percent – a three percent rate of decline. (Note: The rate of decline is determined by subtracting the small number from the large number and dividing the result by large number).

Progress toward reducing adolescent smoking was even more evident. The number of students reporting that they smoked cigarettes at least once in the past year fell from 30.5 to 26.4 percent – a rate of decline of 13 percent.

The percentages of students who reported they drank alcohol or smoked cigarettes in the past year were the lowest in the 15-year history of Pride Surveys’ national report. The level of any illicit drug use – including marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens and other drugs – dropped to the lowest level since the 1993-94 school year.

US STUDENTS AFTER 9/11	
RATE OF DECLINE GRADES 6-12 8/00-6/01 vs. 8/01-6/02	
Any Drug*	-9%
Any* Alcohol	-3%
Cigarettes	-13%

*Any illicit drug use means a student used at least one of these drugs: marijuana, cocaine, uppers, downers, inhalants, hallucinogens, heroin and steroids. Any alcohol includes beer, wine coolers and liquor.

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COMPREHENSIVE PROGRESS
 % DRUG USE

		Annual use		Monthly use	
		00-01	01-02	00-01	01-02
Any Drug	Grades 6-8 (junior high)	13.7	11.9	7.0	6.0
	Grades 9-12 (senior high)	35.3	31.6	22.5	20.0
	12 th Grade	41.4	37.4	26.6	23.5
	Total	24.6	22.3	14.8	13.4
Any Alcohol	Grades 6-8	36.5	34.0	11.0	9.6
	Grades 9-12	67.5	65.0	37.0	34.1
	12 th Grade	74.6	72.3	46.4	43.5
	Total	52.1	50.4	24.1	22.6
Cigarettes	Grades 6-8	19.1	16.2	9.0	7.3
	Grades 9-12	41.8	35.6	27.6	22.6
	12 th Grade	48.1	41.7	35.5	28.7
	Total	30.5	26.4	18.4	15.4

All changes statistically significant at .05 level using chi-square with variables year and no-use/use.

Measured by annual and monthly use, consumption of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs fell for all drug types studied or remained statistically unchanged. This trend held true at every grade level.

Thomas J. Gleaton, Ed.D., author of the study, called it the “best report on adolescent behaviors in over a decade.”

Schools, parents, community, national efforts praised

“Following 9/11 Americans seemed to refocus on family, community, spirituality and nation. That renewed awareness shows up in the data. More students said their teachers and parents cautioned them about drug use, fewer joined gangs, more participated in extra-curricular school activities, and more attended religious services,” Gleaton said.

PREVENTION PAYS
 % ANY ILLICIT DRUG USE

Students report:	A lot	Never
Teachers warn about drugs	15	32
Parents warn about drugs	17	31
Extra-curricular activities	17	32
Attend religious services	13	36

Students in the Pride Survey who said their teachers and parents warn them “a lot” about drugs reported less drug use than students who said their teachers and parents never do so (15 versus 32 percent for teacher warnings and 17 versus 31 percent for parental warnings).

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Students who participated in extra-curricular school activities also used less drugs (17 percent for those who participate “a lot” versus 32 percent for those who “never” participate). A similar pattern emerged for students who attended religious services “a lot” compared to those who “never” attended (13 versus 36 percent drug use).

“Schools, parents, community groups and the faith community should be commended for their vigilance following the September attacks. Though the nation was devastated and torn away from our daily routines, the important function of child rearing was not interrupted,” Gleaton said.

Schools provide a safer, more drug-free environment

While the school day is often portrayed as being riddled with drugs and violence, the Pride data indicate a different story compared to other periods of the week.

WHEN STUDENTS USE DRUGS			
	% ANNUAL USE		
	Beer	Liquor	Marijuana
During school	1	1	2
Weekends	26	24	14

Asked when they used marijuana, two percent of students said during school compared with 14 percent who said they smoked pot on weekends. Less than one percent (0.9 percent) said they drank beer and liquor during school while nearly a quarter of students said they drank on weekends (26.4 percent beer; 23.9 percent liquor).

Asked about carrying guns, 2.3 percent of students said they carried a gun to school compared with 9.1 percent who said they have carried a gun while not at school.

WHERE STUDENTS CARRY GUNS	
% ONCE OR MORE	
At school	2.3
Not at school	9.1

Scholarship was shown to be associated with less drug use. Just 13 percent of students who answered that they made good grades “a lot” also reported drug use, while 63 percent of students who replied they “never” made good grades reported using drugs.

The number of students who said they were afraid another student might hurt them at school fell from 23.4 percent last year to 22.9 percent. When the question was first asked on the Pride questionnaire in 1996-97, 25.5 percent said they were afraid of being harmed by another student.

The survey found that teachers were as likely as parents to engage young people in discussions about the dangers of drug use. More than eight out of 10 students said their teachers warned them about drug use (82%) compared to 84% of students who said their parents did so.

National leadership important

With John P. Walters, director of White House drug policy, and Rep. Rob Portman, R-OH, at his side Gleaton also gave credit to national leadership.

Gleaton said data collected by Pride Surveys during a statewide study of Ohio students showed the effectiveness of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign conducted by the Office of National Drug Control Policy and community anti-drug coalitions like one spearheaded by Portman in the Cincinnati area, Coalition for a Drug-Free Greater Cincinnati.

More than nine out of ten (95 percent) students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 in Ohio said they have seen and heard anti-drug commercials on television and radio within the past three months, and 74.5 percent said the commercials have made them less likely to use drugs. (The Pride Surveys' national questionnaire does not inquire about the media campaign.)

The Ohio study also found that use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs was lower in Ohio and the Cincinnati coalition area than in the nation.

Real progress at last in the 12th grade

Last July, Pride Surveys reported a slight increase in student drug use over the previous year, due partly to intractable use by 12th grade students. Over a five-year period 12th grade use of illicit drugs remained constant at about 41 percent on an annual basis.

That changed significantly during the 2001-2002 school year when students in the 12th grade reported 37.4 percent annual use of any illicit drug, compared with 41.4 percent the year before – a 10 percent rate of decline.

ANY ILLICIT DRUG 12 TH GRADE							Rate Decline 00-01/01-02
% ANNUAL USE							
96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	00-02		
41.6	41.0	40.2	40.2	41.4	37.4	-10%	

The graduating class of 2002 was the first group of students who had been exposed to the media campaign through all four years of high school.

Worrisome signs

While no statistically significant increase was spotted for any drug, the use of several drugs remained statistically unchanged at certain grade levels.

Among students in grades 6-8, the use of cocaine, downers and heroin was unchanged for annual and monthly use. Monthly inhalant and hallucinogen use also remained level.

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Among 12th graders, monthly cocaine, heroin and steroid use remained the same.

“Isolating these trouble spots assists local, state and Federal officials in pinpointing their program responses,” Gleaton said.

The Pride Survey

The Atlanta-based Pride Survey began as a tool to help local school systems assess alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems. At the end of the 1987-88 school year, a national summary was developed. In 1993-94 questions were added about other student behaviors, such as carrying a gun to school, making and receiving threats, physical harm, and gang membership.

The Pride Survey is designated by Federal law as an official measure of the effectiveness of the White House drug policy (H.R. 4328 Div. C Title VII Sec. 706 (a)(4)(B), Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998).

A full copy of the report is available at www.pridesurveys.com.

Methodology

The study was conducted during the 2001-02 school year and involved students nationwide. The Pride Survey represents data from sixth through 12th grade students collected between August 2001 and June 2002. Participating schools are sent the Pride Questionnaire with explicit instructions for administering the anonymous, self-report instrument. Schools that administer the Pride Questionnaire do so voluntarily or in compliance with a school district or state request.

Comparing Pride Survey to others

Results of the Pride Survey are usually consistent with the National Institute on Drug Abuse’s Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF), which has not been published for the 2001-02 school year.

ANY ILLICIT DRUG ANNUAL USE – PRIDE VS. MONITORING THE FUTURE (MTF)															
	2000-2001			1999-00			1998-99			1997-98			1996-97		
Grade	8	10	12	8	10	12	8	10	12	8	10	12	8	10	12
Pride	19.8	34.4	41.4	19.3	33.9	40.2	22.1	35.0	40.2	25.1	37.2	41.0	27.9	39.1	41.6
MTF	19.5	37.2	41.4	19.5	36.4	40.9	20.5	35.9	42.1	21.0	35.0	41.4	22.1	38.5	42.4
Diff.	-0.3	+2.8	0.0	+0.2	+2.5	+0.7	-1.6	+0.9	+1.9	-4.1	-2.2	+0.4	-5.8	-0.6	+0.8

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A third survey, the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHS) has historically shown significantly lower drug use in the age 12 to 17 cohort than either the Pride Survey or Monitoring the Future. This table compares the Pride Survey with NHS. The NHS for the year 2001 has not been released.

ANY ILLICIT DRUG MONTHLY USE	
2000-2001 PRIDE VS. 2000 NHS AGES 12 TO 17	
Pride	14.8
NHS	9.7
Difference	+5.1

The 2001-02 Pride Survey was released in a news conference July 17, 2002, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Participating in the announcement were Gleaton and John P. Walters, director, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President, Luceille Fleming, director, Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, Donald Ian Macdonald, M.D., chairman and medical director, Employee Health Programs. Invited to represent Congress was Rep. Rob Portman, R-OH.

Individual state or regional breakdowns are not available.

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