



SUMMER 2017

# TEEN SUBSTANCE CONSUMPTION

HOCKLEY CO

PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER, REGION 1 TEXAS  
MANAGED CARE CENTER FOR ADDICTIVE/OTHER DISORDERS, INC  
1715 26th St | Lubbock, TX 79411 | 806.780.8300

## INTRODUCTION

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Adolescent substance abuse is a major health problem in the United States. In 2016, over 61% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students have tried alcohol in their lifetime, 44.5% have tried marijuana at least once, and 18% have misused some prescription drug<sup>1</sup>. In fact, almost half (48.3%) of all 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in the United States have abused some illicit drug at least once in their life and almost one fourth (24.4%) have done so in the past month<sup>2</sup>.

There may be any number of reasons for why adolescents abuse alcohol and other drugs (AOD) including the desire for peer approval, curiosity, an attempt to deal with other problems, angst, boredom, and so on. Social factors can influence how teens use or refrain from using these substances including how available these substances are, how dangerous they seem to the adolescent, and how parents and family perceive these substances.

This study explores how adolescents from Hockley County, TX perceive alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs while also glimpsing at how many of these teens may have used AOD substances. This report is made possible by Hockley County VOICES community coalition.

## VOICES OF HOCKLEY Co

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Hockley County VOICES<sup>3</sup> is a community coalition, funded by Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), whose purpose is to encourage community mobilization to implement evidence-based environmental strategies with a primary focus on changing policies and social norms in Hockley County to prevent and reduce underage drinking and marijuana and prescription drug abuse. Their mission is to empower communities to create positive changes in attitudes, behaviors, and policies to prevent and reduce at-risk behaviors in youth with a unified focus on alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs.

Members of this coalition are people who wish to help youth make better choices. These people are from a wide range of organizations that represent Hockley County. These volunteers include people from civic groups, local churches, city government, medical professionals, school officials, humanitarian organizations, and young people themselves. Anyone who wants to help make Hockley County a better place to live is welcome to join.

VOICES keeps active in the community through several programs aimed at making Hockley County a better place to live. Each year VOICES sponsors the Back-to-School Kickoff where backpacks filled with school supplies are given to students who need them. Twice a year VOICES conducts a Medication Cleanout where old and expired prescription medication is collected and safely disposed of. Through the school year, volunteers conduct youth prevention programs and other community service projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Monitoring the Future Study, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Volunteers Offering Involvement in Communities to Expand Services (VOICES)

As part of their mission, Hockley County VOICES conducts a community needs assessment that looks at how teens are misusing marijuana, alcohol, and prescription drugs. As part of this, volunteers conducted a survey focusing on how Hockley County teens perceive and consume alcohol.

## THE SURVEY

All Levelland Middle and High School students were invited by VOICES to participate in a survey concerning how they view AOD. Permission was granted by school officials to ask students to participate. Each student was given a paper copy of a hypertext link to the survey online that is hosted by SurveyMonkey. Participation in this survey was voluntary and no one was compelled or compensated for their participation. Any student who chose to participate could quit without penalty at any time. No personal information was collected that could trace any specific participant to any specific response.

The survey consisted of 46 questions concerning alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs including four covering basic demographics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and county of residence. 23 questions focused on how Hockley Co. youth feel about, consume, or interact with alcohol and those who consume it, 8 questions concentrated on marijuana consumption, and 9 explored how these adolescents use/misuse prescription drugs.

## PARTICIPANTS

A total of 499 ( $N=499$ ) people chose to participate. Of these, 38.7% report being 14 years of age or younger, 58.7% report being 15-17, and 2.2% report being 18-20. More females responded than males (male = 47.5%, female = 52.5%). The majority reported as “Hispanic or Latino” (64.44%) followed by “White/Caucasian” (37.78%), “Black or African American” (10.44%), “American Indian” (7.78%), “Asian” (3.33%), and “Prefer not to Answer” (4.22%).

## ALCOHOL

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Underage drinking is a serious public health issue in the United States. Alcohol is the most widely used and abused substance among American adolescents<sup>4</sup> and this use/abuse poses enormous health and safety risks for everyone—regardless of age or drinking status. Nationally, more than half (52.2%) of all Americans aged 12 or older were current alcohol users in 2013—that translates to an estimated 136.9 million current drinkers<sup>5</sup>.

Anyone may feel the effects of aggressive behavior, property damage, injuries, violence, and deaths that may result from underage drinking. In short, underage drinking should be a nationwide concern rather than simply a problem for some families in our community.

Annually, about 5,000 people under the age of 21 die from alcohol-related injuries involving underage drinking in the United States. Of these deaths, about 1,900 (38%) involve motor vehicle crashes, 1,600 (32%) result from homicides, and 300 (6%) result from suicides<sup>6</sup>. In addition, 40% of people who first

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<sup>4</sup> National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> SAMHSA 2014, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, pp. 10-11.

drink before age 15 become alcohol dependent as adults. This is four times the rate of those who wait until 21 to have their first drink<sup>7</sup>.

In 2013, 11.6% of American adolescents aged 12 to 17 (or about 2.9 million adolescents) reported that they were current alcohol users<sup>8</sup>. Many of these adolescents (6.2% or 1.6 million) reported binge drinking<sup>9</sup> in the past month. Adolescent alcohol consumption is a serious problem today.

Still, 67.2% of all Texas adolescents report trying alcohol at least once in their lifetime<sup>10</sup> and 36.1% report consuming alcohol in the last thirty days. This is higher than the national average and may indicate that Texas adolescents consume more alcohol, on the average, than their peers in other states.

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Underage drinking costs us \$2,075 per year for each teen in Texas or \$3.50 per drink consumed by underage drinkers

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### COSTS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING

Often, adults consider underage drinking as normal behavior, or simply a rite of passage into adulthood. In some cases, adults may even encourage adolescents to consume alcohol under specific circumstances.

In Texas, it is legal for an adult to provide alcohol to their children although it is illegal for an adult to supply alcohol to a minor who is not their child unless their parent or guardian is present and consents<sup>11</sup>. However, laws like these may allow unintended access of alcohol to adolescents.

In 2013, underage drinking cost the state of Texas \$5.5 billion including medical costs, pain and suffering, and work lost<sup>12</sup>. That means underage drinking costs us \$2,075 per year for each teen in Texas or \$3.50 per drink consumed by underage drinkers.

### ADOLESCENT CONSUMPTION RATES AND PATTERNS

Of the participants, 58.5% report having tried alcohol at least once in their lifetime. This is less than the 61% of regional teens who reported the same while participating in the 2016 Texas Student Survey<sup>13</sup> (TSS) for Region 1-2. Of the Hockley Co. teens who report drinking at all, 20.81% report drinking at least once a month while 9.95% say they drink at least once a week.

Most students reported taking their first drink at 13 ( $n=59$ ) although there is a significant increase of students reporting their first drink between 9 and 10. This could indicate that any alcohol prevention programs should occur between 8 and 9 years of age.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> SAMHSA 2014, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Binge drinking is usually defined as 5 or more drinks in a row for men and 4 or more drinks in a row for women.

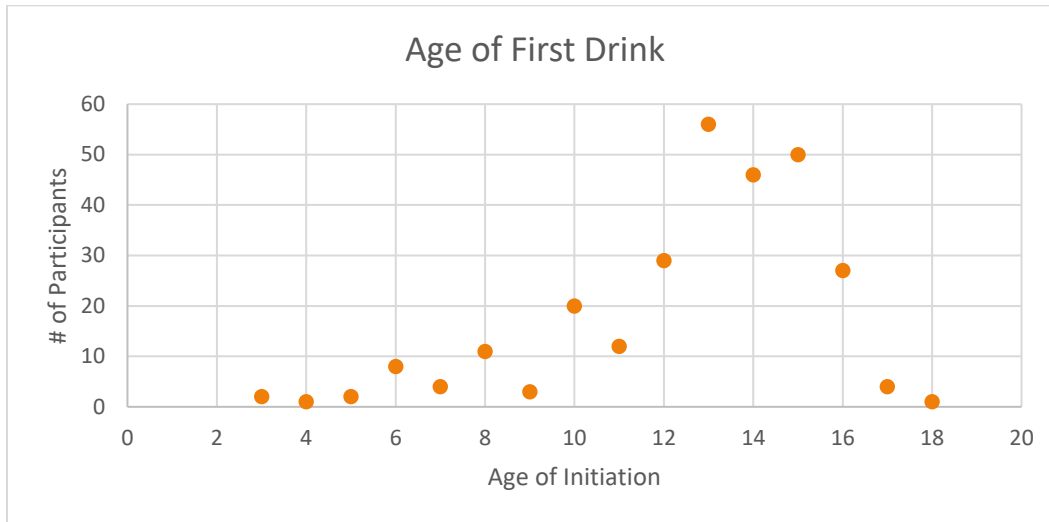
<sup>10</sup> Center for Health Statistics (CHS)

<sup>11</sup> Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> The Public Policy Research Institute.

Figure 1: Age of Initiation, Alcohol



Of those teens who report drinking, 28.07% report binge drinking, or having five or more drinks of alcohol in one sitting at least once. Of those adolescents that did binge drink, 57.14% report having done so in the last month.

Of the 58.5% of Hockley County teens that report having had at least on drink in their lifetime, they also reported these activities:

Table 1: Alcohol Induced Conduct

Have you ever...?	
Been absent from school because you used alcohol	6.86%
Been drunk at school	9.14%
Done poorly in school because you used alcohol	6.29%
Had family problems because you used alcohol	8.57%
Been arrested because you used alcohol	4.57%
Driven under the influence of alcohol	13.14%
Been a passenger in a vehicle while the driver was under the influence of alcohol	66.29%
Been drunk at a party	62.29%
Had an injury because you used alcohol	11.43%

57.83% of these teen participants report that their parents allow them to consume alcohol at home under some circumstances. 28.43% report it is acceptable under parental supervision, 26.84% on special occasions only, and 2.56% report at any time they wish. Still, only 45.34% report discussing their alcohol use with their parents and 45.42% believe that their parents know how much they drink. In fact, 25% report that their parents have seen them drunk.

A full 64.4% of these participants report that they know adults who let minors consume alcohol in their homes. Although only 2.59% of participants report ever using a fake ID to buy alcohol, 50.49% report that someone has offered to give, sell, or buy alcohol for them at least once in the last two months

(19.34% once; 21.64% 2-3 times; 9.51% 4 or more times). 5.83% of these participants report purchasing alcohol without an ID at least once.

**ATTITUDES ABOUT ALCOHOL**

Of all those who participated in this survey, 84.77% teens believe that alcohol use by underage youth is a problem. 40.74% believe that it is a serious problem while 44.03% classify it as a minor problem. 15.23% believe that it is not a problem at all. Still, 75.82% of these participants believe that drinking and driving among youth is a serious problem while 16.6% classify it as only a minor problem. 7.58% believe that underage drinking and driving is not a problem at all here.

In addition, participants rated the likelihood for these reasons that Hockley County youth may consume alcohol:

Table 2: Why Hockley CO Teens Drink

<b>Most people my age who drink do so because... (Check all that apply)</b>	
They want to have a good time at a party	79.75%
They are sad or depressed and want to feel better about themselves	42.19%
They wish to rebel and defy their parents, teachers, and other adult authorities	27.64%
They wish to fit in or be accepted by their friends or peers	58.65%
They are bored	34.18%

60.57% of participants believe that the heavy use of alcohol among Hockley County teens has increased while only 7.93% believe that it has decreased. Nearly one third (31.5%) believe that it has stayed the same. 49.07% report knowing someone with an alcohol problem and of those, most (67.37%) are related to them.

Most participants (69.98%) report friends and relatives as the primary sources where people under the age of 21 obtain alcohol. 17.71% report the parent’s home as the primary source while only 6.05% report a liquor store as that source. 2.16% report a bar or restaurant as the primary source of alcohol for underage drinkers.

Interestingly, 66.05% of participants believe that youth are responsible for contributing to the problem of underage drinking. 43.35% believe that parents are responsible while 25.56% believe that alcohol outlets such as bars, restaurants, and liquor stores share blame. 27.4% say they don’t know who is responsible for this but 21.88% ascribe some blame to alcohol advertising.

Finally, all Hockley County teens who participated in this survey were asked which of the following prevention programs they would support to decrease alcohol use by youth under the legal drinking age of 21:

Table 3: What Motivates Less Drinking

<b>Which of the following approaches would you support to decrease underage drinking? (Check all that apply)</b>	
New and/or stiffer penalties	29.29%
More law enforcement	34.55%

More alcohol education in schools	43.48%
More alcohol education in TV, radio, and magazines	29.29%
More alcohol education online	25.40%
Public presentations by people who have been seriously hurt or impaired by alcohol use	45.31%
Driver's license suspension for youth who drink alcohol	46.45%
Alcohol-free teen night clubs	48.28%
Ban on alcohol advertising	23.80%

It seems that Hockley Co. adolescents believe that Alcohol-free teen night clubs, driver's license suspension, public presentations by people hurt or impaired by alcohol, and more alcohol education would be the best deterrents for underage drinking.

## MARIJUANA

Marijuana is the most widely used illicit drug in the world and the use of marijuana in the United States is increasing. In 2014, more than 22 million Americans (8.4%) age 12 or older reported using marijuana within the past 30 days—a significant increase over rates reported each year from 2002-2013, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse<sup>14</sup>. Other research suggests a decrease in perceived risk of marijuana use in young adolescents corresponds with increased risk of marijuana use.

Other information indicates that this problem is even more pervasive among teens. 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 month<sup>15</sup>.

More than four in ten teens (41%) who have used marijuana started doing so before the age of 15<sup>16</sup>. 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.

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 abstained<sup>17</sup>.

When talking with Hockley Co. teens, we often hear something similar to, “Nobody ever died from smoking marijuana” or “Marijuana is safer than alcohol” or something similar. In fact, we often

Recently, almost half of US teens (44%) report using marijuana at least once in their lifetime.

<sup>14</sup> Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality (2015).

<sup>15</sup> 2013 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, sponsored by Met Life. Key Finds: Released July 23, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Fiellin L, Tetraut 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.

encounter people who are surprised to learn that marijuana is illegal—including many adults. In reality, marijuana consumption has many health effects and can even lead to death.

Table 4: Adverse Effects of Short-term Use and Long-term or Heavy Use of Marijuana<sup>18</sup>

Adverse Effects of Short-term Use and Long-term or Heavy Use of Marijuana	
Effects of Short-term Use	Effects of Long-term or Heavy use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impaired short-term memory, making it difficult to learn and retain information</li> <li>• Impaired motor coordination, interfering with driving skills and increasing the risk of injuries</li> <li>• Altered judgement, increasing the risk of sexual behaviors that facilitate the transmission of STD</li> <li>• Paranoia and Psychosis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addiction</li> <li>• Altered brain development</li> <li>• Poor educational outcome</li> <li>• Cognitive impairment with lower IQ among frequent users in adolescence</li> <li>• Diminished life satisfaction and achievement</li> <li>• Increased risk of chronic psychosis disorders, including schizophrenia</li> </ul>

Overall, about 9% of people who use marijuana become addicted. Of those who begin smoking marijuana in adolescence, 17% become addicted and 25%-50% of those who smoke marijuana daily will become addicted.<sup>19</sup>

### ADOLESCENT CONSUMPTION RATES AND PATTERNS

Of the participants, 35.14% report having tried marijuana at least once in their lifetime. This is higher than the 21.5% of regional teens who reported the same while participating in the 2016 Texas Student Survey<sup>20</sup> (TSS) for Region 1-2. Of the Hockley Co. teens who report marijuana consumption at all, 12.68% report consuming at least once while 8.73% say they consumed it in the past month.

Of the participants who have consumed marijuana, only 86.83% report to have ever smoked it. This is significant because adolescents are beginning to consume marijuana in ways that are more easily hidden from parents and more potent:

Table 5: How Marijuana Consumed

How have you used marijuana? (Select all that apply)	
I have smoked it	86.83%
I have eaten it (edible, candy, or some kind of food)	31.14%
I have used a vaporizer	23.95%
I have dabbled it	23.35%
I have used it in some other way	14.37%

<sup>18</sup> Volkow, 2014

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> The Public Policy Research Institute.



**Edibles** are a discreet way to consume marijuana by infusing cannabis with food or drink. These edible sources introduce THC into the body through the intestinal tract instead of through the lungs. Once, brownies were the most well-known way to consume edible cannabis but these edibles come in many different forms, from candy to soda to gourmet cooking<sup>21</sup>, and are easy to conceal from parents and teachers. 31.14% of Hockley Co. adolescents who have used marijuana report consuming cannabinoids in edibles.

These products carry a much higher concentration of THC than "flower" (meaning the raw "bud" form of weed) and they produce a longer high. Typically, marijuana flowers contain between 12% and 15% THC while edibles use a concentrate that is between 50% and 90% THC<sup>22</sup>. Often the concentrate is not distributed evenly or correctly labeled which can lead to accidental overdose.

**Vaporizing** is a technique of cannabinoid consumption where a marijuana concentrate or oil is super-heated into a mist which is inhaled like smoke. Vaporization is a relatively new method of administration for marijuana. This device delivers inhaled THC while reducing toxic byproducts of smoking marijuana caused by combustion<sup>23</sup>. Many users believe that it provides a faster, more intense high. 23.95% of Hockley Co. adolescents who have used marijuana report consuming cannabinoids with a vaporizer.

Often, vaporizing is used by people to conceal their consumption of marijuana<sup>24</sup>. The latest versions of e-cigarettes can be used to vaporize cannabis oil with little or no odor as there is no fire or smoke. They can often be purchased at a local convenience store. Also, these vaporizers look like pens which are easy to conceal and do not resemble bongs or even earlier vaporizers. They simply look innocuous.

**Dabbing** is inhaling the vapors from a concentrated form of marijuana made by an extraction method that uses butane gas. Dabs, also known as butane hash oil (BHO)—which are sometimes called "budder," "honeycomb" or "earwax"—are more potent than conventional forms of marijuana because they have much higher concentrations of THC, than is found in regular cannabis. At a minimum, dabs are four times as strong as a joint, and the high is administered all at once<sup>25</sup>. 23.35% of Hockley Co. adolescents who have used marijuana report dabbing.

Of those participants who have consumed marijuana, 41.57% have smoked it, 14.46% have consumed edibles, and 11.45% have dabbled it over the last 30 days. Almost 10% (9.64%) have consumed marijuana using a vaporizer. More than half have consumed marijuana in the past 30 days.

Table 6: How Marijuana Consumed, Past 30 Days

**During the past 30 days, how did you use marijuana?  
(Select all that apply)**

31% of Hockley Co. teens report consuming some form of edible marijuana

<sup>21</sup> For example, *The Cannabis Gourmet Cookbook* by Cheri Sicard. <http://www.cannabischeri.com/buy-the-book/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/these-are-not-your-fathers-pot-brownies-n411881>

<sup>23</sup> Abrams et.al., 2007

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2014/04/18/302992602/pot-smoke-and-mirrors-vaporizer-pens-hide-marijuana-use>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.livescience.com/51202-marijuana-dabbing-trend.html>

I have smoked it	41.57%
I have eaten it (edible, candy, or some kind of food)	14.46%
I have used a vaporizer	9.64%
I have dabbled it	11.45%
I have used it in some other way	7.83%
I have not used marijuana in the last 30 days	46.39%

This could have major ramifications into how parents, school officials, and law enforcement consider how to recognize use among Hockley Co. adolescents. If fewer teens are smoking marijuana, identifying users may become more difficult as the other methods are easier to conceal and more difficult to catch users in the act. In addition, the other methods of consumption tend to more efficiently deliver the THC to consumers allowing a higher chance of overdose.

### ATTITUDES ABOUT MARIJUANA

Only 50.93% of Hockley Co. adolescents perceive marijuana as either “Very” or “Somewhat” dangerous. This is much lower than the regional average of 75.5%<sup>26</sup> who believe that marijuana is harmful. In fact, 16.42% of Hockley Co. participants believe that marijuana is not dangerous at all:

Table 7: Perception of Harm

How dangerous do you think it is for kids your age to use marijuana?	
Very Dangerous	27.86%
Somewhat Dangerous	22.87%
Not Very Dangerous	19.33%
Not Dangerous at All	16.42%
I Don't Know	12.27%

In addition, many participants believe that marijuana is easy to obtain. 55.36% of Hockley Co. adolescents believe that marijuana is either “Somewhat” or “Very” easy to get. This is much higher than the regional average (30.3%)<sup>27</sup>. Only 39.25% believe that they would be likely or very likely to be caught by police if they did consume it.

Less than half (49.48%) of participants believe that it is wrong or very wrong for them to consume marijuana while 35.49% believe that their friends think it is wrong or very wrong. Perhaps not surprisingly, 85.95% believe that their parents believe it is wrong or very wrong for teens to consume marijuana.

## PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Prescription drug abuse is a major health epidemic in the United States. In the past two decades, many new medications have been developed including new treatments for pain management, Attention

<sup>26</sup> Texas School Survey, Regions 1-2. 2016

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), anxiety and sleep disorders. At the same time, we see an increase in the misuse and abuse of these medications where individuals take a drug in a higher quantity, in another manner, or for another purpose than prescribed, or take a medication that has been prescribed for another individual.

Approximately 6.1 million Americans abuse or misuse prescription drugs.<sup>28</sup> Abuse, particularly of prescription painkillers, has serious negative health consequences and can even result in death. Overdose deaths involving prescription painkillers have quadrupled since 1999 and now outnumber deaths from heroin and cocaine combined.<sup>29</sup>

Sales of prescription painkillers per capita have quadrupled from 1999 to 2010 and the number of fatal poisonings due to prescription pain medications has also quadrupled<sup>30</sup>. In fact, enough prescription painkillers were prescribed in 2010 to medicate every American adult continually for a month.<sup>31</sup>

Each day, around 50 Americans die from prescription painkiller overdoses<sup>32</sup>. These drugs are responsible for more than 16,000 deaths and 475,000 emergency department visits each year.<sup>33</sup>

A 2011 study estimated that in 2006, nonmedical use of prescription painkillers imposed a cost of about \$53.4 billion on the U. S. economy. This cost included \$42 billion in lost productivity, \$8.2 billion in increased criminal justice costs, \$2.2 billion for drug abuse treatment, and \$944 million in medical complications.<sup>34</sup>

Each day, around 50 Americans die from prescription painkiller overdoses. These drugs are responsible for more than 16,000 deaths and 475,000 emergency department visits each year.

## ADOLESCENT CONSUMPTION RATES AND PATTERNS

Of the participants, 24.95% report currently taking some kind of prescription drug and 23.09% report that other people have access to their prescription drugs. The most common places to keep prescription drugs is the kitchen cabinet (46.14%), the bathroom cabinet (26.05%), and the bedroom nightstand (22.74%). Interestingly, 66.95% report that they would not share their prescription drugs with others although 9.66% report that they would with friends and family:

Table 8: Sharing Prescription Drugs

If asked, would you share your prescription drugs with others?	
Yes	3.22%
No	66.95%
Maybe	8.37%

<sup>28</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2012)

<sup>29</sup> Topics in Brief: Prescription Drug Abuse (2013)

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011)

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Trust for America's Health (October 2013)

<sup>34</sup> Hansen et al (2011)

Only with a friend or family	9.66%
Not Sure	7.30%
Other	4.51%

Although 82.8% of participants report never using Adderall or Ritalin as a study aid, 6.45% say that they have and 3.23% responded that they would rather not say. In addition, 23.57% of participants responded that they knew someone affected by prescription drug use or abuse.

### ATTITUDES ABOUT PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Participants are mixed as to whether there is a problem at school with prescription drugs. 23.03% believe that there is a problem while 35.82% say there is no problem; 20.68% say maybe and 19.19% say that they are not sure. Most think that people who misuse or abuse prescription drugs get them from friends (60.04%) followed closely by purchasing on the street (54.7%). Still, 46.58% believe they get them from parents or siblings and 34.62% say that they get them from some other relative.

Overall, participants believe that depressants (49.51%) are the biggest problem at school followed by cold medicine (40.29%). 33.5% believe that opiates are the biggest problem:

Table 9: Prescription Drugs That Are Biggest Problem

Which prescription drugs do you think are the biggest problem at your school?	
Opiates	33.50%
Sedatives	22.33%
Depressants	49.51%
Cold Medicine	40.29%
Stimulants	29.61%
Other	15.53%

Most commonly participants report keeping unused prescription drugs for future use (44.64%). Still, 35.45% report disposing of these drugs by tossing in the garbage and 32.82% dispose by flushing down the toilet. Only 8.32% report disposing of these compounds by visiting a “take back” center or event where these drugs can be disposed of safely.

## CONCLUSION

The mission of VOICES is to empower communities to create positive changes in attitudes, behaviors, and policies to prevent and reduce at-risk behaviors in youth with a unified focus on alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs. The results of this survey certainly point to areas where VOICES could work for change.

Many community coalitions, like VOICES, conduct programs to ensure that alcohol retailers are carding people to ensure they are of age. However, only 5.83% of the participants who drink report purchasing alcohol without an ID at least once and only 2.59% report using a fake ID to purchase alcohol. VOICES members may want to focus on other areas.

For instance, this survey demonstrates a significant uptick between 9 and 10 years of age when Hockley Co. adolescents first try alcohol. This may indicate that a targeted program to stop underage drinking before 9 years old may be the most effective time to dissuade adolescents from drinking alcohol.

Another area of education that could be pursued is that 64.4% of all participants report knowing a parent or adult that allows minors consume alcohol in their homes. A campaign to change adult attitudes towards underage drinking is sorely needed in Hockley County. This would make a good future project for change.

In addition, students have given some good insight into what approaches they believe could decrease underage drinking. This data could give some direction to a youth coalition. Also, it gives some hope that adolescents themselves believe that in school education could work.

### KEY FINDINGS

- 58.5% of Hockley Co. adolescents report having tried alcohol at least once in their lifetime. This is less than the regional average.
- 35.14% of Hockley Co. adolescents report trying marijuana at least once in their lifetimes. This is higher than the regional average.
- 24.95% of Hockley Co. adolescents report currently taking some prescription drug.
- 64.4% of these participants report that they know adults who let minors consume alcohol in their homes.
- 31.14% of Hockley County teens who report using marijuana have consumed it in the form of an edible. 23.95% have consumed it using a vaporizer.
- Only 8.32% of Hockley Co. teens report disposing of unused prescription drugs at a “take back” center or event.

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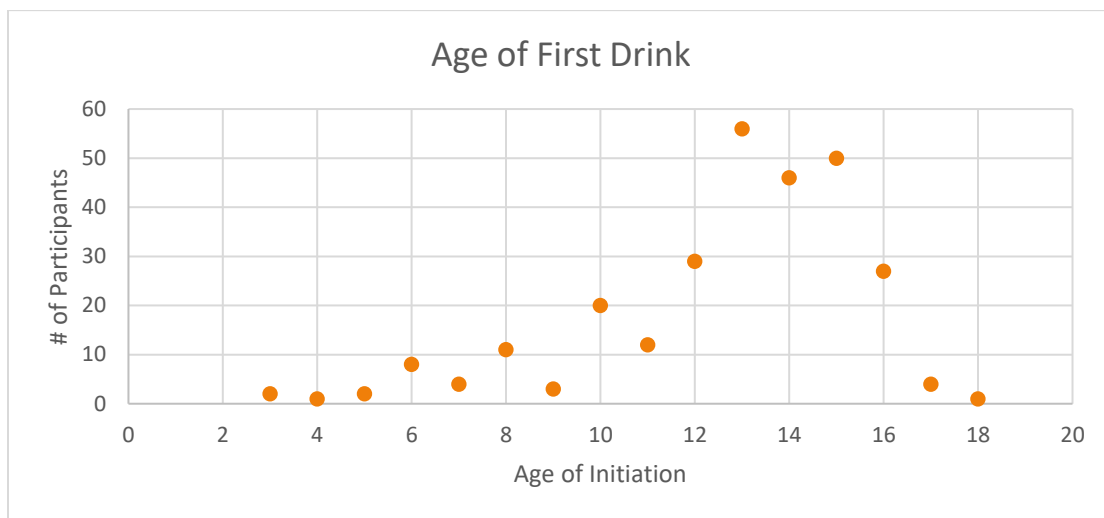
## APPENDIX: RESULTS

Question 1 (n=494):

Have you ever drank an alcoholic beverage?	
Yes	58.50%
No	37.45%
Not Sure	4.05%

Question 2 (n=289):

How old were you when you first drank alcohol?



Question 3 (n=221):

How often do you drink alcohol?	
At least once a day	1.36%
At least once a week	9.95%
At least once a month	20.81%
Less than once a month	67.87%

Question 4 (n=285):

Do you ever have five or more drinks of alcohol in one sitting?	
Yes	28.07%
No	63.16%
Not Sure	8.77%

Question 5 (n=91):

Have you done this in the last month?	
Yes	57.14%
No	37.36%
Not Sure	5.49%

Question 6 (n=175):

Have you ever...?	
Been absent from school because you used alcohol	6.86%
Been drunk at school	9.14%
Done poorly in school because you used alcohol	6.29%
Had family problems because you used alcohol	8.57%
Been arrested because you used alcohol	4.57%
Driven under the influence of alcohol	13.14%
Been a passenger in a vehicle while the driver was under the influence of alcohol	66.29%
Been drunk at a party	62.29%
Had an injury because you used alcohol	11.43%

Question 7 (n=313):

Do your parents permit you to drink alcohol in your home?	
Never	42.17%
Under parental supervision	28.43%
On special occasions only	26.84%
Any time I want	2.56%

Question 8 (n=311):

Do you discuss alcohol use with your parents?	
Yes	45.34%
No	48.55%
Not Sure	6.11%

Question 9 (n=306):

Do your parents know how much you drink?	
Yes	45.42%
No	42.81%
Not Sure	11.76%

Question 10 (n=308):

Have your parents ever seen you drunk?	
Yes	25.00%
No	70.78%

Not Sure	4.22%
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Question 11 (n=309):

Do you know parents or adults that allow people under the age of 21 to consume alcohol in their homes?	
Yes	64.40%
No	27.51%
Not Sure	8.09%

Question 12 (n=305):

How many times in the last two months has someone offered to give you, buy for you, or sell you alcohol?	
None	49.51%
Once	19.34%
2-3 times	21.64%
4 or more times	9.51%

Question 13 (n=309):

Have you successfully used a fake ID to obtain alcohol?	
Yes	2.59%
No	97.41%

Question 14 (n=309):

Have you ever purchased alcohol without an ID?	
Yes	5.83%
No	94.17%

Question 15 (n=474):

Most people my age who drink do so because... (Check all that apply)	
They want to have a good time at a party	79.75%
They are sad or depressed and want to feel better about themselves	42.19%
They wish to rebel and defy their parents, teachers, and other adult authorities	27.64%
They wish to fit in or be accepted by their friends or peers	58.65%
They are bored	34.18%

Question 16 (n=486):

Do you think alcohol use by underage youth is a...?	
Serious problem	40.74%
Minor problem	44.03%

Not a problem	15.23%
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Question 17 (n=492):

Within the past year, do you think heavy use of alcohol among people your age has...	
Increased	60.57%
Decreased	7.93%
Stayed the same	31.50%

Question 18 (n=489):

Who is responsible for contributing to the problem of alcohol use by youth under age 21? (Check all that apply)	
Parents	43.35%
Public Agencies	13.09%
Alcohol outlets, such as bars, liquor stores, and restaurants	25.56%
Advertising	21.88%
Youth Themselves	66.05%
Don't Know	27.40%

Question 19 (n=463):

Where is the primary source where people under the age of 21 obtain alcohol? (Select only one)	
Parent's home	17.71%
Bar/restaurant	2.16%
Liquor Store	6.05%
Grocery/convenience store	4.10%
Friends/relatives	69.98%

Question 20 (n=488):

Do you think drinking and driving among youth is a...	
Serious problem	75.82%
Minor problem	16.60%
Not a problem	7.58%

Question 21 (n=485):

Do you know anyone with an alcohol problem?	
Yes	49.07%
No	38.76%
Not Sure	12.16%

Question 22 (n=236)

<b>What was their relationship to you?</b>	
Relative	67.37%
Non-relative	42.37%

Question 23 (n=437):

<b>Which of the following approaches would you support to decrease underage drinking? (Check all that apply)</b>	
New and/or stiffer penalties	29.29%
More law enforcement	34.55%
More alcohol education in schools	43.48%
More alcohol education in TV, radio, and magazines	29.29%
More alcohol education online	25.40%
Public presentations by people who have been seriously hurt or impaired by alcohol use	45.31%
Driver's license suspension for youth who drink alcohol	46.45%
Alcohol-free teen night clubs	48.28%
Ban on alcohol advertising	23.80%

Question 24 (n=481):

<b>How dangerous do you think it is for kids your age to use marijuana?</b>	
Very Dangerous	27.86%
Somewhat Dangerous	22.87%
Not Very Dangerous	19.33%
Not Dangerous at All	16.42%
I Don't Know	12.27%

Question 25 (n=482):

<b>If you wanted some, how difficult would it be to get marijuana?</b>	
Impossible	7.47%
Very Difficult	6.43%
Somewhat Difficult	11.00%
Somewhat Easy	22.41%
Very Easy	31.95%
I Don't Know	19.09%

Question 26 (n=481):

<b>How recently, if ever, have you used marijuana?</b>	
I have never used it	64.86%
I tried it at least once	12.68%
During the past month	8.73%
During the past year	7.28%

Question 27 (n=167):

<b>How have you used marijuana? (Select all that apply)</b>	
I have smoked it	86.83%
I have eaten it (edible, candy, or some kind of food)	31.14%
I have used a vaporizer	23.95%
I have dabbled it	23.35%
I have used it in some other way	14.37%

Question 28 (n=166):

<b>During the past 30 days, how did you use marijuana? (Select all that apply)</b>	
I have smoked it	41.57%
I have eaten it (edible, candy, or some kind of food)	14.46%
I have used a vaporizer	9.64%
I have dabbled it	11.45%
I have used it in some other way	7.83%
I have not used marijuana in the last 30 days	46.39%

Question 29 (n=479):

<b>How wrong do you believe it is for someone your age to use marijuana?</b>	
Very Wrong	29.23%
Wrong	20.25%
A Little Bit Wrong	29.02%
Not Wrong at All	18.16%

Question 30 (n=479):

<b>How wrong do your friends think it is for someone your age to use marijuana?</b>	
Very Wrong	17.33%
Wrong	18.16%
A Little Bit Wrong	29.23%
Not Wrong at All	30.90%

Question 31 (n=477):

<b>How wrong do your parents think it is for someone your age to use marijuana?</b>	
Very Wrong	65.20%
Wrong	20.75%
A Little Bit Wrong	8.39%
Not Wrong at All	3.77%

Question 32 (n=479):

If someone your age were to use marijuana, how likely are they to be caught by the police?	
Very Likely	11.69%
Likely	27.56%
Unlikely	41.96%
Not Likely at All	16.08%

Question 33 (n=473):

Do you currently take any prescription drugs?	
Yes	24.95%
No	66.38%
Not Sure	7.61%

Question 34 (n=472):

Do other people have access to your prescription drugs where you live?	
Yes	23.09%
No	59.11%
Not Sure	15.25%

Question 35 (n=453):

Where do you keep your prescription drugs? (Select all that apply)	
Kitchen Cabinet	46.14%
Bathroom Cabinet	26.05%
Locked Drawer	7.51%
Locked Medicine Cabinet	11.70%
Bedroom Nightstand	22.74%
Other	18.32%

Question 36 (n=466):

If asked, would you share your prescription drugs with others?	
Yes	3.22%
No	66.95%
Maybe	8.37%
Only with a friend or family	9.66%
Not Sure	7.30%
Other	4.51%

Question 37 (n=465):

Have you ever used a prescription drug, like Adderall or Ritalin, as a study aid or way to get better grades?	
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Yes	6.45%
No	82.80%
I would rather not say	3.23%
Not Sure	6.24%
Other	1.29%

Question 38 (n=471):

Do you know someone affected by prescription drug use or abuse?	
Yes	23.57%
No	65.39%
Not Sure	10.62%

Question 39 (n=469)

Do you believe there is a problem with students at your school misusing prescription drugs?	
Yes	23.03%
No	35.82%
Maybe	20.68%
Not Sure	19.19%
Other	1.28%

Question 40 (n=206):

Which prescription drugs do you think are the biggest problem at your school?	
Opiates	33.50%
Sedatives	22.33%
Depressants	49.51%
Cold Medicine	40.29%
Stimulants	29.61%
Other	15.53%

Question 41 (n=468):

Where do you think that people who misuse prescription drugs get those drugs? (Select all that apply)	
Their home (parents or siblings)	46.58%
Relative's home (grandparent, aunt/uncle, cousin)	34.62%
Friends	60.04%
Purchase on the Street	54.70%
School	25.85%
Other	8.76%

Question 42 (n=457):



<b>How do you dispose of unused prescription drugs? (Select all that apply)</b>	
Flush down the toilet	32.82%
Throw in trash	35.45%
At a Take Back Center or Event	8.32%
Give them to someone who needs them	10.50%
Keep in case I need them in the future	44.64%
Other	11.38%

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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<p><b>Jessica Bustos</b> Community Liaison</p> <p>Tel: 806-780-8300 Fax: 806-780-8383 Jessica.bustos@mccaod.com</p>	<p><b>Diane Wilson</b> Community Liaison</p> <p>Tel: 806-331-2723 Fax: 806-331-2728 diane.wilson@mccaod.com</p>	<p><b>Robert Schafer</b> Evaluator</p> <p>Tel: 806-780-8300 Fax: 806-780-8383 bob.schafer@mccoad.com</p>
<p><b>Adam Barrera</b> Program Director</p> <p>Tel: 806-780-8300 Fax: 806-780-8383 adam.barrera@mccaod.com</p>		

### Prevention Resource Center, Region 1

Managed Care Center for Addictive/Other Disorders, Inc.

1715 26<sup>th</sup> St. Lubbock, TX 79411

**Tel** (806) 780-8300

**Fax** (806) 780-8383

prc1.org