



Drug use among Indiana youth sees biggest drop in years

New data also include first report on methamphetamines and gambling

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BLOOMINGTON, Ind. -- A new report on alcohol, tobacco and other drug use by the Indiana Prevention Resource Center at Indiana University Bloomington demonstrates a significant downward trend in youth drug use and includes the agency's first compilation of data concerning methamphetamine use and gambling by sixth- through 12th-grade students. For most drugs, rates of use are at their lowest since 1991.

The full report, which is the IPRC's 15th annual report on alcohol, tobacco and other drug use by Indiana adolescents, will be available online on Monday (Aug. 1) at <http://www.drugs.indiana.edu>. The following are major points from the survey results:

Gateway drugs drop steeply -- Reported use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and inhalants continued to decline this year, in many cases by more than three percentage points. Binge drinking and marijuana use continued to fall further below the national average. Overall, rates of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use were among the lowest seen in the state in years. Statewide prevention initiatives appear to be experiencing continued success, based upon the findings of the statewide survey.

Alcohol use declines significantly -- Indiana alcohol prevalence rates fell below the national rates for the third consecutive year. Binge drinking rates in grades six through nine saw their first decline in several years. Overall, alcohol use rates among Indiana youth are experiencing what appears to be a steady decline.

Tobacco use down sharply -- Daily cigarette use among sixth- through 12th-graders fell to 9.3 percent, a proportion less than half that of 1996 rates. Use of smokeless tobacco also declined among most grades. Cigar smoking showed a slight increase among 12th-graders,

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but remained stable or declined in other grades.

Inhalant use falls from last year's increase -

- After three years of increasing rates, inhalant use among all grades saw a decrease or a plateau. However, younger students (grades eight, nine and 10) were more likely to have tried inhalants than older students (11th and 12th grade).

Methamphetamines -- Of 12th-graders surveyed, 5.5 percent reported using methamphetamines at least once, which is slightly lower than the national rate for this grade (6.2 percent). However, monthly methamphetamine use among eighth-, 10th- and 12th-graders in Indiana appears to be higher than national rates.

Gambling -- The large majority of Indiana youth do not engage in gambling behaviors, with less than 22 percent of youth placing bets on games or sports. Among those who did engage, most did not consider their behaviors to be problematic. However, younger students were more likely than older students to report feeling unable to stop betting.

The 2005 results were obtained from analyses of data from 140 separate local surveys of 136,782 students in grades six through 12, attending 435 schools in Indiana. The purpose of the survey is to measure alcohol, tobacco and other drug use on a statewide and local basis for planning and evaluation of prevention programs.

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