



Drug-Free Youth

PRESS RELEASE

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Junior high students continue to show increases in drug use; Signs of progress are seen in high school age group; Help for parents provided in PRIDE Tool Box

Washington, Oct. 28 – The nation’s largest student drug survey today offered a mixed report card on American youth: a five-year frenzy of drug use may have stabilized among older students, but among 11- to 14-year-olds illegal drug use remains on the rise.

In releasing the tenth annual PRIDE Survey of 141,077 students in junior and senior high school, experts said the monthly use of most drugs during the 1996-97 school year by students in senior high school (grades 9-12) was unchanged.

But students in junior high (grades 6-8) reported statistically significant increases in monthly use of marijuana, cocaine, uppers, downers, hallucinogens, and heroin. One-tenth (11 percent) of junior high students, mostly ages 11-14, were current (monthly) drug users.

Cigarettes, wine cooler, and liquor use remained unchanged by junior high students. Decreases were reported for inhalants and beer.

At the high school level, increases were reported in monthly cigarette and liquor use, while decreases were found in inhalant and hallucinogen use. All other drug categories remained statistically unchanged.

“Though I caution against too much optimism, there is a glimmer of hope in the data. The increases this year are not nearly as steep as we’ve seen in recent years, and in some cases we observed slight decreases,” said Thomas J. Gleaton, president of PRIDE, the Atlanta-based organization that conducted the survey.

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In the fall of 1992, PRIDE was first to report that teen drug use had reversed more than a decade of steady decline. Since then, some drugs have more than doubled in use.

Gleaton added, "Senior high drug use may have stalled, but it is stalled at the highest levels we have measured in ten years. Until we see sharp declines in use at all grade levels, there will be no reason to rejoice."

One quarter of senior high students (25%) used an illicit drug on a monthly or more frequent basis in the past school year. Seven percent said they took illegal drugs daily, a figure that rose to 8 percent for the twelfth grade.

More parents are talking

For the first time in five years, the percent of students who said their parents talk with them "often" or "a lot" about the dangers of alcohol and drugs rose slightly from 29.6 percent to 30.8 percent. In 1991-92, 38.7 percent of students said they received frequent warnings from their parents.

Annual use of any illicit drug by students who are warned "a lot" by their parents is lower (26 percent) than among students who "never" get parental warnings (37 percent) – a 30 percent relative decrease.

Two-thirds (67 percent) of students said their parents regularly set clear rules for them, but only half (51 percent) said they are punished when they break the rules.

Annual use of any illicit drug was dramatically lower (21.7 percent) among students who said their parents set clear rules "a lot" versus students who said their parents "never" set clear rules (50.7 percent) – a 57 percent relative decrease.

More students (48 percent) said they attend parties "often" or "a lot" than church (46 percent), and 15 percent said they are very likely to use drugs or alcohol at parties.

Students were twice as likely to smoke marijuana at home than at school (13.5 percent vs. 6.5 percent), and more than four times more likely to smoke pot at a friend's house than at school (28.5 percent vs. 6.5 percent).

In order, the times when students were most likely to smoke pot were: weekends, weeknights, after school, before school, and during school.

PRIDE Tool Box unveiled

As it announced the survey results, PRIDE unveiled an innovative resource that empowers parents to combat the drug scourge.

"This study accentuates the important role that parents play in preventing drug use," Gleaton said. "Parents need all the tools they can get to prevent drug use."

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The PRIDE Tool Box will be distributed by 25,000 youth in some 500 U.S. communities beginning today. It contains a guidebook, compact disc, two-way family pledge, family bulletin board, refrigerator magnet and informational brochure on PDT-90 patented hair analysis drug testing technology.

For more information, parents can call 1-800-853-7867. (See separate press release.)

Liquor and cigarette use on the rise

Use of two deadly, legal drugs – alcohol and cigarettes – showed no abatement. Monthly cigarette smoking rose to 35 percent among senior high students, while monthly use of hard liquor rose to 29 percent.

Cigarettes and liquor showed the strongest increases of any drug categories and were the only two drugs in which increases of two percentage points or more were registered. In recent years, the PRIDE Survey has seen one-year increases of up to 6 percentage points for some drugs.

Annual use of cigarettes and liquor rose 2.4 percent among twelfth grades, from 50 percent to 52.4 percent in the case of cigarettes, and from 59.9 percent to 62.3 percent for liquor.

Gleaton said aggressive marketing strategies by distillers and cigarette makers, coupled with social trends such as the popularity of cigar bars and martini clubs, may have contributed to greater acceptance of smoking and hard liquor among teen-agers.

Beer use remained mostly flat, although an increase in senior high annual use from 59.1 percent to 59.6 percent was statistically significant. Use fell on a monthly basis in junior high. In all cases, drinking wine coolers remained unchanged.

Despite widespread public attention to adolescent cigarette smoking, more young people lit up last year than at any time in the ten years of the survey. They said cigarettes are easy to find, and a surprising number said that cigarettes present no serious health threat.

One half of the senior high (50 percent) said they smoked cigarettes in the past year, up 2 percent from the year before, and 20 percent said they smoked daily.

Over two-thirds of students (68 percent) said cigarettes were fairly easy or very easy to get. Nearly a quarter of students (24 percent) thought cigarettes posed only a limited threat to health, with 4 percent saying there is no health risk in smoking.

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Methodology

The study was conducted during the 1996-97 school year and involved 141,077 students from 28 states. The PRIDE Survey represents data from sixth through twelfth grade students conducted between September and June of the school year. 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 generally consistent with the National Institute on Drug Abuse’s Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF). Data from MTF has not been released for the 1996-97 school year.

Any Illicit Drug Annual Use: PRIDE vs. Monitoring the Future (MTF)

YEAR	1996-97		1995-96			1995-95			1993-94			1992-93			1991-92			1990-91			
Grade	8	10	12	8	10	12	8	10	12	8	10	12	8	10	12	8	10	12	8	10	12
PRIDE	27.9	39.1	41.6	25.9	38.0	40.8	21.3	32.3	35.8	19.3	28.6	31.9	15.0	22.6	28.2	13.5	21.1	25.1	13.0	20.5	24.8
MTF				23.6	37.5	40.2	21.4	33.3	39.0	18.5	30.0	35.8	15.1	24.7	31.0	12.9	20.2	27.1	11.3	21.4	29.4
Difference				-2.3	-0.5	-0.6	+0.1	+1.0	+3.2	-0.8	+1.4	+3.9	+0.1	+2.1	+2.8	-0.6	-0.9	+2.0	-1.7	+0.9	+4.6

A third survey, the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHS) has historically shown significantly lower drug use in the age 12-17 cohort than either the PRIDE Survey or the Monitoring the Future Survey. The following table compares the PRIDE Survey with NHS, which was released Aug. 6, 1997 by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Any Illicit Drug Monthly Use: PRIDE vs. National Household Survey (NHS)

Age	12-17	12-13	14-15	16-17	18-20
PRIDE	18.3	8.6	19.7	27.0	27.8
NHS	9.0	2.2	8.8	15.6	20.0
Difference	-9.3	-6.4	-10.9	-11.4	-7.8

Information from the PRIDE Survey is found in the President’s National Drug Control Strategy and the Bureau of Justice Statistics Sourcebook. It is also used by Congress as an indicator of student drug use.

A copy of the survey methodology is available upon request.

States represented in the 1996-97 PRIDE Survey: Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Wyoming. State by state breakdowns are not available.

Results from the 1996-97 PRIDE Survey were announced at a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington. Participating were Thomas J. Gleaton, Ed.D., president of PRIDE, and co-author of the survey, Gen. Barry R. McCaffrey (Ret.), director of the Office of National Drug Control Strategy, and U.S. Sen. Paul Coverdell, R-GA.

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PRIDE Survey
Percentage of Students Who Report Using Drugs

DRUG	GRADE LEVEL	ANNUAL USE			MONTHLY USE		
		1995-96	1996-97	change	1995-96	1996-97	change
Cigarettes	Junior High	31.1	31.8	+0.7*	17.2	17.3	+0.1
	Senior High	48.2	50.2	+2.0*	33.4	34.7	+1.3*
	12th Graders	50.0	52.4	+2.4*	36.2	38.3	+2.1*
Beer	Junior High	33.1	33.2	+0.1	12.5	12.1	-0.4*
	Senior High	59.1	59.6	+0.5*	34.3	34.4	+0.1
	12th Graders	64.9	65.3	+0.4	41.2	41.7	+0.5
Wine Coolers	Junior High	33.2	33.6	+0.4	10.8	10.8	+0.0
	Senior High	52.6	52.9	+0.3	22.3	22.3	+0.0
	12th Graders	54.5	55.4	+0.9	22.9	23.7	+0.8
Liquor	Junior High	22.9	23.7	+0.8*	9.0	9.1	+0.1
	Senior High	53.4	54.9	+1.5*	28.2	28.7	+0.5*
	12th Graders	59.9	62.3	+2.4*	32.8	34.0	+1.2*
Any Alcohol	Junior High	44.5	44.7	+0.2	16.4	16.2	-0.2
	Senior High	70.6	71.0	+0.4	39.8	39.9	+0.1
	12th Graders	75.6	76.5	+0.9	46.4	46.7	+0.3
Marijuana	Junior High	13.6	14.7	+1.1*	8.1	8.6	+0.5*
	Senior High	34.0	35.8	+1.8*	22.3	22.7	+0.4
	12th Graders	37.9	39.4	+1.5*	24.3	24.4	+0.1
Cocaine	Junior High	2.7	3.0	+0.3*	1.5	1.7	+0.2*
	Senior High	5.6	5.9	+0.3*	2.9	3.0	+0.1
	12th Graders	7.1	7.0	-0.1	3.6	3.6	+0.0
Uppers	Junior High	4.6	4.9	+0.3*	2.4	2.6	+0.2*
	Senior High	10.5	10.3	-0.2	5.2	5.3	+0.1
	12th Graders	11.6	10.7	-0.9*	5.8	5.6	-0.2
Downers	Junior High	3.5	4.0	+0.5*	1.9	2.1	+0.2*
	Senior High	7.1	7.2	+0.1	3.8	3.8	+0.0
	12th Graders	7.4	7.4	+0.0	4.1	3.9	-0.2
Inhalants	Junior High	8.5	8.9	+0.4*	3.5	3.7	+0.2
	Senior High	7.6	7.1	-0.5*	3.4	3.1	-0.3*
	12th Graders	6.6	5.8	-0.8*	3.1	2.7	-0.4*
Hallucinogens	Junior High	3.3	3.6	+0.3*	1.8	2.0	+0.2*
	Senior High	9.5	9.5	+0.0	4.5	4.2	-0.3*
	12th Graders	12.1	11.7	-0.4	5.1	4.6	-0.5
Heroin	Junior High	2.1	2.4	+0.3*	1.3	1.5	+0.2*
	Senior High	3.1	3.1	+0.0	1.9	1.9	+0.0
	12th Graders	3.5	3.4	-0.1	2.2	2.1	-0.1
Designer Drugs	Junior High	3.8	4.1	+0.3*	2.1	2.2	+0.1
	Senior High	5.1	5.0	-0.1	2.8	2.6	-0.2
	12th Graders	5.2	4.8	-0.4	2.8	2.6	-0.2
Any Illicit Drugs	Junior High	19.7	20.7	+1.0*	10.9	11.4	+0.5*
	Senior High	37.6	38.9	+1.3*	24.4	24.6	+0.2
	12th Graders	40.8	41.6	+0.8	26.5	26.1	-0.4

*Statistically significant difference at .05 level using chi-square with variables year & no-use/use.

N-Sizes		
Grade	1995-96	1996-97
Junior High	58596	68071
Senior High	70964	73006
12th Graders	14261	15532