



SUMMER 2014

TRENDS OF TEEN MARIJUANA USE

REGION 1, TEXAS

PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER, REGION 1 TEXAS

MANAGED CARE CENTER FOR ADDICTIVE/OTHER DISORDERS, INC

1715 26th St | Lubbock, TX 79411 | 806.780.8300

THE PRC, REGION 1

WHO WE ARE

The Prevention Resource Center (PRC) is a service of Managed Care Center for Addictive/Other Disorders, Inc. We serve the 41 counties of the Texas Panhandle and South Plains Region.

We serve as the central data collection repository and substance abuse prevention training liaison for Public Health Region 1, funded by a grant from the Department of State Health Services.

Our duties are to identify local community, county, and regional data resources that will provide and share data to enhance and maximize data collection and support the central data collection repository efforts.

OUR MISSION

The purpose of the Prevention Resource Center is to support activities that enhance and improve substance abuse prevention services across Region 1 of the State of Texas. The Resource Center serves as a central repository for data collected throughout Region 1 that will be used to develop a Regional Needs Assessment.

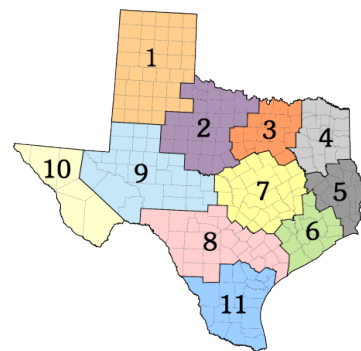
Our specific goals are:

- To provide current, relevant, and community-wide data on substance abuse trends
- To enhance the ability of our communities to more effectively respond to changes in substance abuse trends
- To influence data driven changes in the standards and attitudes within our communities

OUR REGION

We serve the following counties in West Texas:

- Armstrong, Bailey, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Childress, Cochran, Collingsworth, Crosby, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Dickens, Donley, Floyd, Garza, Gray, Hale, Hall, Hansford, Hartley, Hemphill, Hockley, Hutchinson, King, Lamb, Lipscomb, Lubbock, Lynn, Moore, Motley, Ochiltree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Swisher, Terry, Wheeler, & Yoakum.



HOW WE SERVE OUR COMMUNITY

We serve our communities by providing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) data to schools, colleges and universities, or other community agencies. This is done through **Information Dissemination**

which provides awareness and knowledge of alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse, and issues and trends through the data collected by the central data repository.

Our **Community-Based Process** aids the community to more effectively provide "TIPS" (Treatment, Intervention and Prevention Services) for ATOD problems through community mobilization, collaboration, coalition building, networking and community empowerment efforts.

Through **Environmental and Social Policy**, we aim to reduce the incidence and prevalence of ATOD in the general population by establishing and/or changing written and unwritten standards, codes and attitudes within the community. This strategy also aims to combat substance abuse and related harms with concerted, community-based and comprehensive efforts to change norms, behaviors, systems and context that contribute to substance abuse problems in our communities.

TOBACCO STRATEGIES

Our Tobacco Specialist works with tobacco retailers to understand and comply with Texas laws concerning the sale and display of tobacco products. The Prevention Resource Center provides education to tobacco retailers and the media concerning tobacco laws and the harmful effects of tobacco.

COMMUNITY COOPERATION

The Prevention Resource Center collaborates with other agencies by sharing data about substance abuse issues, trends, planning, training and other activities within our region and state. The Prevention Center coordinates with regional coalitions and supports their prevention efforts.

Richard Kolas

Program Director

30 July 2014

Prevention Resource Center, Region 1

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INTRODUCTION

Marijuana is the most widely used illicit drug in the world and the use of marijuana in the United States is increasing. In 2010, more than 29 million Americans (11.5%) age 12 or older reported using marijuana within the past year—a significant increase over rates reported each year from 2002-2008, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse¹. Other research suggests a decrease in perceived risk of marijuana use in young adolescents corresponds with increased risk of marijuana use.

Newer information indicates that this problem is even more pervasive. Recently, almost half of US teens (44%) report using marijuana at least once within their lifetime; more than one in three (36%) report using in the past year; one in four (24%) report using within the past month; and 7% report using at least 20 times within the past month².

More than four in ten teens (41%) who have used marijuana started doing so before the age of 15³. This is worrisome considering that those who initiate marijuana use at a younger age are more likely to use marijuana – as well as other substances – more frequently than those who begin using at an older age.

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Of course, marijuana use is associated with other forms of drug abuse. While some research questions if the link between marijuana and other drug abuse is causal, other studies find that marijuana use typically precedes the use of potentially more dangerous drugs, such as cocaine and heroin. A recent study published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* found that men and women who had used marijuana were 2.5 times more likely to later misuse prescription drugs compared to those who abstained⁴.

Still, marijuana continues to be the most used illicit substance in Region 1. Although data specific to Region 1 on marijuana use is sparse, there are two regional surveys that the PRC has access to: The Amarillo Texas Prevention Impact Index (TPII) 2013 and the 2013 Lubbock VOICES Survey. The results of these surveys, along with the results from two state-wide surveys, provides the best picture into just how regional adolescents abuse marijuana.

Specifically, this report primarily uses data for region 1 from these four surveys:

- TSS: 2012 Texas Student Survey
- YRBS: 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- TPII: 2013 Texas Prevention Impact Index, Amarillo ISD
- VOICES: 2013 VOICES, Lubbock Survey

¹ Topics in Brief: Marijuana. National Institute on Drug Abuse, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, December 2011.

² 2013 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, sponsored by Met Life. Key Finds: Released July 23, 2014.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Fiellin L, Tetrault J, Becker W, Fiellin D, Hoff R. Previous use of alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana and subsequent abuse of prescription opioids in young adults. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, August 2012.

Taken together, these surveys begin to illustrate how adolescents in Region 1, Texas perceive harmful risks of using marijuana and how they consume marijuana. Although most of the regional data was collected in Amarillo and Lubbock, other regional teens do seem to follow similar patterns.

REGIONAL ADOLESCENT PERCEPTIONS OF MARIJUANA

How teens perceive marijuana is vital to understanding how teens consume marijuana in our region. These perceptions directly correlate to how marijuana is treated by teens and what strategies Prevention Specialists can employ in order to educate adolescents about the dangers of marijuana consumption.

PERCEPTION OF ACCESS

Adolescents can only use ATOD substances if they have access to these substances. The Texas Student Survey asks 7th to 12th grade students to rate how easily they can find these products. In general, the less able adolescents can find these substances, the less likely they are to consume these substances. Overall, Texan High School students perceive alcohol to be the easiest to get with 58.2% reporting that access to alcohol is either somewhat or very easy for them.

Still, many Texas adolescents believe that accessing marijuana is relatively easy. Overall, there is little data on how accessible marijuana is to adolescents in Region 1. However, the 2013 TP11⁵ reports that 32.6% of participating Amarillo area students indicate that marijuana is either very easy or fairly easy to get. This is lower than the average for Texas as reported by the 2012 Texas Student Survey (38.1%).

Table 1: Perceived Accessibility to Marijuana, TSS 2012⁶

If you wanted to, how difficult would it be for you to get marijuana?						
	Never Heard of It	Impossible	Very Difficult	Somewhat Difficult	Somewhat Easy	Very Easy
All Grades	19.0%	26.2%	7.7%	9.0%	12.4%	25.7%
Grade 7	30.0%	45.1%	7.3%	5.4%	5.1%	7.1%
Grade 8	23.2%	37.4%	8.9%	7.8%	8.8%	13.9%
Grade 9	17.7%	25.0%	8.3%	10.2%	13.5%	25.3%
Grade 10	15.4%	19.0%	7.3%	10.1%	15.4%	32.7%
Grade 11	13.7%	14.6%	7.6%	10.2%	15.9%	38.1%
Grade 12	12.5%	11.8%	6.7%	10.5%	16.8%	41.7%

Perhaps of greatest concern regarding access is that 58.5% of Texas twelfth grade students report that marijuana is either somewhat easy or very easy to obtain. Still, almost one eighth (12.2%) of Texas seventh grade students report that marijuana is either somewhat easy or very easy to obtain.

⁵ Texas Prevention Impact Index, 2013

⁶ Source: Texas Student Survey of Drug and Alcohol Use, 2012

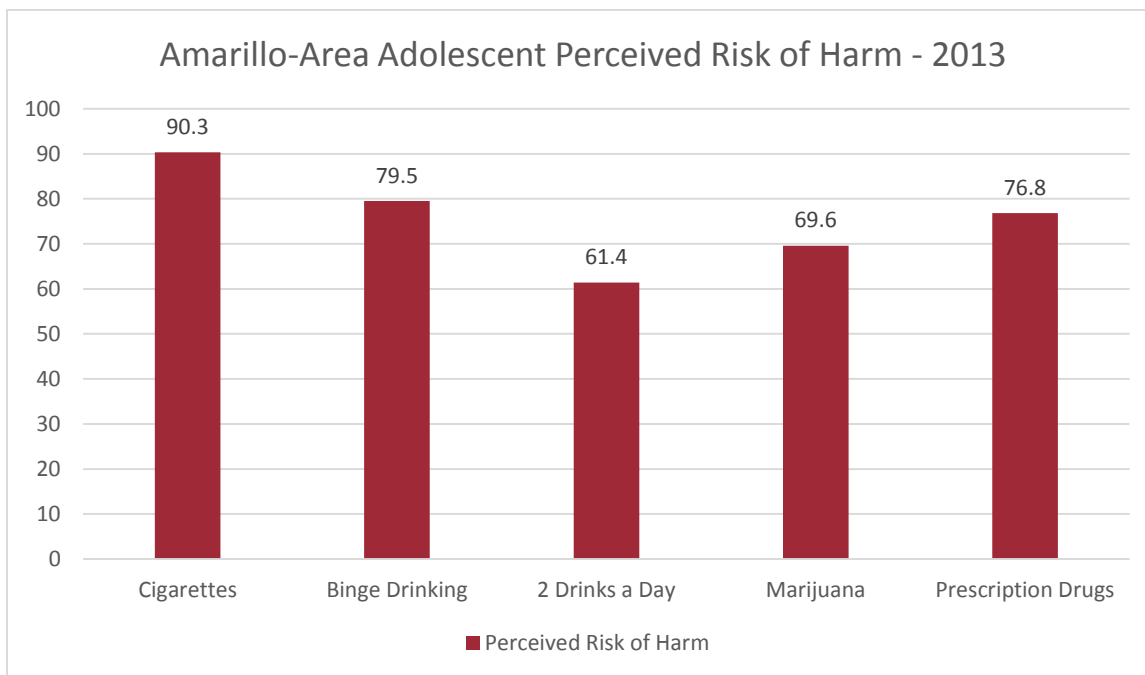
Amarillo-area adolescents report a slightly lower perception of access to marijuana. In 2013, 32.6% of these teens reported that marijuana is either very or fairly easy to obtain⁷. It may be that adolescents are less likely to access marijuana when compared to the Texas State average.

PERCEIVED RISK OF HARM

Convincing adolescents that ATOD substances are harmful to them is what Youth Prevention efforts are all about. Overall, Texas students report that they believe marijuana to be very dangerous (58.2%) followed closely by tobacco (56.8%)⁸.

Regionally, adolescents do perceive ATOD substances as having a higher risk of harm than Texas teens. Over 90% of Amarillo-area adolescents perceive cigarettes as harmful and 69.6% of these same students perceive marijuana as harmful.

Figure 1: Perceived Risk of Harm, TPII 2013⁹



Regional educators and other prevention advocates do have reason for concern. Although the regional data does demonstrate that area teens do perceive marijuana as dangerous, these students do perceive marijuana as less dangerous than cigarettes, binge drinking, and prescription drugs.

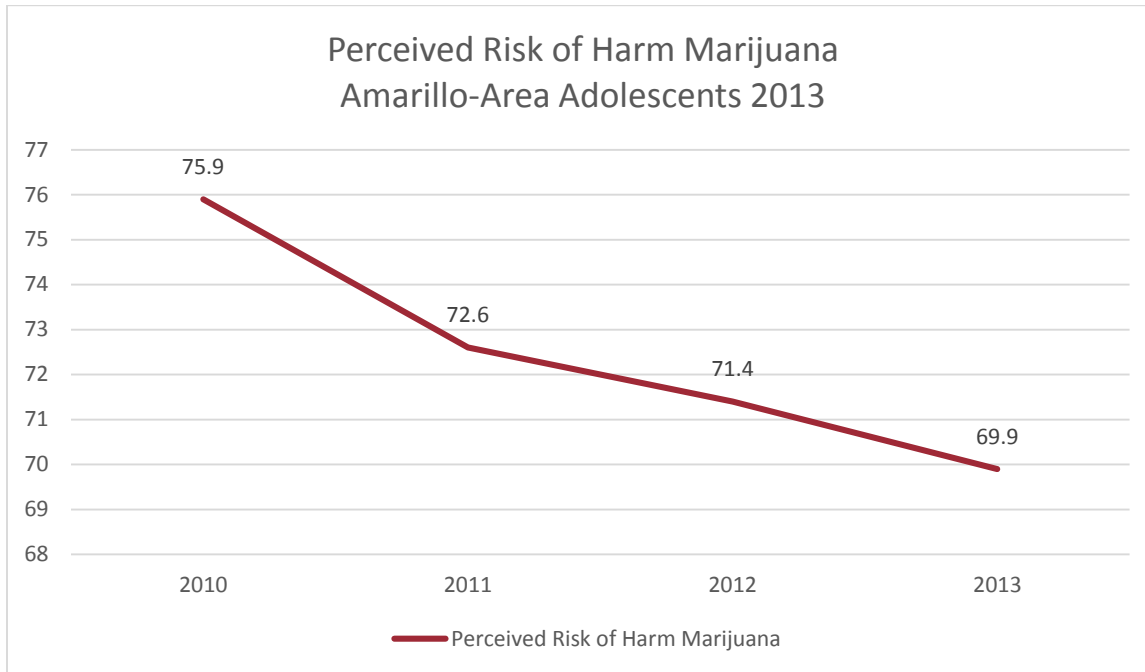
Also, fewer Amarillo-area students perceive marijuana as dangerous each year. Over the last four years, the perception of marijuana as dangerous has steadily fallen each year. In 2010, 75.9% of participants perceived marijuana as dangerous while, in 2013, only 69.9% felt this way. That is a 6% drop over four years.

⁷ 2013 Texas Prevention Impact Index

⁸ 2012 Texas Student Survey of Drug and Alcohol Abuse

⁹ Source: Texas Prevention Impact Index, 2013

Figure 2: Four Years Perceived Risk of Harm for Marijuana, TPII 2013¹⁰



Depending on how one looks at the data, regional adolescents may or may not consider marijuana as dangerous as compared to the Texas State average. Although the TSS does report that 58.2% of Texas adolescents perceive marijuana as dangerous, 14.2% also answered that marijuana is “somewhat dangerous”. Taken together, one could say that 72.4% of Texas adolescents feel that marijuana is either somewhat or very dangerous while only 69.6% of regional adolescents reported marijuana as dangerous. It could be argued that regional adolescents perceive marijuana as less dangerous than the Texas State average.

Table 2: Perceived Risk of Harm to Marijuana Use, TSS 2012¹¹

How dangerous do you think it is for kids your age to use marijuana?					
	Very Dangerous	Somewhat Dangerous	Not Very Dangerous	Not at All Dangerous	Do Not Know
All Grades	58.2%	14.2%	11.8%	12.0%	3.8%
Grade 7	80.6%	8.0%	3.8%	3.5%	4.1%
Grade 8	69.5%	11.7%	7.4%	7.1%	4.3%
Grade 9	55.9%	15.5%	12.9%	11.9%	3.8%
Grade 10	50.2%	16.8%	14.4%	15.2%	3.5%
Grade 11	47.2%	15.8%	16.2%	17.3%	3.5%
Grade 12	41.4%	18.3%	17.4%	19.2%	3.7%

¹⁰ Source: Texas Prevention Impact Index, 2013

¹¹ Source: Texas Student Survey of Drug and Alcohol Use, 2012

REGIONAL ADOLESCENT CONSUMPTION OF MARIJUANA

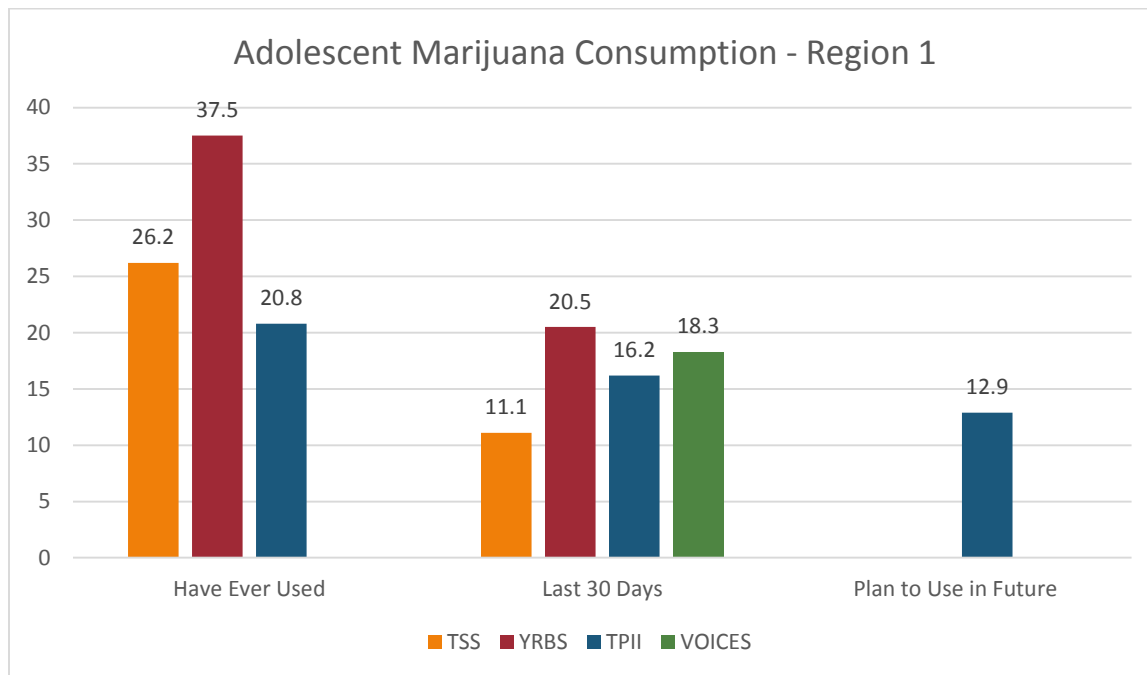
The majority of regional marijuana consumption data that is available comes from the 2012 Texas Student Survey of Substance Abuse (TSS) and the 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey – Texas Results (YRBS). Both of these surveys give data for the State of Texas and is not available at a regional or county level of detail. These do afford communities a general idea of what may be occurring among their young people. This data provides an excellent frame from which to compare any local information concerning ATOD use.

Data specific to Region 1 on marijuana consumption and abuse is sparse but there are two surveys that the PRC has access to: The Amarillo Texas Prevention Impact Index (TPII) 2013 and the 2013 Lubbock VOICES Survey. These surveys are centered in the Amarillo and Lubbock metropolitan areas but they should not be dismissed by rural areas within the region.

OVERVIEW

Generally speaking, available data seems to indicate that fewer adolescents in Region 1 (20.8%) have ever used marijuana when compared to national (44%)¹² and state (26.2% or 37.5%) results. Equally encouraging, fewer regional adolescents (16.2%, 18.3%) report using marijuana in the last 30 days than national teens (24%)¹³.

Figure 3: Overview of Marijuana Consumption, Region 1



¹² 2013 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, sponsored by Met Life. Key Finds: Released July 23, 2014.

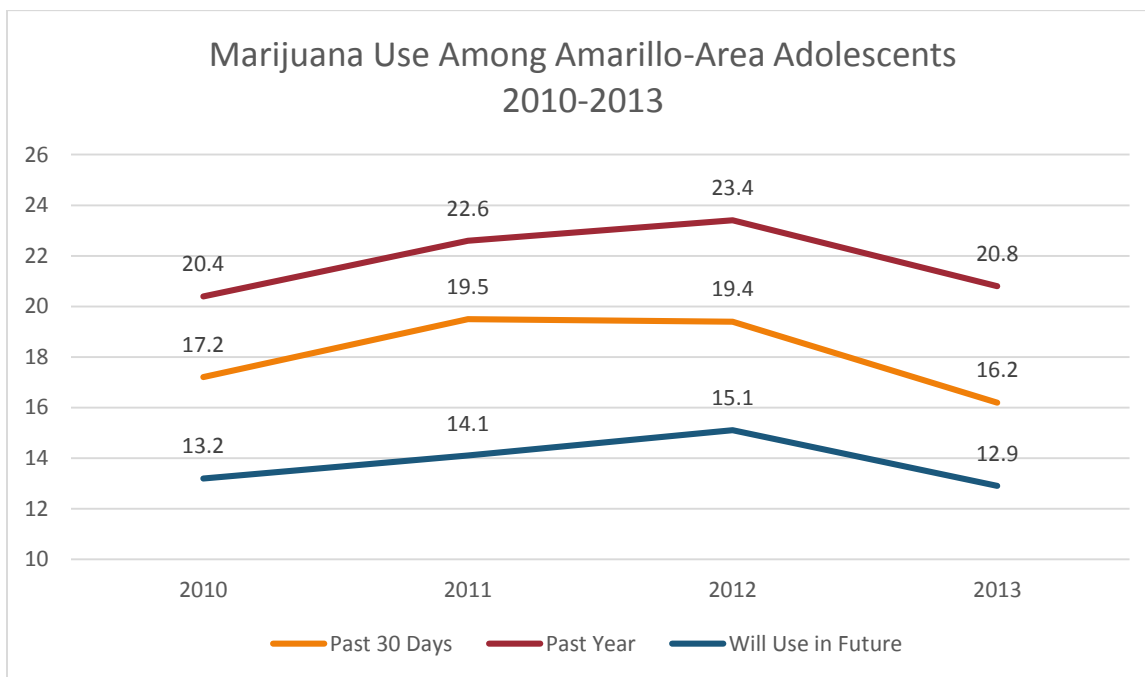
¹³ Ibid.

Still, it is troubling that 12.9% of Amarillo-area adolescents reported that they plan on using marijuana in the future. Equally troubling is that 18.3% of Lubbock-area adolescents report that they have used marijuana within the last 30 days. Although this is slightly less than Texas Students surveyed by the YRBS, it is over 7% higher than the Texas Students surveyed by the TSS. Finally, there is a greater disparity between having ever used and used within the last 30 days for Texas adolescents (17%, 15.1%) than for Regional adolescents (4.6%). This may indicate that regional adolescents are more likely to use marijuana more often if they use it at all.

CURRENT USE

Nationally, marijuana use among adolescents is basically flat over the last five years¹⁴ and what regional information we have seems to corroborate this. In 2013, marijuana use among Amarillo-area adolescents are similar to 2010 rates.

Figure 4: Marijuana Use 2010-2013, TPII 2013¹⁵



Overall, this is good news—especially when compared to how fewer Amarillo-area adolescents perceive marijuana as harmful over this same period (-6%). Still, more than one in five (20.8%) Amarillo-area students report using marijuana in the last year. Unfortunately, we have no data from Lubbock-area adolescents concerning past year use. However, Lubbock-area students (18.3%) report a higher past 30 days use than Amarillo-area students (16.2%).

As compared to Texas state averages, our region seems mixed. Area adolescents are less likely to have ever tried marijuana but more likely to have used marijuana in the last 30 days than participants of the

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Sources: Texas Prevention Impact Index, 2013

Texas Student Survey. Unfortunately, we have little data for Lubbock and no data for large areas of the region with which to compare to the Amarillo trends over time.

State-wide, only 26.2% of adolescents report ever using marijuana but 41.8% of twelfth grade students report that they have used marijuana at least once. Overall, this is well below national findings.

Table 3: Prevalence and Recent Use of Marijuana, TSS 2012¹⁶

Prevalence and Recent Use of Marijuana – TSS 2012				
	Past Month	School Year	Ever Used	Never Used
All Grades	11.1%	16.0%	26.2%	73.8%
Grade 7	3.2%	4.4%	8.7%	91.3%
Grade 8	6.2%	8.9%	15.6%	84.4%
Grade 9	11.3%	16.2%	26.2%	73.8%
Grade 10	13.6%	19.7%	32.3%	67.7%
Grade 11	15.4%	22.7%	37.0%	63.0%
Grade 12	18.9%	26.8%	41.8%	58.2%

CONCLUSION

New national-level data concerning adolescent use of marijuana may indicate some troubling trends. Overall, Adolescent use of marijuana in our region is lower when compared to this information but mixed as compared to state-level data.

KEY FINDINGS

- Although the regional data does demonstrate that area teens do perceive marijuana as dangerous, these students do perceive marijuana as less dangerous than cigarettes, binge drinking, and prescription drugs.
- Over the last four years, the perception of marijuana as dangerous has steadily fallen each year in our region. In 2010, 75.9% of participants perceived marijuana as dangerous while, in 2013, only 69.9% felt this way. That is a 6% drop over four years.
- 72.4% of Texas adolescents feel that marijuana is either somewhat or very dangerous while only 69.6% of regional
- 12.9% of Amarillo-area adolescents reported that they plan on using marijuana in the future. Equally troubling is that 18.3% of Lubbock-area adolescents report that they have used marijuana within the last 30 days. Although this is slightly less than Texas Students surveyed by the YRBS, it is over 7% higher than the Texas Students surveyed by the TSS.
- There is a greater disparity between having ever used and used within the last 30 days for Texas adolescents (17%, 15.1%) than for Regional adolescents (4.6%). This may indicate that regional adolescents are more likely to use marijuana more often if they use it at all.

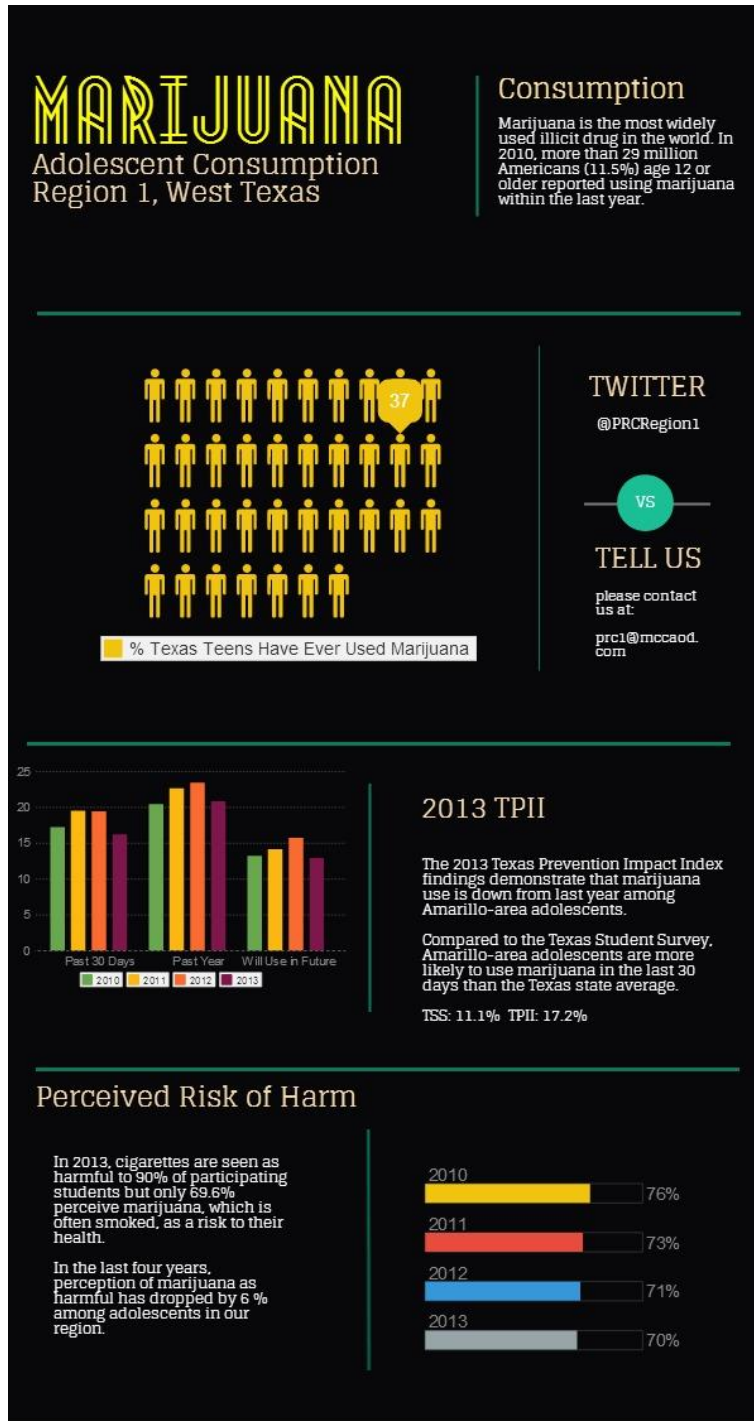
¹⁶ Source: Texas Student Survey, 2012

adolescents reported marijuana as dangerous.

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APPENDIX: INFOGRAM—REGION 1 MARIJUANA CONSUMPTION



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