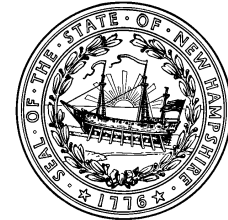


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DHHS Releases Findings: State Ranks High for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Among Young Adults

Concord – Although New Hampshire is often ranked as one of the healthiest states in the nation, according to national surveys, it ranks among the poorest for rates of young adult alcohol abuse and other drug use. The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services (BDAS) details the findings in the Issue Brief, “Young Adult Substance Abuse in New Hampshire.” According to the brief, binge drinking among the State’s 18 – 25 year olds is 9% above the national average; also in that same age group, 27% report using marijuana on a regular basis, placing New Hampshire fifth highest in the country for both of these categories.

Binge drinking poses significant risk for car crashes, unintended sexual activity, violence and other short-term problems. Regular binge drinking and other drug use increase the progression of substance use disorders, are related to lower academic achievement, and decrease productivity on the job.

“The vast majority of those who develop alcoholism and drug addiction began drinking and using drugs in their teens, and the young adult years are often where problems either diminish or get worse,” stated BDAS Director Joe Harding. “It’s a critical age where we need to be talking more, whether we’re a health clinic worker, a parent, an employer or a college dorm supervisor.”

“Young Adult Substance Abuse in New Hampshire” Issue Brief, provides statistics on young adult substance abuse and information on resources available to health clinics, colleges, businesses, and others that interact with the state’s young adult population.

“The State is starting to understand the economic impact of the substance abuse problem among our young adults,” stated Tym Rourke, Director of Program and Substance Use Disorders Grantmaking at the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. “Employers are having a hard time finding young workers who can pass necessary drug tests for employment in some industries, and once hired, employees who misuse alcohol or other drugs start costing the business in other ways. We need to be talking about it, but that’s not all we can do, we need to take action as well.”

The brief provides recommendations derived from the State’s March 2013 strategic plan, *Collective Action – Collective Impact: New Hampshire’s Strategy for Reducing Alcohol and Other Drug Misuse and Promoting Recovery*, a publication of the New Hampshire Governor’s Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment.

For more information visit www.drugfreenh.org, www.nhcenterforexcellence.org or www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/bdas

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