

2021-2022

Prevention *Across New Jersey*

2021-2022 Report on Statewide
Prevention Programs

NJ Department of Human Services
**Division of Mental Health
and Addiction Services**





The Prevention Parable

"Imagine a high waterfall that plunges into a large river. At the bottom of this waterfall, hundreds of people work along the shores of the river trying to save those who have fallen down the waterfall and are drowning in the river. As the people along the shore work frantically to rescue as many as possible, one person looks up at the seemingly never-ending stream of people falling down the waterfall and begins to run upstream.

Another rescuer hollers, 'Where are you are you going? There are so many people that need help here.' To which the person replies, 'I'm going upstream to find out why so many people are falling into the river.'

"This version of the prevention parable, emphasizing the importance of addressing root causes, was articulated by Irving Zola, who highlighted the need for proactive measures in public health and social issues."



Watch
Prevention
Across New Jersey
On YouTube
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Prepared September 2025 by:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) is proud to present Prevention Across New Jersey: 2021–2022 Report on Statewide Prevention Programs, the first of its kind to highlight the scope, progress, and positive impact of DMHAS-funded prevention efforts across the state.

Throughout 2021 and 2022, New Jersey continued to implement comprehensive, evidence-based prevention strategies across all 21 counties. These efforts range from school-based education programs and youth leadership initiatives to community-wide coalitions and trauma-informed interventions targeting high-risk populations. Together, these approaches work to delay the onset of substance use, reduce associated harms, and build healthier, more resilient communities.

New Jersey’s comprehensive prevention system—anchored by evidence-based programs, a statewide network of coalitions, and strategic partnerships—continues to make a meaningful difference in reducing early substance use and promoting healthier communities.

Prevention agencies across the state adapted and remained committed to addressing risk and protective factors across the lifespan, with **more than 59,000 individuals reached** through youth and family programming alone during this period.

In addition, the Regional Coalitions, working collaboratively with their **over 2,200 members**, provided a variety of interventions and strategies in their communities that **reached over 91,000 individuals**. This report highlights **over 200,000 served** across various types of prevention programming.

200,000

individuals
served across all
DMHAS-funded
programs

91,000

served by Regional
Coalitions throughout
all 21 NJ counties

59,000

individuals served through
evidence-based youth
and family education
programs

A Note About COVID-19



The limitations of direct contact during this time period had a significant impact on the behavioral health system of care and those served by curtailing the implementation of school and community-based programs in person. As a result, the data contained in this report may not fully reflect the current capacity and reach of service providers throughout the state.

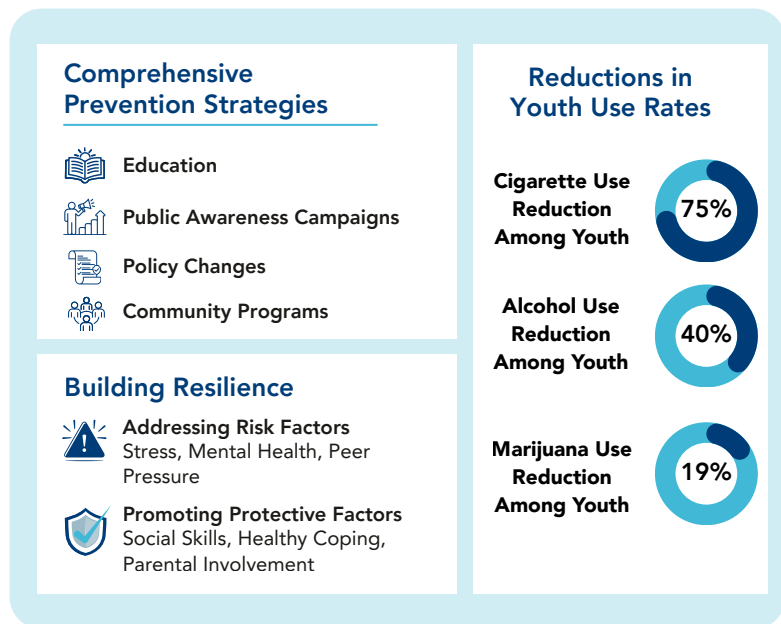
PREVENTION'S COMMUNITY IMPACT

Prevention includes a wide range of interventions, such as **education**, **public awareness campaigns**, **policy changes**, and **community-based programs**. These strategies are tailored to individuals, families, schools, workplaces, and communities, addressing various levels of prevention—from primary prevention to early intervention and treatment.

Primary prevention also addresses factors such as stress, mental health, and peer pressure while promoting protective factors such as positive social skills, healthy coping mechanisms, and parental involvement. The ultimate goal is to build resilient, recovery-ready communities.

New Jersey prevention efforts over the years has had a significant impact on youth use rates from 2011-2021.

Data from NJ Student Health Survey, 2021.

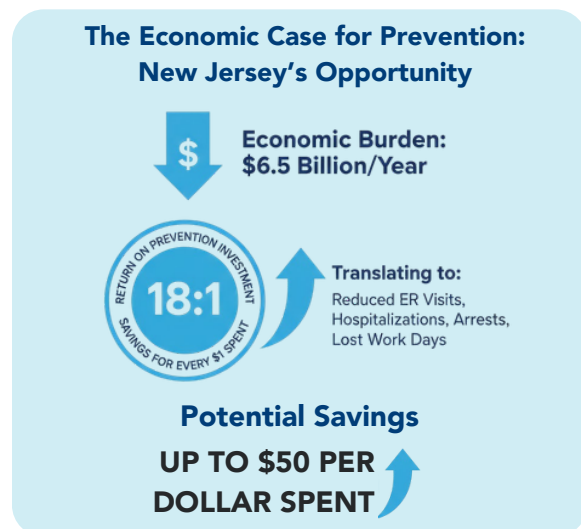


Economic Benefit of Prevention Programs

New Jersey faces an estimated economic burden of more than **\$6.5 billion per year** from drug and alcohol misuse, including billions in health care costs and substantial losses in workplace productivity, criminal justice expenditures, and related social services. At the same time, national cost-benefit analyses of evidence-based substance use prevention show that effective school and community programs can conservatively save about 18 dollars for every 1 dollar invested, **with some models yielding returns as high as 20–50 dollars per dollar** through reduced medical, criminal justice, and productivity losses.

Applying even the conservative **18:1 ratio** to New Jersey's documented burden suggests that redirecting a portion of current spending into proven prevention and environmental strategies could, over time, translate hundreds of millions of dollars in annual costs into avoided emergency room visits, hospitalizations, arrests, and lost work days, while strengthening the health and economic stability of New Jersey communities.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that every prevention dollar allocated to proven programs and environmental strategies not only reduces substance use and related harms, but **can conservatively return 7–50 dollars in avoided downstream spending** and increased economic productivity for the community.



PRIMARY PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** outlines the following strategies for primary prevention. Programs must target both the general population and sub-groups that are at high risk for substance use. The program must include, but is not limited to, the following strategies:

- **Information Dissemination** provides knowledge and increases awareness of the nature and extent of alcohol and other drug use, use, and addiction, as well as their effects on individuals, families, and communities.
- **Education** builds critical life and social skills through structured learning processes.
- **Alternatives** provide opportunities for target populations to participate in activities that exclude alcohol and other drugs.
- **Problem Identification and Referral** aims to identify individuals who have indulged in illegal or age-inappropriate use of tobacco or alcohol and individuals who have indulged in the first use of illicit drugs. The goal is to assess if their behavior can be reversed through education.
- **Community-based Process** empowers coalitions to provide ongoing networking activities and technical assistance to community groups or agencies which include neighborhood-based, grassroots empowerment models using action planning and collaborative systems planning.
- **Environmental** establishes or changes written and unwritten community standards, codes, and attitudes. Its intent is to influence the general population's use of alcohol and other drugs.

To provide a clear framework for these interventions, the National Academy of Medicine classifies substance use prevention into three distinct levels based on the target population's risk profile:

- **Universal:** The general public or a whole population group that has not been identified on the basis of individual risk
- **Selective:** Individuals or a subgroup of the population whose risk of developing a disorder is significantly higher than average
- **Indicated:** Individuals in high-risk environments who have minimal but detectable signs or symptoms foreshadowing disorder or have biological markers indicating predispositions for disorder but do not yet meet diagnostic levels

NJ Prevention follows the Strategic Prevention Framework



The Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) is a step-by-step process created by SAMHSA to help communities plan and carry out effective substance misuse prevention efforts. It includes five main steps: assessing community needs, building local capacity, planning strategies, putting them into action, and evaluating results. Throughout every step, the SPF emphasizes cultural competence—working respectfully with diverse communities—and sustainability—making sure prevention efforts last long-term, even after initial funding ends.

STATEWIDE SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

New Jersey's prevention infrastructure, established and maintained through New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (NJ-DMHAS) funding, includes Regional Prevention Coalitions, prevention agencies providing direct prevention services to youth, and the Prevention Hub system to provide easy access to all of these services which are available in all 21 counties.

The New Jersey Prevention Network (NJPN) provides coordination, training, and technical assistance to this system of agencies and initiatives on behalf of DMHAS to ensure collaboration and quality services across the state. DMHAS also funds NJ's County Drug and Alcohol Directors to support prevention, treatment, and recovery support services statewide.

In addition to DMHAS's initiatives, the Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder (GCSUD, formerly known as GCADA) funds municipal level coalitions, referred to as Municipal Alliances, to provide additional local prevention services in communities when required.

The following are the state, county, and local organizations that make up the NJ system of prevention providers.

State Government



The **New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (NJ-DMHAS)** oversees a comprehensive network of mental health, addiction treatment, peer recovery support, and prevention services statewide, contracting with over 120 agencies. Designated as New Jersey's single state agency by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA), NJ-DMHAS is an advocate for evidence-based prevention approaches and community engagement.

Through partnerships with diverse stakeholders and decades of experience, NJ-DMHAS and New Jersey's prevention agencies have made significant strides in reducing youth substance use and promoting healthier lifestyles for all ages.

This report highlights DMHAS-funded initiatives, showcasing the state's commitment to evidence-based strategies, innovative partnerships, and comprehensive prevention approaches. It aims to inspire continued dedication to creating a healthier, safer, and more resilient New Jersey.



The **Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder (GCSUD, formerly known as GCADA)**, provides prevention planning, public awareness, and education, and administers the Alliance to Prevent Substance Use Disorder. The Council is an active and collaborative participant in the planning and coordination of New Jersey's prevention efforts through its membership and the development of the GCSUD Master Plan, as well as its Alliance to Prevent Substance Use Disorder.

GCSUD administers New Jersey's Alliance to Prevent Substance Use Disorder Program, a network of 300 community-based substance use disorder prevention coalitions providing prevention programming at the most local level in all 21 counties. These Alliances work collaboratively with DMAHS-funded prevention agencies and regional coalitions to plan and implement programs to meet the needs of their targeted communities.

Statewide Initiatives



The **New Jersey Prevention Network (NJPN)** is a leading public health agency which contributes significantly to building workforce capacity and professional development for the entire addiction continuum of care. With training and tools, NJPN supports prevention, clinical treatment, and peer recovery professionals by offering initial and advanced certifications and connecting them to valuable resources.

NJPN collaborates with prevention agencies across New Jersey and serves as a lynchpin for regional coalitions, providing technical support and training for professionals within this network. NJPN also works to promote statewide prevention and public health initiatives, including WISE, Military family programs, Connect. Guide. Empower., the Prevention Hub, Tobacco-Free for a Healthy NJ, and more.



The **Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey (PDFNJ)**, created in 1992, is a substance use prevention alliance to localize, strengthen and deepen initiatives, provide drug-free assistance, and host parent education conferences throughout the state. All PDFNJ programs are available free-of-charge to New Jersey residents.

PDFNJ, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is renowned for its statewide substance use prevention campaigns visible on trains, buses, billboards, and various media platforms. With a coalition of prevention, communication, corporate, and government professionals, its mission is to reduce substance use in New Jersey. Since inception, PDFNJ has earned over 200 advertising awards and secured nearly \$200 million in pro bono media services, making it the largest continuous pro bono campaign in New Jersey's history.



The **Prevention Hub**, established in 2022, is a comprehensive statewide network connecting NJ's existing prevention provider agencies and offers easy consumer access to existing evidence-based prevention education, interventions, strategies, and programs to all sectors of the community.

The Prevention Hub improves access to resources that reduce early substance use and address key risk factors for youth, families, and society. As a one-stop access point for DMHAS prevention services, it features a "Warm Line" connecting callers to local prevention specialists who provide guidance and resources for prevention, treatment, and recovery support.

The Prevention Hub website (www.njpreventionhub.org) provides access to additional resources including school and municipal policy toolkits, Connect. Guide. Empower., and more.



Established in 2012, NJ-DMHAS **Regional Prevention Coalitions** are key to community collaboration in reducing substance use among youth and adults. Guided by the Strategic Prevention Framework, they address priorities such as underage drinking, drug misuse, and emerging substances, while ensuring initiatives meet state and local needs.

This nationally recognized statewide system of coalitions is led by county prevention agencies with over 2,000 members who represent:

- State and local government agencies
- Health care providers
- Local businesses
- Youth
- Parents
- Schools
- Law enforcement
- Faith-based organizations
- Community organizations
- Other stakeholders

Regional coalitions take a comprehensive approach to substance use prevention and community wellness by promoting evidence-based strategies like education, public awareness, policy development, and enforcement. They focus on building community resilience and healthier environments by reducing access, addressing risk factors, and advocating for policy changes. Coalitions also provide training, resources, and technical assistance to support prevention efforts across New Jersey.

County Alcohol and Drug Use Directors



DMHAS designated alcohol and drug use directors in each county to plan and coordinate county efforts related to prevention, treatment and recovery support services. There are various funding sources that are provided to each county which are distributed to support services that have been identified through a comprehensive planning process.

Prevention services supported by the County Alcohol and Drug Use Directors initiative include addressing the following areas of focus:

- Underage drinking
- Prescription medication misuse
- Evidence-based strategies for youth
- Student problem solving and decision-making skills
- Programs that aid students in evaluating the influence of media in their lives
- Prevention programs that enhance protective factors and reduce risk
- Senior citizens aged 55 and older

Local Prevention Agencies

Prevention agencies located throughout New Jersey work to bring prevention strategies and initiatives to their local communities. They may provide evidence-based programs to local schools and partners, house regional prevention coalitions, or advocate for local policy changes that shape their environment.

Atlantic County

Atlantic Prevention Resources

www.atlprev.org

Bergen County

The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources

www.bergencoalition.org

Burlington County

Prevention Plus

www.prevplus.org

Camden County

Camden County Council

www.cccada.org

Hispanic Family Center of Southern New Jersey

www.hispanicfamilycenter.com

Cape May County

Cape Assist

www.cmchcc.org

Cumberland County

The Southwest Council

www.southwestcouncil.org

Essex County

Family Connections, Inc.

www.familyconnectionsny.org

Gloucester County

The Southwest Council

www.southwestcouncil.org

Hudson County

Partners in Prevention

www.hudsoncountycoalition.org

Hunterdon County

Prevention Resources, Inc.

www.safecoalition.org

Mercer County

Mercer Council

www.mercercouncil.org

Catholic Charities

www.catholiccharitiestrenton.org

Middlesex County

Wellspring Center for Prevention

www.wellspringprevention.org

Monmouth County

Prevention First

www.monmouthresourcenet.org

Morris County

Prevention is Key

www.preventioniskey.org

Ocean County

**RWJBarnabas Health, Institute
for Prevention and Recovery**

www.rwjbh.org/dart

Passaic County

**United for Prevention in
Passaic County**

www.up-in-pc.org

Salem County

The Southwest Council

www.southwestcouncil.org

Somerset County

Prevention Resources, Inc.

www.safecoalition.org

Sussex County

Center for Prevention and Counseling

www.centerforprevention.org

Union County

Prevention Links

www.preventionlinks.org

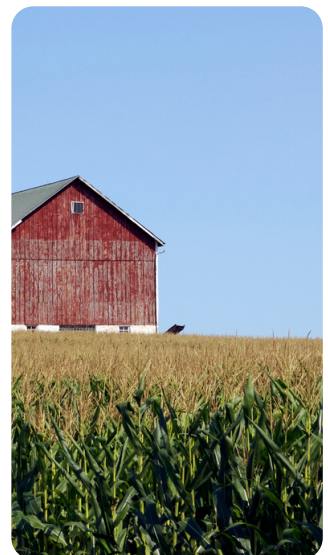
Warren County

Center for Family Services

www.preventionconnections.org

**Community Prevention
Resources of Warren County**

www.communitypreventionresources.org



EXPANDING PREVENTION BEST PRACTICES

Partnerships for Success Project

Partnerships for Success (PFS), a grant funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), expanded the use of the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) by addressing the unique community needs of New Jersey counties.

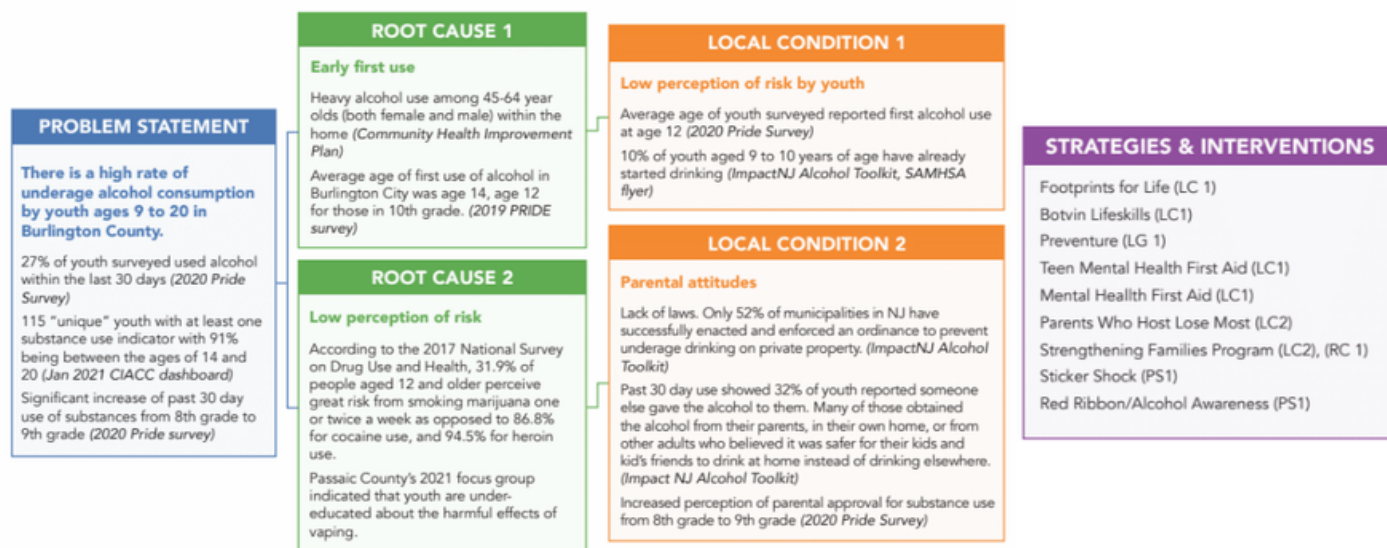
During this grant period, this initiative -- a collaboration between NJ-DMHAS and NJ Department of Children and Families -- extended statewide prevention efforts to reach at-risk youth populations, including those with behavioral health challenges, involved in child welfare or foster care, and transitioning into adulthood. By leveraging the expertise of NJPN and DMHAS's network of Regional Prevention Coalitions, the PFS-NJ project worked in tandem with the County Children's Interagency Coordinating Councils (CIACCs) to address identified priorities in each county.



PFS-NJ identified the county needs by assessing individual and family risk factors impacting youth substance use, with a specific focus on the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). This collaborative effort, led by NJPN and supported by Rutgers University School of Social Work, exemplified a dedicated partnership striving to enhance the prevention infrastructure and improve the health and well-being of New Jersey's youth.

Working through the SPF process, each county developed a logic model summarizing their plans to address the needs within their communities using evidence-based prevention strategies.

Several products were developed as a result of this initiative including the *Effective Prevention in New Jersey: A Community Guide to Reducing Youth Substance Use* toolkit created by NJPN.



Example of a logic model created by **Burlington County's** Regional Prevention Coalition for the Partnerships for Success grant.

Prevention Hub



New Jersey Prevention Hubs implemented community initiatives such as over-the-counter (OTC) medicine safety, promoting and building capacity for screening tools, and marijuana education for youth and adults.

OTC Medicine Safety Training Events

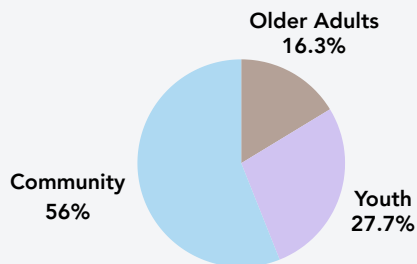
OTC medicine safety trainings educate community members on safe handling, storage, and consumption of medicines purchased over the counter at pharmacies.

Total # Individuals Reached:

9,084

Total # Programs/Events

208



OTC medicine safety training in Passaic County.

Screening Tools Training & Technical Assistance

Total # Individuals Reached:

1,828

Units of Technical Assistance Provided:

480



Cannabis Education

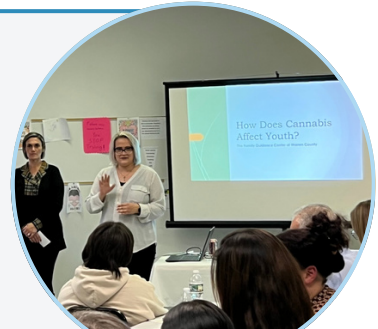
After the legalization of cannabis, DMHAS and the Prevention Hub identified marijuana/cannabis use as a focus area for prevention education efforts to ensure a knowledgeable and informed community was prepared for a potential uptick in prevalence due to the commercialization of a new substance.

Total # Individuals Reached:

17,634

Total # Programs/Events

330



Marijuana town hall in Warren County.

COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES

Community-based initiatives focus on changing the environment where we live, work, and play. These efforts involve identifying positive changes through the seven evidence-based strategies outlined by CADCA:

CADCA's Seven Strategies



- 1 Provide Information
- 2 Enhance Skills
- 3 Provide Support
- 4 Change Access/Barriers
- 5 Change Consequences/Incentives/Disincentives
- 6 Change Physical Design
- 7 Modify and Change Policies

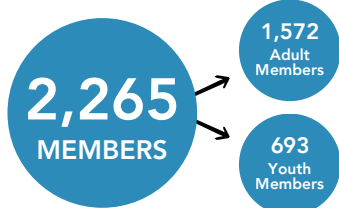
Initiatives such as raising the legal age to purchase tobacco to 21 years and limiting the number of liquor stores through zoning ordinances highlight the positive impact these evidence-based public health approaches can have by limiting access and reducing the prevalence of youth use of harmful substances.

Regional Prevention Coalitions

Regional Coalitions play a pivotal role in collaborating with community stakeholders to identify and implement positive environmental changes that address behavioral health and substance misuse issues within their specific region. NJPN, with its statewide perspective, actively connects and supports these coalitions who engage in all levels of prevention initiatives across New Jersey.

Coalitions, guided by national research, promote evidence-based prevention strategies, including education, public awareness, policy development, and enforcement, with a central focus on enhancing community resilience.

Regional Coalition Members (2021-2022)



Total # Individuals Reached:

91,001

Total # Programs/Events

2,130



DART Day 2022 in Ocean County.



Somerset County's coalition attending national CADCA conference on Capitol Hill.



Overdose Awareness Day in Hunterdon County.

Regional Coalition Focus Areas

In addition to offering training, technical assistance, and resources, NJPN facilitates the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) process, guiding each coalition in assessing local data to prioritize needs and develop comprehensive strategic prevention plans using environmental strategies centered around key focus areas, as well as the advocacy of policy changes.

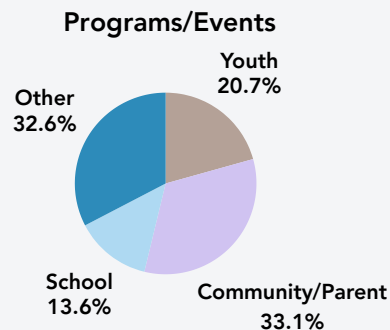
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Total # Individuals Reached:

27,378

Total # Programs/Events

589



Examples of Strategies for Community Change

Changing Access and Barriers:

- Safe disposal bags for medications
- Promoting the national DEA Prescription Drug Take Back Day

Policy Change:

- Establishing permanent prescription medication drop boxes for the public

Community Events & Programs:

- Promoting the safe disposal of medications
- Education workshops in partnership with local pharmacists and experts

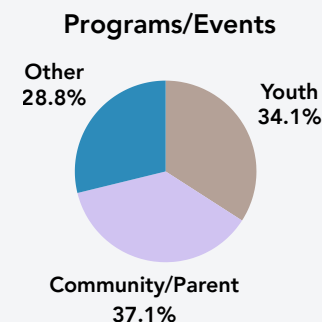
OPIOIDS/HEROIN

Total # Individuals Reached:

10,188

Total # Programs/Events

442



Examples of Strategies for Community Change

Changing Access and Barriers:

- School Resiliency Teams
- Hope One Mobile Outreach Units

Policy Change:

- Establish Narcan Trainings
- Athletes & Opioids Tackling Opioid through Prevention (TOP) Toolkit Education

Community Events & Programs:

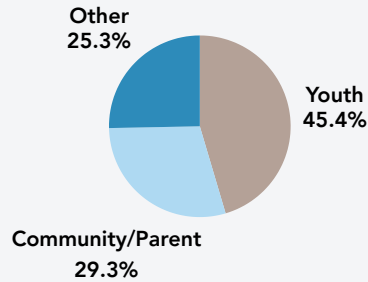
- International Overdose Awareness Day promotion such as hosting a candlelight vigil.
- Knock Out Opioids Day promotion

ALCOHOL

Total # Individuals Reached:

9,808

Total # Programs/Events

315**Programs/Events**

National Night Out event in Bergen County.

Examples of Strategies for Community Change*Changing Access and Barriers:*

- Alcohol merchant education and "Sticker Shock" campaigns

Policy Change:

- Responsible Beverage Server Training Ordinances

Community Events & Programs:

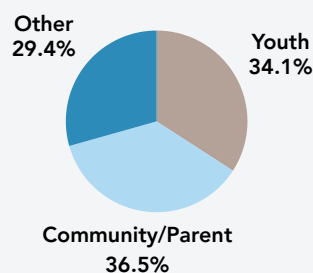
- College peer-to-peer intervention programs
- Provide alternative alcohol-free social events such as teen safety nights
- Host events for Alcohol Awareness Month
- Host town hall meetings focused on the increase of alcohol sales during the pandemic

MARIJUANA

Total # Individuals Reached:

26,492

Total # Programs/Events

418**Programs/Events**

Red Ribbon Week 2022 in Warren County.

Examples of Strategies for Community Change*Changing Access and Barriers:*

- "Take Action on Local Cannabis Regulation" presentation
- Educate local officials and Coalition members

Policy Change:

- Responsible Beverage Server Training Ordinances

Community Events & Programs:

- Host Cannabis "Know the Facts" workshops
- Red Ribbon Week activities included marijuana education for middle school classrooms.
- Community Forums held in conjunction with prosecutors' offices
- "Women & Weed" presentation

OTHER DRUGS

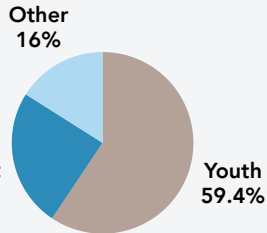
Total # Individuals Reached:

17,135

Total # Programs/Events

366

Programs/Events



Tobacco pledge being signed in Somerset County.

Examples of Strategies for Community Change

Changing Access and Barriers:

- Tobacco Retailer Education and Responsible Merchant Pledge

Policy Change:

- Smoke-free, vape-free parks and beaches signs

Community Events & Programs:

- Host conferences such as Bergen County's Tree of Addiction Conference
- "Don't Get Vaped In" workshops
- Participation in Tobacco-Free for a Healthy NJ Projects
- Great American Smoke Out (GASO) events

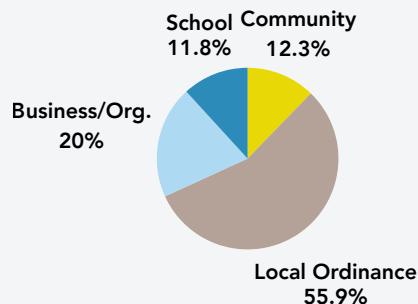
POLICY CHANGES

Total # Policies:

424

Total # Municipalities
Effected

314



Regional Coalitions helped advance a total of 424 policy changes across schools, organizations, and local communities throughout New Jersey in 2021-2022. These policies and best practices ensure safe and healthy communities for individuals of all ages, working to protect youth from harmful substances and lower use rate across all demographics.

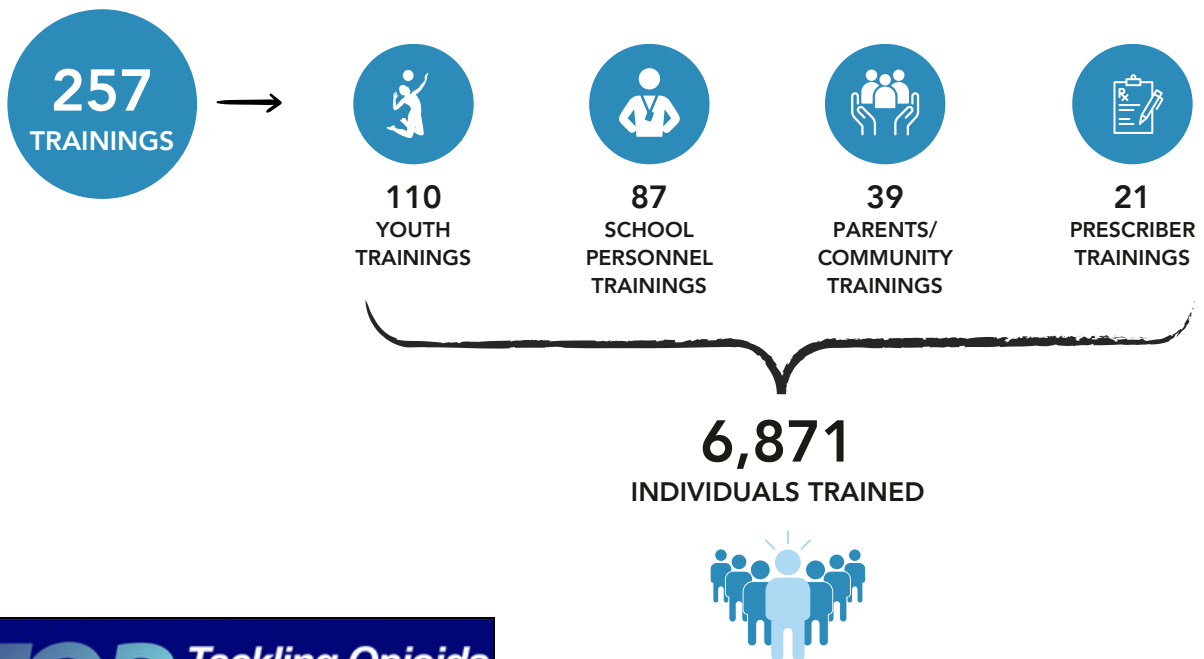
Examples of Policy Changes

- Smoke-free parks and beaches
- Limiting access to alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis through zoning ordinances
- Requiring responsible vendor training for alcohol servers

Athletes & Opioids Program

A major component of New Jersey's Strategic Prevention Framework for Prescription Drugs (SPF-Rx) project, funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), focuses on reducing the prevalence of opioid use among young athletes – a population that is more likely to be prescribed opioid medication due to sports-related injury.

The New Jersey Prevention Network (NJPN) developed a toolkit, *Tackling Opioids through Prevention for Athletes (TOP)*, for use by prevention agencies in all 21 NJ counties. Research suggests that when young athletes are prescribed opioid pain relievers for injuries, there is an increased risk of opioid addiction and misuse. The 19 regional prevention coalitions that were established by DMHAS use the TOP toolkit to provide education on this issue to coaches, trainers, parents, prescribers, and young athletes.



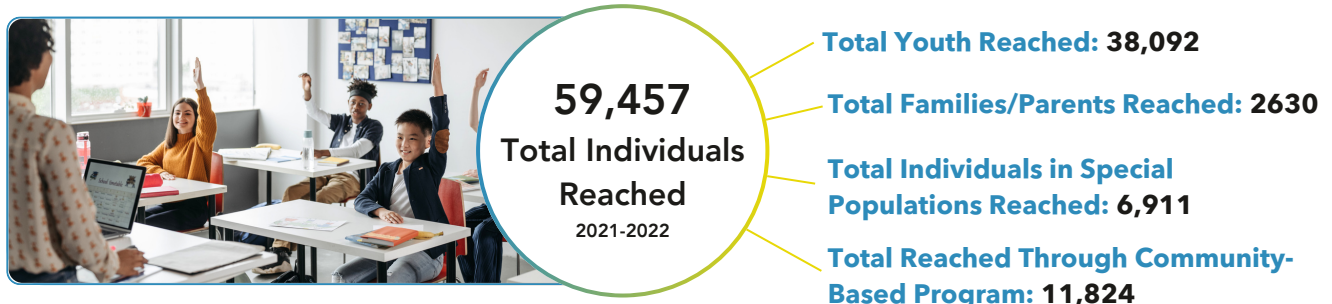
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TOOLKIT!



EVIDENCE-BASED YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAMS

Evidence-based education programs address specific risk and protective factors known to contribute to youth substance use and later addiction. These programs have undergone rigorous review to determine their effectiveness in building resiliency, positively changing beliefs and attitudes, and delaying the onset of substance use.

DMHAS-funded prevention agencies located throughout New Jersey provide education services based upon their community's needs, determined through needs assessments conducted regularly.



Universal, Selective, & Indicated Populations

The Institute of Medicine defines the various classifications of prevention based on the risks associated with the populations that help to identify the various levels of service needed in identifying strategies, programs, and interventions.



Universal — Interventions which address the entire population to delay or prevent substance use.

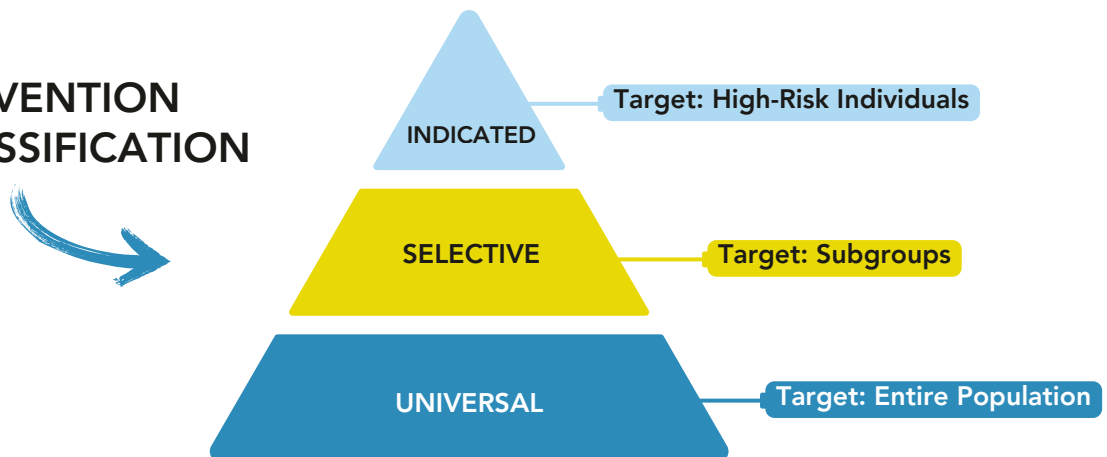


Selective — Interventions which target subpopulations at increased risk of substance use disorder.



Indicated — Interventions which focus on individuals who are using substances and are at risk of developing a substance use disorder.

PREVENTION CLASSIFICATION



Youth-Based Programs

LifeSkills Training

LifeSkills Training (LST) is a program that reduces the risk of substance use and violence by targeting key social and psychological factors. It empowers adolescents with confidence and skills to make healthy choices and handle challenging situations effectively.

An LST cycle is taught across three years. Year one: 15 classes; year two: 10 classes; year three: 5 classes.

Total Youth Reached	Youth Reached	Youth Reached
2021-2022	2021	2022
19,113	8,975	10,138
(697 Cycles)		



Learning Outcome Highlight

- 100% of teachers reported an increase in student use of LST skills

Counties offered: Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Morris, Salem, Somerset, Sussex, Warren

Footprints for Life

Footprints for Life is a six-week program developed by Wellspring Center for Prevention for second and third graders that teaches essential life skills through interactive activities. It focuses on decision-making, cultural understanding, and interpersonal abilities like peer pressure resistance and conflict resolution, with additional guidance on refusing tobacco and alcohol.

Footprints for Life is taught in 6-session cycles.

Total Youth Reached	Youth Reached	Youth Reached
2021-2022	2021	2022
8,062	3,488	4,574
(357 Cycles)		



Learning Outcome Highlight

- 86% of teachers report seeing a positive change in student behaviors (ex: decision making, emotion management, conflict resolution, etc.)

Counties offered: Bergen, Burlington, Cumberland, Gloucester, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Morris, Salem, Somerset, Sussex, Warren

We're Not Buying It 2.0

We're Not Buying It 2.0, a six-lesson prevention program developed by Wellspring, promotes media literacy among middle schoolers to prevent substance use and bullying. The program equips students with skills to critically assess media messages, empowering them to resist negative influences and make healthier decisions. Activities cater to various learning styles, ensuring comprehensive education on prevention strategies.

We're Not Buying It 2.0 is taught in 6-session cycles.

Total Youth Reached	Youth Reached	Youth Reached
2021-2022	2021	2022
6,535	2,118	4,417
(305 Cycles)		



Counties offered: Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Morris, Somerset, Sussex, Union, Warren

Youth-Based Programs

Protecting You Protecting Me

Classroom-based program aimed at preventing alcohol-related harm among children and youth. Educates elementary and high school students about alcohol's effects on the brain and topics such as vehicle safety, decision-making, stress management, media literacy, and refusal/communication skills.

Taught in 8-session cycles.

Total Youth Reached 2021-2022	Youth Reached 2021
	250
601 (30 Cycles)	Youth Reached 2022
	351

Counties offered: Mercer

Keepin' It REAL

School-based program for students aged 12-14 and tailored for diverse audiences. Focuses on resistance strategies—represented by the acronym REAL: **R**efuse offers; **E**xplain reasons for refusal; **A**void substance-present situations; and **L**ease if substances are being used.

Taught in 10-session cycles.

Total Youth Reached 2021-2022	Youth Reached 2021
	294
596 (36 Cycles)	Youth Reached 2022
	302

Counties offered: Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem

Too Good for Drugs

Fosters life skills and character values while teaching elementary and middle school students to resist negative peer influences, substance use, and violence. Through classroom discussions, interactive activities, role-playing, and games, students develop skills applicable to real-life situations, with opportunities for parental/community engagement.

Taught across 10-session cycles.

Total Youth Reached 2021-2022	Youth Reached 2021
	614
1,431 (91 Cycles)	Youth Reached 2022
	817

Counties offered: Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Salem

Class Action

Alcohol prevention program for high school students. Using the social influence theory, it features interactive sessions led by peers to discuss substance use consequences, aiming to discourage alcohol experimentation, decrease consumption among those who have tried it, and address related problems.

Class Action is taught across 8-10 session cycles.

Total Youth Reached 2021-2022	Youth Reached 2021
	28
49 (2 Cycles)	Youth Reached 2022
	21

Counties offered: Middlesex

Youth-Based Programs

Keep a Clear Mind

Educates students in grades four to six, along with their parents, about drug and alcohol prevention. It emphasizes social-skills training to teach how to reject using substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana.

Offered as a take home program over 10-12 weeks.

Total Youth Reached	Youth Reached
2021-2022	2021
689	263
(38 Cycles)	Youth Reached
	2022
	426

Counties offered: Union

Lion's Quest

Lion's Quest is designed for schools to foster positive development in youth. It collaborates with educators, parents, and communities to cultivate social-emotional skills, promote good citizenship, nurture character, instill drug-free attitudes, and encourage service to others.

Total Youth Reached	Youth Reached
2021-2022	2021
445	127
(33 Cycles)	Youth Reached
	2022
	318

Counties offered: Sussex

PreVenture

A program designed to prevent substance use among youth by identifying characteristics that predispose them to substance use and classifying them into groups. It enhances mental well-being, fosters skill growth, and promotes healthy decision-making. PreVenture helps at-risk youth develop coping mechanisms and long-term goals tailored to their unique personalities.

Taught in two-lesson cycles.

Total Youth Reached	Youth Reached
2021-2022	2021
123	16
(9 Cycles)	Youth Reached
	2022
	107

Counties offered: Sussex

Safe Dates

Safe Dates is a program for middle and high school students aimed at preventing dating through both school and community components. The school curriculum segment of the program focuses on preventing dating abuse, while community support groups and activities offer secondary prevention.

Safe Dates is taught in 10 session cycles.

Total Youth Reached	Youth Reached
2021-2022	2021
163	88
(6 Cycles)	Youth Reached
	2022
	75

Counties offered: Middlesex

Olweus Bullying Prevention

A comprehensive initiative targeting bullying across elementary to high school. It involves multiple components, including increasing awareness, involving teachers and parents, establishing clear rules, and supporting victims at the school, classroom, and individual levels to evaluate, prevent, and address bullying effectively.

Total Youth Reached	Youth Reached
2021-2022	2021
285	285
(1 Cycle)	Youth Reached
	2022
	0

Counties offered: Sussex (One school was served in 2021, reaching 285 students as part of a year-long school initiative.)

Family & Parenting Programs

Strengthening Families

Strengthening Families (SFP) aims at enhancing family dynamics and reducing the risk of substance use and other issues among families with young adolescents. It includes separate skill-building sessions for parents and children, followed by joint family sessions focusing on conflict resolution and communication. Parents learn to set expectations, manage emotions, and communicate effectively, while children develop refusal skills, social interaction skills, and healthy decision-making skills. Multiple versions of the program geared towards different age populations (ages 3-17) are implemented across New Jersey.

An SFP cycle is provided in 7-, 11-, and 14-session cycles.

Families Reached	Reached	Reached
2021-2022	2021	2022
831*	377	454
(103 Cycles)		

*2,493 approximate individuals reached based on average family size of 3 per family



Learning Outcome Highlight

- Families reported a 27.94% increase in family bonding, cohesion, conflict resolution, and family involvement.

Counties offered: Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Morris, Salem, Somerset, Sussex, Warren

DARE to be You

DARE to be You is a program designed to prevent substance use and other risky behaviors in children aged 2-5 from high-risk families. It offers educational activities for children, parenting strategies, and environmental support to enhance resilience. A study showed significant improvements in child development, decreased oppositional behavior, and increased parental self-confidence among participants compared to the control group.

DARE to be you is taught in 10-12 session cycles.

Total Reached	Reached	Reached
2021-2022	2021	2022
137	60	77
(10 Cycles)		

Counties offered: Somerset



Community-Based Programs

Communities That Care

Communities That Care (CTC) is a prevention framework empowering communities to address adolescent health and behavior issues by targeting identified risk and protective factors. Using data analysis from youth surveys, it creates action plans to reduce substance use, violence, school failure, and mental health concerns. By implementing programs that strengthen protective factors and reduce risks, CTC aims to improve outcomes and prevent problem behaviors among young people.

CTC is organized in a five-stage planning and implementation model and provided over 6-12 months.

Total Reached	Reached	Reached
2021-2022	2021	2022
11,824	7,466	4,358
(2 Cycles)		

Counties offered: Ocean



Programs for Older Adults

Wellness Initiative for Senior Education (WISE)

The WISE Program is a wellness and prevention initiative for older adults, promoting healthy aging and preventing substance use. It offers educational services on topics such as medication management, stress, depression, and substance misuse. Developed by NJPN, WISE has reached over 40,000 individuals through prevention programs conducted by facilitators nationwide since its inception in 1996.

WISE is taught in six-session cycles.

Total Reached 2021-2022	Reached 2021	Reached 2022
984 (193 Cycles)	301	683



Counties offered: Somerset

Take Control of Your Health

Take Control of Your Health is a peer-led initiative that empowers individuals with chronic conditions and their caregivers to become more active participants in their health care. The program is conducted in various community settings such as senior centers, churches, libraries, and hospitals, and brings together people with different chronic health issues.

Take Control of Your Health is taught in six-session cycles.

Total Reached 2021-2022	Reached 2021	Reached 2022
90 (7 Cycles)	27	63



Counties offered: Somerset

Alternative Approaches for Pain Management in Older Adults

The Alternative Approaches for Pain Management in Older Adults initiative is a community-based education program with the goal of reducing the demand and misuse of opioid prescriptions by providing education on alternative approaches to opioid analgesics for acute and chronic pain management among older adults (60+). This training was provided both virtually and in-person.



Older adult education for pain management.

5,669
INDIVIDUALS
SERVED

280
PROVIDERS
PARTICIPATED

The above numbers not reflected in grand total on page 16.

Programs for Active Military Personnel, Veterans, and Their Families

Achieving Personal Balance

The Achieving Personal Balance (APB) initiative is tailored for military service members, both active and veterans, and equips them with effective coping strategies to manage the stressors they encounter both at work and home. Based on the evidence-based curriculum Coping with Work and Family Stress, the APB program focuses on empowering participants to enhance their utilization of healthy coping skills. By participating in this program, military personnel gain valuable skills which contribute to achieving a healthier balance in their lives.



12
CYCLES
COMPLETED

133
INDIVIDUALS
GRADUATED

The above numbers reflect the 2019-2021 reporting period.

Military Family Nights

The Military Family Nights series, based on the Strengthening Families Program, is designed to address the strains on family communication and structure during military deployments. The program focuses on improving communication skills, effective discipline, and reinforcing positive behaviors within the family. It assists parents in achieving desired behaviors in children through attention, rewards, clear communication, substance use education, and problem-solving. Children, in turn, learn essential skills such as stress management, social skills, resisting peer pressure, and coping with emotions. The program aims to strengthen military families by promoting healthy communication and coping strategies.



18
CYCLES
COMPLETED

862
INDIVIDUALS
GRADUATED

The above numbers reflect the 2019-2021 reporting period.

WISE for Vets

NJPN adapted its WISE curriculum for U.S. military veterans, WISE for Vets, and is currently being implemented in Atlantic, Cape May, Morris, and Somerset counties.



Programs for Members of the LGBTQIA+ Community

Project W.O.W.

North Jersey Community Research Initiative's (NJCRIs) Project W.O.W.! (Web Outreach Works) utilizes online outlets and social media to cultivate peer-to-peer relationships among LGBTQ youth ages 14-24. Project WOW creates a safe and affirming space where LGBTQ youth can socialize, build community, develop leadership skills, and access relevant sexual health, mental health, and substance use disorder treatment, services, and education.

Project W.O.W.! provides the evidence-based **Street Smart** curriculum to the youth it serves.



Street Smart

Street Smart is a multisession, skills-building program developed by researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and is designed to help groups of runaway youth reduce unprotected sex, number of sex partners, and substance use. The program is based on social learning theory, which describes the relationship between behavior change and a person's beliefs that he/she can change a behavior and that changing that behavior will produce a specific result.

During the 2021-2022 calendar year, NJCRI also:

- Provided Early Intervention Services (E.I.S.) to 320 LGBTQ youth of color, ages 13-24.
- Launched a social marketing campaign that reached more than 4,000 LGBTQ youth to change norms around substance use based on role-model stories through a youth-designed social media platform and story pocket booklets designed and distributed by youth at events such as House Balls where LGBTQ youth socialize.
- Provided additional recreational activities to 1,000 LGBTQ youth to build skills, provide after-school alternatives to substance use, and develop healthy support systems and positive mentoring relationships with local artists/musicians.
- Provided bi-monthly creative arts programming for 480 youth.



GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER YOUTH PEER LEADERSHIP PROJECT

In 2022, DMHAS awarded GCADA, now the Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder (GCSUD), funding to develop a statewide youth leadership program. GCSUD provided funds to their system of County and Municipal Alliances (volunteer-run community coalitions) to utilize evidence-based practices to serve as the programmatic framework for this initiative.



GCSUD and these alliances utilize best practice prevention strategies that are proven effective in addressing community problems related to substance misuse. The most frequently utilized strategies incorporate information dissemination, education, alternative activities, and community-based processes.

The following prevention initiatives were implemented by Municipal Alliances utilizing this DMHAS funding:

- Youth Leadership Councils/Youth Alliance (may collaborate with existing youth councils)
- Cannabis education for youth, parents, and the broader community
- Youth Peer Leadership programs
- Youth Mental Health First Aid or other youth-based mental health program
- Resiliency programs for youth
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and other trauma-informed education programs for youth and parents
- Vaping prevention programs
- Community and other strengths-based youth programs



THE COUNCIL ON COMPULSIVE GAMBLING OF NEW JERSEY



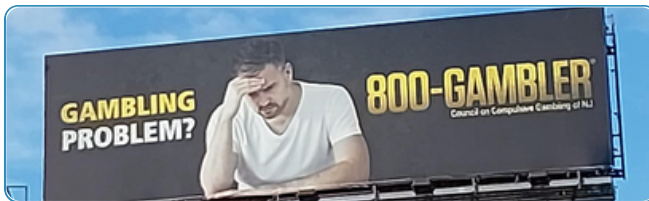
The Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey (CCGNJ) is a private non-profit 501(c)3 organization with a primary purpose to represent the best interests of problem and disordered gamblers and their families, recognizing that problem gambling is a treatable condition.

The Council focuses on educating the general public, training professionals throughout NJ, referring problem and disordered gamblers and their families to treatment, and advocating for increased treatment services for problem and disordered gamblers and their families.

The Council performs the below listed services under contract with NJ-DMHAS:

Public Awareness

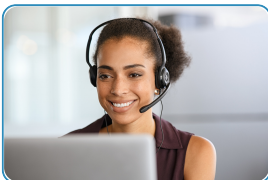
The Council creates greater awareness of the risk and protective factors of problem gambling and the availability of support, treatment, and hope for residents of New Jersey. Public awareness initiatives make their impact through traditional media, digital and electronic, and social media.



- Billboards on major NJ highways
- 800-GAMBLER website promotion
- Radio-based public service announcements
- Social media public awareness campaigns
- Video awareness messages on all mediums
- Television spots and interviews on local broadcast media
- National media commercials feature of 800-GAMBLER helpline
- Promotional pins directly to consumers' mobile devices when on location at casinos
- Vehicle wrap advertising (concluded 2021)

Information & Referral

1-800-GAMBLER® Helpline is available 24/7. Consumers can contact the helpline using their communication method of choice: telephone, text, and website chat.



42,620
TOTAL CALLS

3,296
TOTAL INTAKE
CALLS

Program & Policy Development

The Council conducts outreach and provides varying levels of information, participation, and resources (via meetings) to governmental organizations, the NJ legislature, and related committees, professional and treatment agencies, business and grass-root organizations, and county prevention coalitions to develop, refine, or implement programs related to problem gambling.



Felicia Grondin testifying on behalf of CCGNJ

3,844
INDIVIDUALS
ENGAGED

Government Individuals: 1,129
Business & Grass-roots Individuals: 1,348
Professional & Treatment Individuals: 1,367

575
ENTITIES
ENGAGED

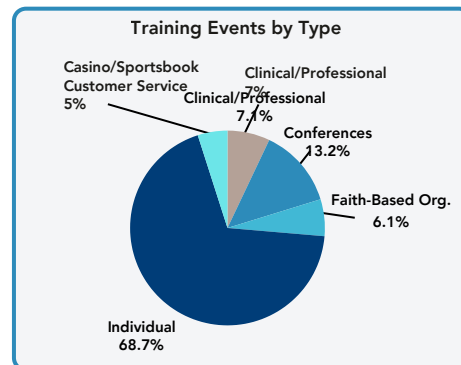
Government Entities: 182
Business & Grass-roots Entities: 113
Professional & Treatment Entities: 253

Education

The Council conducts outreach and provides presentations and training to diverse individuals, groups, communities, professionals, and the faith-based community to enhance the breadth, reach, and sustainability of gambling awareness and messages, as well as the certified gambling counselor training (CT) program.

13,261
INDIVIDUALS
REACHED

8,715
30-HOUR CT
ATTENDEES



EVALUTING PREVENTION PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

Evaluating local and statewide efforts is a cornerstone of public health and is critical to the success of prevention, programs and strategies are efficient, effective, and impactful. The systematic evaluation of the various initiatives occurring across New Jersey transforms programs from static initiatives into dynamic, responsive tools for community well-being.

Rutgers University: PFS & Regional Coalition Evaluation

The Rutgers University Center for Prevention Science (RU-CPS), part of Rutgers University's School of Social Work, focuses on research and providing training to empower community-based organizations. Their mission is to foster changes in public policies and environmental conditions that alleviate health and social disparities.

Since 2008, RU-CPS has partnered with the NJ-DMHAS to bolster the state's prevention infrastructure through innovative strategies. This includes offering technical support and enhancing data systems under the DMHAS's Partnerships for Success grant.

The team conducts detailed evaluations of New Jersey's statewide Prevention Regional Coalition system, focusing on how these coalitions implement the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) Model. This involves a mix of surveys, interviews, and observations to ensure coalitions adhere to the SPF model and effectively develop their infrastructure.

RU-CPS assesses changes at the community level through epidemiological data, evaluating shifts in substance use patterns and related consequences over time. They aim to support continuous improvement in community prevention efforts.

COVID-19 Pandemic Response

During the pandemic, RU-CPS documented how regional coalitions adjusted to remote work, assessing their infrastructure development and community-level impact. Despite initial setbacks, coalitions reported a bounce-back to pre-pandemic productivity levels, integrating lessons learned during the pandemic to enhance their operations.

Findings from 2021-2022 Evaluation

Engagement with the SPF Model: Coalitions used the SPF model to address substance misuse across multiple community sectors, working towards sustainable practices through policy changes and broad collaborations.

Focus Areas: Primary prevention efforts targeted prescription drug misuse, underage drinking, and marijuana use, among others.

Policy Changes: Coalitions effectively influenced various policies, ranging from organizational to local and school policies.

Community Involvement: Increased community engagement and partnership were key, with varying challenges unique to each coalition but a general trend toward enhanced effectiveness and sustainable impact.

By harnessing robust research and collaborative efforts, RU-CPS has made significant strides in strengthening substance use prevention initiatives across New Jersey, demonstrating adaptability and ongoing commitment to community health.

Montclair University: Middle School Risk and Protective Factors Survey

The *New Jersey Middle School Risk and Protective Factors Survey* (NJRPFS) is a student health survey that has been conducted by NJ-DMHAS approximately once every three years since 1999. The survey is administered to seventh and eighth grade students and includes questions about their use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs and their availability, as well as other related factors.

Survey Administration and Key Findings

In late 2018, DMHAS contracted with the Center for Research and Evaluation on Education and Human Services (CREEHS) at Montclair State University to administer this survey in public schools (including charter schools) across the state during the 2019-2020 school year. Survey administration resulted in 6,490 responses representing all 21 counties in NJ.



A Note About COVID-19

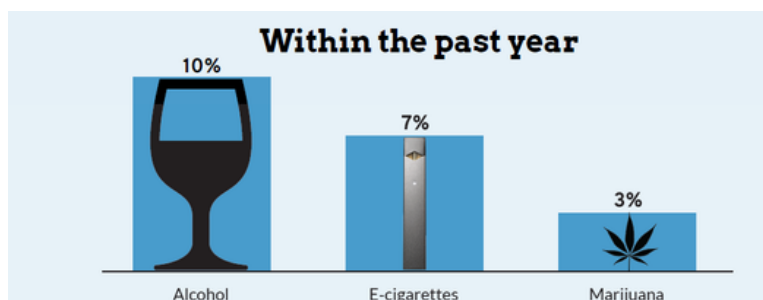
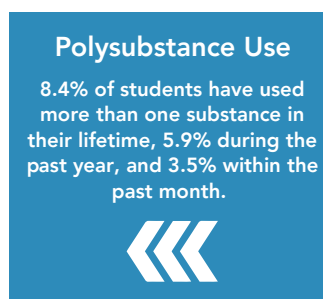
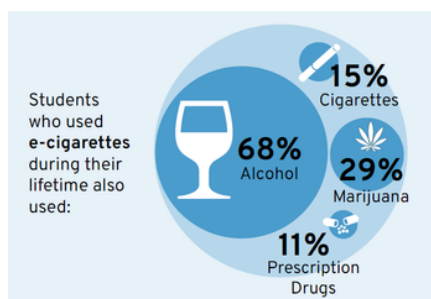
COVID-19 initially had a severe impact on data collection. The effects of the pandemic were of significant concern to community prevention agencies and schools as it changed the way students interacted with one another and attended school. As a response, additional items were added to the survey instrument to capture student experiences since the onset of the pandemic and subsequently resumed survey administrations in January 2021 using a fully virtual administration format.



Data collected between November 2019 and March 2020 prior to the COVID-19 school closures are referred to as "2020" and data collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, from January to March 2021 are referred to as "2021".

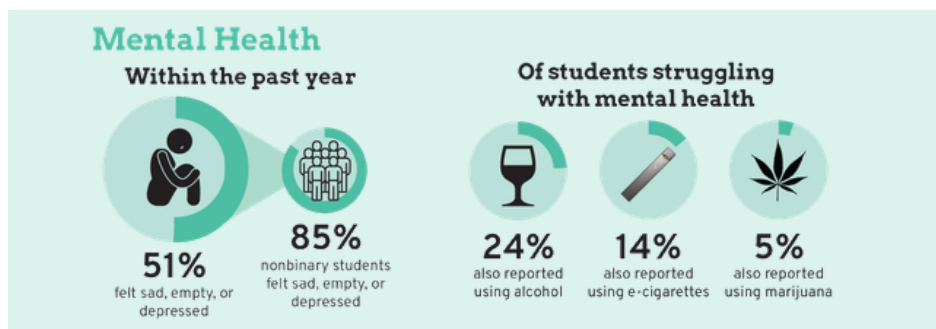
2021 Substance Use Findings

- Alcohol remains the substance most widely used by seventh and eighth grade students in NJ in the past year, followed by e-cigarettes and marijuana (10.4%, 6.6%, and 2.5%, respectively).
- About 2.6% of students used e-cigarettes with marijuana within the past year.
- Past year alcohol, e-cigarette, and marijuana use was higher than the state average for eighth grade students; female and nonbinary students; and students identifying as Hispanic, Native American or Alaskan Native, Other race, and two or more races.
- From 2020 to 2021, significant decreases were observed for past year use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other illicit drugs.



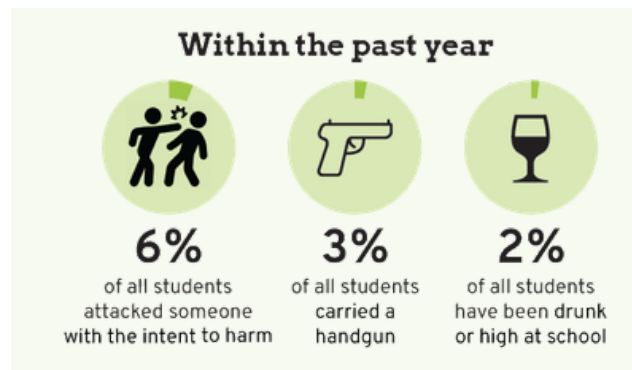
2021 Mental Health Findings

- Half of all students (50.5%) reported struggling with feelings of sadness, emptiness, or depression within the past year. Nonbinary students (85.3%) reported the highest percentage as compared to other groups.
- Of students struggling with mental health, 24% reported also using alcohol, 14% also used e-cigarettes, and 5% also used marijuana.
- More than one-quarter of students (26.2%) felt nervous, anxious, or on edge most days or every day in 2021.



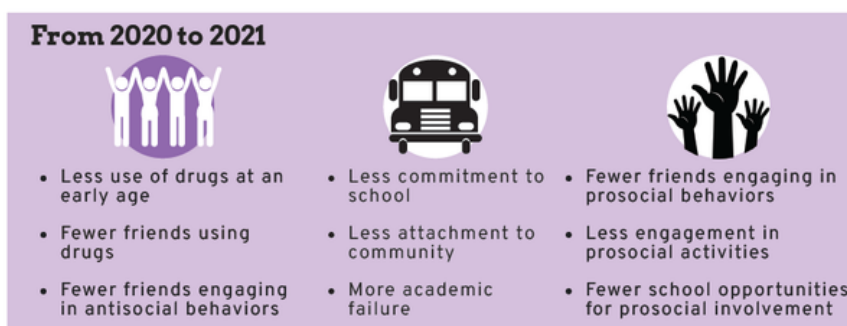
2021 Suspension and Antisocial Behaviors Findings

- Overall, 8.1% of students reported being suspended within the past year.
- Attacking someone with the intent to harm was the most frequently reported past year antisocial behavior (5.6%), followed by carrying a handgun (2.5%), and being drunk or high at school (2.2%).



2021 Risk and Protective Factors Findings

- Students reported less attachment to the community, more academic failure, and less commitment to school in 2021, compared to 2020.
- Fewer students reported using drugs at an early age, friends' use of drugs, and fewer friends engaging in antisocial behaviors in 2021, compared to 2020.
- Students reported fewer protective behaviors, including fewer school opportunities for prosocial involvement, less engagement in prosocial activities, and fewer friends engaging in prosocial behaviors in 2021, compared to 2020.



PROGRAM PROVIDER DIRECTORY

Atlantic Prevention Resources (Serves Atlantic County)
www.atlprev.org

Catholic Charities (Serves Mercer County)
www.catholiccharitiestrenton.org/locations/mercercounty

Camden County Council (Serves Camden County)
www.cccada.org

Cape Assist (Serves Cape May County)
www.cmchcc.org

Center for Family Services (Serves Warren County)
www.centerffs.org

Center for Prevention and Counseling (Serves Sussex County)
www.centerforprevention.org

The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources (Serves Bergen County)
www.bergencoalition.org

Community Prevention Resources of Warren County (Serves Warren County)
www.communitypreventionresources.org

The Council on Compulsive Gambling of NJ (CCGNJ)
www.800gambler.org

Empower Somerset (Serves Somerset County)
www.empowersomerset.com

Family Connections, Inc. (Serves Essex County)
www.essexadapt.org

Governor's Council on Substance Use Disorder (GSCUD, formerly GCADA)
<https://www.nj.gov/treasury/gcada/home>

Hispanic Family Center of Southern NJ (Serves Camden County)
www.hispanicfamilycenter.com

Mercer Council (Serves Mercer County)
www.mercercouncil.org

Montclair State University, Center for Research and Evaluation on Education and Human Services
www.montclair.edu/creehs/

New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (NJ-DMHAS)
www.nj.gov/humanservices/dmhas/home

North Jersey Community Research Initiative
www.njcric.org

New Jersey Prevention Network (NJPN)
www.njpn.org

Partners in Prevention (Serves Hudson County)
www.hudsoncountycoalition.org

Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey
www.drugfreenj.org

Prevention First (Serves Monmouth County)
www.monmouthresourcenet.org

Prevention is Key (Serves Morris County)
www.preventioniskey.org

Prevention Links (Serves Union County)
www.preventionlinks.org

Prevention Plus (Serves Burlington County)
www.prevplus.org

Prevention Resources, Inc. (Serves Hunterdon & Somerset Counties)
www.safecoalition.org

Rutgers University, Center for Prevention Science, School of Social Work
www.socialwork.rutgers.edu/centers/center-prevention-science

RWJBarnabas Health, Institute for Prevention and Recovery (Serves Ocean County)
www.rwjbh.org/dart

The Southwest Council (Serves Cumberland, Salem & Gloucester Counties)
www.southwestcouncil.org

United for Prevention in Passaic County (Serves Passaic County)
www.up-in-pc.org

Wellspring Center for Prevention (Serves Middlesex County)
www.wellspringprevention.org



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