

The Exchange

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A Publication of the
Chester County
Department of
Drug and Alcohol
Services

SPECIAL EDITION

2005/2006 CHESTER COUNTY YOUTH SURVEY OVERVIEW

Message from the Director

As I review and compare the results from our 2005/2006 Chester County Youth Survey with previous years, I feel both a sense of accomplishment and concern. In this edition of our newsletter you will see that, in many areas, we are having a positive impact on our youth and their decision to use or not use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD). However, there are those youth that we have not been able to impact or reach – the survey results help identify which age groups we should target and what type of services would be most effective. For example, the survey shows that as youth transition from 6th to 8th grade, it increases the likelihood that they will experiment with ATODs:

Lifetime Use of Alcohol

(best measure of experimentation)

6 th grade	8 th Grade
23.5%	52.9%



Past 30-Day Use: Alcohol

(best measure of current use)

6 th Grade	8 th Grade
2.8%	16.1%

These numbers indicate a need to provide primary ATOD education in early elementary school, followed by more targeted programming that includes decision-making skills in upper elementary school.

Due to the overwhelming amount of data contained in the 78-page 2005/2006 Chester County Youth Survey, we have tried to provide readers of this newsletter with the following: background information about the survey process, an overview/highlights from the survey, state and national comparisons and trend data for Chester County beginning with the survey year 1999 and continuing every two years through 2005.

A copy of the full report can be obtained on our web site: www.chesco.org and follow the links to Department, Human Services, Drug & Alcohol, Chester County Youth Survey or by dialing 610-344-6620.

Background:

- The Chester County Youth Survey is conducted every two years and utilizes the same survey instrument as the state (survey is based on the Communities That Care Youth Survey). This allows us to look at the Chester County data in comparison with the statewide data. In some instances, we are able to include comparison data for the county, state and nation.
- Twelve Chester County school districts and two (2) Centers for Arts and Technology participated in the 2005/06 survey. A total of 15,530 youths in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 participated.
- The survey provides the following information: prevalence data for ATOD use (lifetime and past 30-day use), information on anti-social behaviors (i.e. getting

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Kim P. Bowman

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

suspended, selling drugs, etc.) and measures risk and protective factors (see page 3).

- In reviewing prevalence data, 30-day use is the best measure of current use. Lifetime use is the best measure of experimentation.

Notable Results:

- Alcohol continues to be the primary substance of abuse among all grades and a significant concern.
- Cigarette use continues to decline in all grade levels.
- Marijuana use continued to decline or progress was sustained in 6, 8 and 10th grades.
- For the first time, the report includes abuse of prescription drugs: amphetamines, sedatives, tranquilizers and narcotics. In these areas, Chester County youth use is similar to state and national results with one exception: 12th graders use of RX narcotics, while similar to Pennsylvania data, is higher than national data.
- Almost one quarter of Chester County 12th graders report driving after smoking marijuana or drinking alcohol.
- The percentages are very small; however, a consistent growth in 12th grader past 30-day use of cocaine and heroin are a concern.

Kim P. Bowman
 Director, Chester County Department of
 Drug and Alcohol Services



Special Topics - CHESTER COUNTY YOUTH SURVEY

The 2005/06 Chester County Youth Survey included questions on the following special topics; age of onset of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use (ATOD), willingness to try or use ATODs, driving after alcohol or marijuana use, gambling, symptoms of depression and the frequency of having been threatened or attacked at school. Below is information on two (2) of these special topic areas - for data in additional areas, a copy of the full report can be obtained on our web site www.chesco.org or by phoning 610-344-6620:

Age of First Use

For Chester County 12th Graders, the Average Age of First Use For:

TRYING ALCOHOL:	14 YEARS and 1 MONTH
DRINKING ALCOHOL REGULARLY:	15 YEARS and 5 MONTHS
SMOKING MARIJUANA:	14 YEARS and 5 MONTHS

These ages are consistent with the Pennsylvania statewide results.

Studies show youth who begin drinking before age 15 are four (4) times more likely to develop alcohol dependence and are 2.5 times more likely to become abusers of alcohol than those who begin drinking at age 21. (*Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2001*).

**Driving After Alcohol or Marijuana Use
 2001/02-2005/06**

	<u>2001/02</u>	<u>2003/04</u>	<u>2005/06</u>		<u>2001/02</u>	<u>2003/04</u>	<u>2005/06</u>
Percentage of 12 th Graders Reporting Driving After Drinking	20.8%	23.8%	24.1%	Percentage of 12th Graders Reporting Driving After Marijuana Use	28.9%	25.2%	24.2%



Risk and Protective Factors ***Chester County Youth Survey 2005/2006***

Just as eating a high-fat diet is a risk factor for heart disease and getting regular exercise is a protective factor for heart disease and other health problems, there are factors that can help protect youth from, or put them at risk for, drug use and other problem behaviors.

There is substantial amount of research showing that adolescents' exposure to a greater number of risk factors is associated with more drug use and delinquency. There is also evidence that exposure to a number of protective factors is associated with lower prevalence of these problems.

As part of the Youth Survey, adolescents were asked to respond to a series of statements that are then translated into risk and protective factor scores. For example, to determine the score for School Opportunities for Pro-social Involvement youth responded to the following: "The school lets my parents know when I have done something well"; while Personal Transitions and Mobility is measured by youths response to: "How many times have you changed schools since kindergarten"? and "How many times have you changed homes since kindergarten"?

Listed below are the top ranked risk and protective factors identified by youth that will help us direct future prevention programming and resources:

Protective Factors Perceived by Chester County Adolescents as Strengths:

- Belief in the Moral Order
- School Opportunities for Pro-social Involvement
- Family Attachment
- Family Opportunities for Pro-social Involvement



Protective Factors Perceived by Chester County Youth as "Needing Improvement":

- Community Rewards for Pro-social Involvement
- School Rewards for Pro-social Involvement

Risk Factors Perceived by Chester County Youth as Least Problematic:

- Low Perceived Risks of Drug Use
- Perceived Availability of Drugs and Handguns

Risk Factors Perceived by Chester County Youth as Most Problematic:

- Personal Transitions and Mobility
- Parental Favorable Attitudes Toward Antisocial Behaviors



**Chester County Youth Survey
2005/06**

Past 30-Day Use of Alcohol, Tobacco And Other Drugs

The following chart shows a breakdown of the past 30-day use of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among Chester County youth by grade level, as well as an overall percentage rate. Past 30-day prevalence-of-use (whether a youth has used the drug within the last month) is a good measure of current use. In addition to the past 30-day prevalence rates for alcohol use, binge drinking (defined as 5 or more drinks in a row within the past two weeks) is also measured.

As depicted below, Chester County youth reported the highest past 30-day prevalence-of-use rates for alcohol (26.1%), marijuana (10.6%) and cigarettes (9.9%). Other past 30-day prevalence-of-use rates ranged from 0.5% for heroin to 3.4% for inhalants. Overall, 6.4% of Chester County youth reported the use of any illicit drug (other than marijuana) in the past 30 days.

Comparisons with previous survey year data (1999 through 2006) show steady decreases in overall percentages (combination of all grade levels surveyed) past 30-day use of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana. In the 1999/00 survey the overall percentage rate for alcohol was 32.2 %, cigarettes – 17.8% and marijuana – 14.7%. In the current survey year the overall percentages decreased to 26.1%, 9.9% and 10.6% respectively.

These decreases are noteworthy in that alcohol, tobacco and marijuana are generally seen as “gateway drugs”. The widely held theory regarding gateway drugs according to researcher Denise Kandel in the Department of Psychiatry at Columbia University is that “very few individuals who have tried heroin and cocaine have not already used marijuana and the majority have already used tobacco and alcohol”. While it may also be true that not everyone who uses gateway drugs turns to “hard drugs”, it remains extremely important to maintain concentrated efforts to prevent the onset of youths experimentation and regular use of gateway drugs. In addition, there are the known long-term health effects associated with tobacco, the increased risks for accidental death and injury for youth under the influence of alcohol, and the increasing number of youth we see needing treatment for marijuana abuse and dependence.

Table 4. Past 30-Day Use of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

<i>Chester County Youth Survey 2005/06</i>								
	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	Overall
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Alcohol	2.8	--	16.1	--	38.6	--	52.8	26.1
Binge Drinking	0.8	--	6.5	--	20.4	--	32.9	14.1
Cigarettes	0.4	--	5.4	--	13.2	--	22.8	9.9
Smokeless Tobacco	0.3	--	1.2	--	2.8	--	5.2	2.2
Marijuana	0.3	--	3.8	--	15.6	--	26.1	10.6
Inhalants	2.2	--	4.1	--	3.7	--	3.4	3.4
Cocaine	0.1	--	0.6	--	2.1	--	4.1	1.6
Crack Cocaine	0.1	--	0.6	--	1.1	--	1.2	0.7
Heroin	0.1	--	0.4	--	0.5	--	1.3	0.5
Hallucinogens	0.1	--	0.7	--	3.0	--	5.2	2.1
Methamphetamine	0.1	--	0.5	--	0.6	--	1.5	0.6
Ecstasy	0.1	--	0.7	--	1.9	--	3.1	1.3
Steroids	0.2	--	0.6	--	0.7	--	0.9	0.6
Any Illicit Drug (Other than Marijuana)	2.4	--	5.6	--	7.6	--	10.7	6.4

Mark Your Calendar

National Alcohol
& Drug Addiction
Recovery Month
september 2006

September marks the 17th annual National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month. This year's theme is "Join the Voices for Recovery: Build a Stronger, Healthier Community". We welcome you to join us at the following local events to celebrate people and their families in recovery:

Recovery Expo

Saturday, September 30, 2006

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

United Methodist Church of the Resurrection

181 Sharp Lane - Exton, PA

Keynote Speaker: Deb Beck, President Drug and Alcohol Service Providers Organization of Pennsylvania

Contact: Wendy Beck wbeck101@comcast.net

Recovery Walks

Sunday, September 17, 2006

1:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.

Boathouse Row – Philadelphia, PA

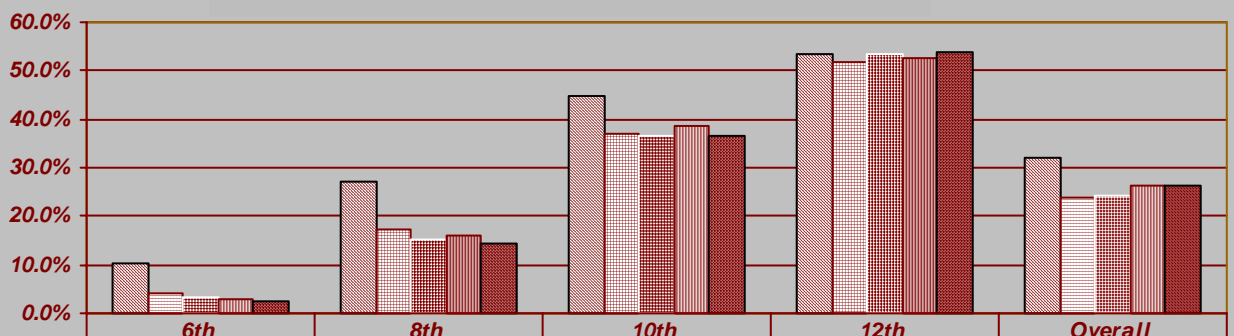
3-Mile Walk: Speakers, Entertainment and Light Refreshments

Call 1-800-221-6333 for more information

Chester County Youth Survey Trend Data

Alcohol, including beer, wine and hard liquor, is the drug used most often by adolescents today. The chart below offers trend data on students past 30-day use of alcohol beginning with survey year 1999/00 and following in two-year intervals. It is encouraging to note the decreases in use from 1999/00 to the current year. However, there have been some small increases noted in grades 8 and 10 from 2003/04 to 2005/06.

**Past 30-Day Use - Alcohol
1999/00 - 2005/06**



■ Chester County 99/00	10.1%	27.0%	44.8%	53.3%	32.2%
■ Chester County 01/02	4.1%	17.2%	36.8%	51.7%	23.9%
■ Chester County 03/04	3.1%	15.4%	36.5%	53.5%	24.1%
■ Chester County 05/06	2.8%	16.1%	38.6%	52.8%	26.1%
■ Pennsylvania 05/06	2.6%	14.5%	36.5%	53.7%	26.3%



The Exchange is sponsored by: The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services, P.O. Box 2747, 601 Westtown Road Suite 325, West Chester, PA 19380-0990.

For more information or to be on the mailing list for this newsletter, contact the Community Prevention staff at: The Coad Group, 930 East Lancaster Avenue Exton, PA 19341. 610.363.6164 or 1.800.917.1117

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The Department of Health and Chester County Commissioners specifically disclaim responsibility for any analyses, interpretations, or conclusions herein.

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For More Information...

Join Together (617) 437-1500

www.jointogether.org

National Institute on Drug Abuse

www.nida.nih.gov or clubdrugs.org

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health

www.cdc.gov/tobacco

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug Information

1-800-729-6686 www.health.org

Partnership for a Drug-Free America

(212) 922-1560 www.drugfreeamerica.org

PA Dept. of Health, Research & Info. Clearinghouse www.padohric.org

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters.

(800) 344-2666 or (800) 356-9996.

www.al-anon.alateen.org

The Coad Group

www.coadgroup.com

You can view or print this newsletter by visiting Chester County's Website: www.chesco.org and following the links for Human Services to Drug & Alcohol Services.