



WINTER 2016

TEEN PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE

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.

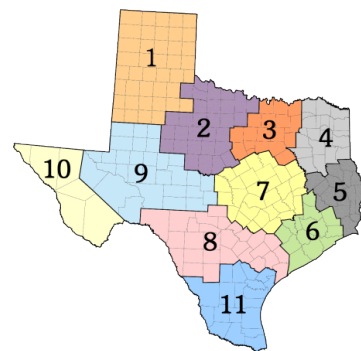
Our specific goals are:

- 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.

Jackie J. Johnson, CPS

Program Director

25 January 2016

Prevention Resource Center, Region 1

Managed Care Center for Addictive/Other Disorders, Inc.

1715 26th St. Lubbock, TX 79411

Tel (806) 780-8300

Fax (806) 780-8383

prc1.org

INTRODUCTION

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 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.¹ 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.²

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 quadrupled³. In fact, enough prescription painkillers were prescribed in 2010 to medicate every American adult continually for a month.⁴

Each day, around 50 Americans die from prescription painkiller overdoses⁵. These drugs are responsible for more than 16,000 deaths and 475,000 emergency department visits each year.⁶

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.

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.⁷

This report focuses on how regional adolescents perceive and consume prescription drugs. Specifically, it examines the attitudes of regional adolescents in using/misusing/abusing these drugs and the regional teen consumption rates of these drugs. If we can understand how adolescents in Region 1 perceive and misuse/abuse these drugs, parents, prevention professionals, and other community stakeholders can work to bolster the protective factors and reduce the risk factors in their daily lives.

Regional coalitions⁸ are working to create environmental changes in how businesses, municipal governments, schools, or other organizations approach substance abuse prevention. These changes can

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2012

² Topics in Brief: Prescription Drug Abuse, 2013

³ Ibid.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Trust for America's Health, October 2013

⁷ Hansen et al, 2011

⁸ A list of Regional Coalitions is available in the Appendix.

take many forms from changing or enforcing laws concerning the selling of alcohol to minors to convincing school districts to change their policies to allow prevention programs in their schools. These coalitions are always looking for people to help change their communities for the better.

METHODOLOGY

These are regional surveys that the PRC has access to: The 2015 Texas Prevention Impact Index (TPII), the 2015 40 Developmental Assets Survey (40 DAS), 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 misuse/abuse prescription drugs.

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

- TSS: 2014 Texas Student Survey, Region 1-2
- YRBS: 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Texas
- TPII: 2015 Texas Prevention Impact Index, Amarillo ISD
- VOICES: 2013 VOICES, Lubbock Survey
- 40 DAS: 2015 40 Developmental Assets Survey, Lubbock YWCA

Taken together, these surveys begin to illustrate how adolescents in Region 1, Texas perceive harmful risks of using prescription drugs and how they consume these drugs.

Throughout this report, we will be using some terms that correlate directly to how prescription drug consumption is understood for the purpose of reporting regional teen consumption rates and perceptions:

- Use: Medical use by teen as prescribed by a doctor for the teen
- Abuse: Nonmedical use by teen to alter consciousness or get high
- Misuse: Medical use by teen as prescribed by a doctor for someone else

TEEN PERCEPTIONS ON PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Often parents contribute to adolescent substance use by approving of, either implicitly or explicitly, their children consuming these substances. Alcohol is usually the commonly supplied substance that adolescents consume but prescription drugs are often the most accessible abused substance to regional teens.

Environmental risk factors are characteristics in a person's surroundings that increase their likelihood of becoming addicted to drugs. A person may have many environments, or domains, of influence such as the community, family, school, and friends. Their risk of addiction can develop in any of these domains.

Influential factors in substance abuse disorders include genetic predisposition and prenatal exposure to alcohol when combined with poor self-image, self-control, or social competence. Other risk factors include family strife, loose knit communities, participating in an intolerant society, being exposed to

violence, emotional distress, poor academics, socio-economic status, and involvement with children's protective services, law enforcement, and parental absence.

However, research has also demonstrated that exposure to even a significant number of risk factors in a child's life does not necessarily mean that substance use or other problem behaviors will follow inevitably. Many children and youth growing up in presumably high-risk families and environments emerge relatively free of problems. Often these teens have protective factors that balance and buffer the risk factors that contribute to the decision to begin consuming dangerous substances by shaping how adolescents perceive these substances.

RISK OF HARM

An adolescent's perception of the risks associated with substance use is an important determinant of whether he or she engages in substance use. For example, youths who perceive high risk of harm are less likely to use drugs than youths who perceive low risk of harm. Thus, providing adolescents with credible, accurate, and age-appropriate information about the harm associated with substance use is a key component in prevention programming.

Overall, Region 1 adolescents report that the misuse of prescription drugs can be harmful. 77% of Amarillo-area adolescents report them as dangerous⁹ while 81% of Lubbock-area teens report the misuse of prescription drugs as a moderate or great risk¹⁰. Regionally, 89.2% of adolescents report that hydrocodone is either very or somewhat dangerous to use.

Table 1: Perceived Risk of Harm, Hydrocodone, TSS 2014¹¹

How dangerous do you think it is for kids your age to use hydrocodone?						
	Very Dangerous	Somewhat Dangerous	Not Very Dangerous	Not at All Dangerous	Do Not Know	
All Grades	83.6%	5.6%	1.9%	1.0%	7.9%	
Grade 7	82.7%	4.2%	1.1%	1.8%	10.2%	
Grade 8	84.5%	3.4%	2.7%	0.8%	8.6%	
Grade 9	86.7%	7.7%	1.5%	0.8%	3.3%	
Grade 10	80.3%	6.5%	3.0%	1.4%	8.8%	
Grade 11	78.2%	9.1%	1.8%	1.0%	9.9%	
Grade 12	83.9%	6.9%	3.2%	0.4%	5.5%	

Nationally, both teens and parents seem to share similar misconceptions concerning prescription drug misuse and abuse. 16% of parents and 27% of teens believe that using prescription drugs to get high is safer than using street drugs. 33% of teens believe that it is okay to use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them in order to deal with injury, illness, or pain¹².

⁹ Texas Prevention Impact Index, Amarillo, 2015.

¹⁰ 40 Developmental Asset Survey, Lubbock Area, 2015

¹¹ Texas Student Survey, Regions 1-2, 2014

¹² The Partnership at Drugfree.org, 2013

Teens seem to have little idea about the danger of addiction in regard to prescription drugs. 25% of teens say that there is little to no risk in using prescription pain relievers without a prescription and 22% of teens say the same thing about Ritalin and Adderall. In addition, 20% of teens believe that pain relievers are not addictive at all.

ACCESS TO PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Adolescents can only use ATOD substances if they have access to these substances. In general, the less able adolescents can find these substances, the less likely they are to consume these substances. Laws exist in order to limit adolescent's access to legal yet harmful substances such as alcohol and tobacco in addition to the banning of illegal substances.

Even though laws exist to restrict access to ATOD substances, adolescents can often find and consume these substances. Enforcing current laws may help limit access or community groups may need to lobby for stronger laws to protect adolescents.

Teens' ease of access to prescription drugs in their own homes and in the homes of family and friends enables teens to misuse and abuse prescriptions. In fact, four in ten teens (40 percent) indicate prescription drugs are everywhere, while 43 percent indicate prescription drugs are easier to get than illegal drugs.¹³

In general, teens from urbanized, but non metropolitan areas are at the greatest risk for misusing or abusing prescription drugs, followed by rural and then metropolitan areas.¹⁴ However, lax attitudes and permissiveness by parents toward prescription drug misuse and abuse, along with availability, are directly linked to these abuses by teens. Access to prescription drugs is usually found in the family (or friend's) medicine cabinet and teens are more likely to misuse or abuse these drugs if they think that their parents are okay with it, or if they think that any punishment would be less than for using street drugs.

There is little region-specific data on how accessible adolescents feel they are to prescription drugs. However, most parents and grandparents give little thought to how they store their prescriptions—especially expired prescriptions. Some regional coalitions are starting to sponsor prescription collection programs and there seems to be a need. In 2013, the Lubbock VOICES coalition reported that, during their prescription drop off program, **they collected almost 100 pounds of expired prescription medication prescribed during the 1950's and 1960's alone.**

PEER APPROVAL

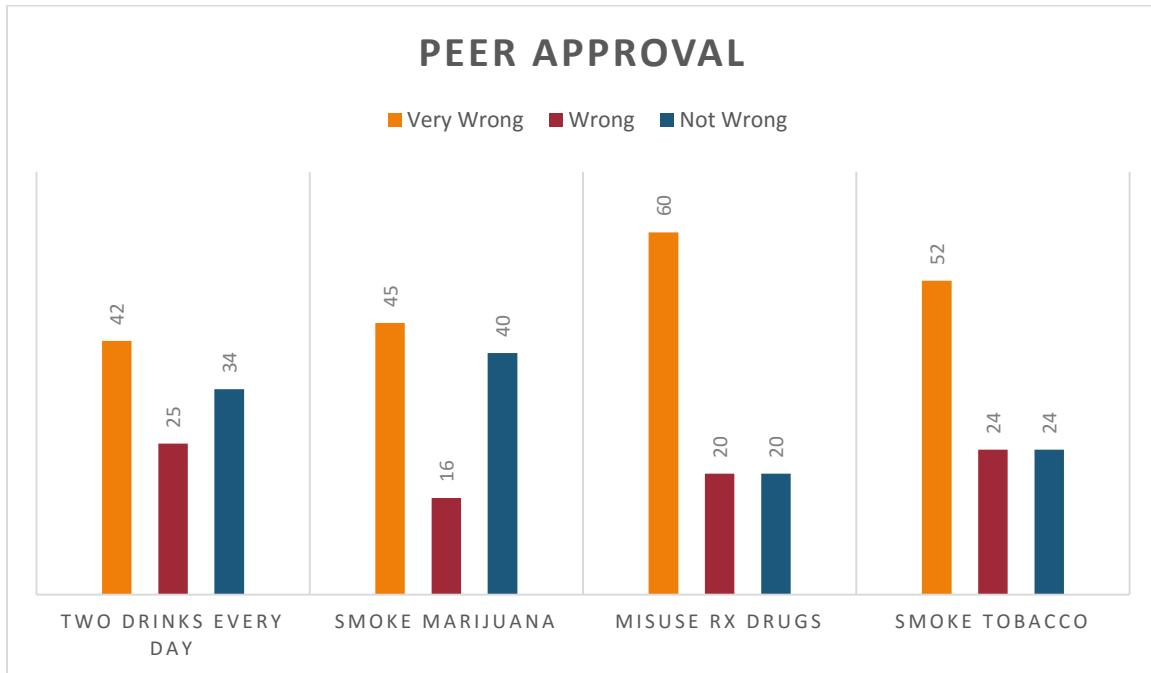
Social standards and conduct contribute to adolescent substance abuse. In many communities, parents and peers implicitly or explicitly approve of underage drinking or other substance use or misuse. This can take the form of unwritten cultural norms to parents providing alcohol for teens at a social event.

¹³ The Partnership at Drugfree.org

¹⁴ SAMHSA, April 11, 2013

Often adolescents seek the approval of peers for consuming ATOD substances. Peers can contribute to the social norm by implicit or explicit approval of the consumption of these substances in social settings. Alcohol is still the most widely consumed substance by adolescents in Region 1.

Figure 1: Peer Approval, Lubbock Area, 2015¹⁵



PARENTAL APPROVAL

Regionally, we have little information about how adolescents perceive their parental approval for prescription drug use. Nationally, parents are talking less to their teenage children about the dangers of prescription drug misuse and abuse as compared to other drugs. Only 14% of teens report discussing with their parents the dangers of prescription drug misuse and abuse, as compared to 81% of teens who report discussing the dangers of marijuana use with their parents.¹⁶

This decrease in discussions concerning prescription drug misuse and abuse has troubling implications for teens whose behavior is linked to how they believe their parents would react if they were caught abusing or misusing prescription drugs. 23% of teens believe that their parents would not care as much if they were caught misusing or abusing prescription drugs as compared to illicit drugs like marijuana.

In any event, parents may be sending mixed messages to their teenage children concerning prescription drugs. 20% of parents indicate that they have given their teenage children prescription drugs that were not prescribed for them and 17% of parents say that they do not throw away or dispose of old prescription medication.

¹⁵ 40 Developmental Asset Survey, Lubbock Area, 2015

¹⁶ The Partnership at Drugfree.org

Here are some other specific parental attitudes concerning prescription drugs from the 2012 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS):

- 29% of parents say they believe ADHD medication can improve a child’s academic or testing performance—even if the teen does not have ADHD
- 20% of parents report that they have given their teen a Rx drug not prescribed for them
- 16% of parents believe that using Rx drugs to get high is safer than using street drugs

We do have some data concerning parental approval from the 40 DAS. Surprisingly, prescription drugs are perceived by Lubbock-area adolescents as what parents disapprove of most strongly with 85% saying that parents view it as “very wrong”.¹⁷

REGIONAL TEEN CONSUMPTION OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Prescription drug misuse and abuse by teens continues to be a significant health problem today and it is threatening the well-being of American adolescents. Currently, 24% of American teens—that is almost one in four—admit to misusing or abusing a prescription drug at least once in their lifetime.¹⁸ This is a 33% increase over the last five years and a much larger problem than many parents and educators may realize.

In general, teens from urbanized, but non metropolitan areas are at the greatest risk for misusing or abusing prescription drugs, followed by rural and then metropolitan areas.¹⁹ However, lax attitudes and permissiveness by parents toward prescription drug misuse and abuse, along with availability, are directly linked to these abuses by teens. Access to prescription drugs is usually found in the family (or friend’s) medicine cabinet and teens are more likely to misuse or abuse these drugs if they think that their parents are okay with it, or if they think that any punishment would be less than for using street drugs.

Teen misuse and abuse of prescription drugs seems to be declining significantly (-5.6%) in our region over the last five years.

Approximately 6.1 million Americans abuse or misuse prescription drugs.²⁰ 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.²¹

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 quadrupled²². In fact, enough prescription

¹⁷ 40 Developmental Assets Survey, Lubbock Area, 2014

¹⁸ The Partnership at Drugfree.org, 2013

¹⁹ SAMHSA, April 11, 2013

²⁰ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2012)

²¹ Topics in Brief: Prescription Drug Abuse (2013)

²² Ibid.

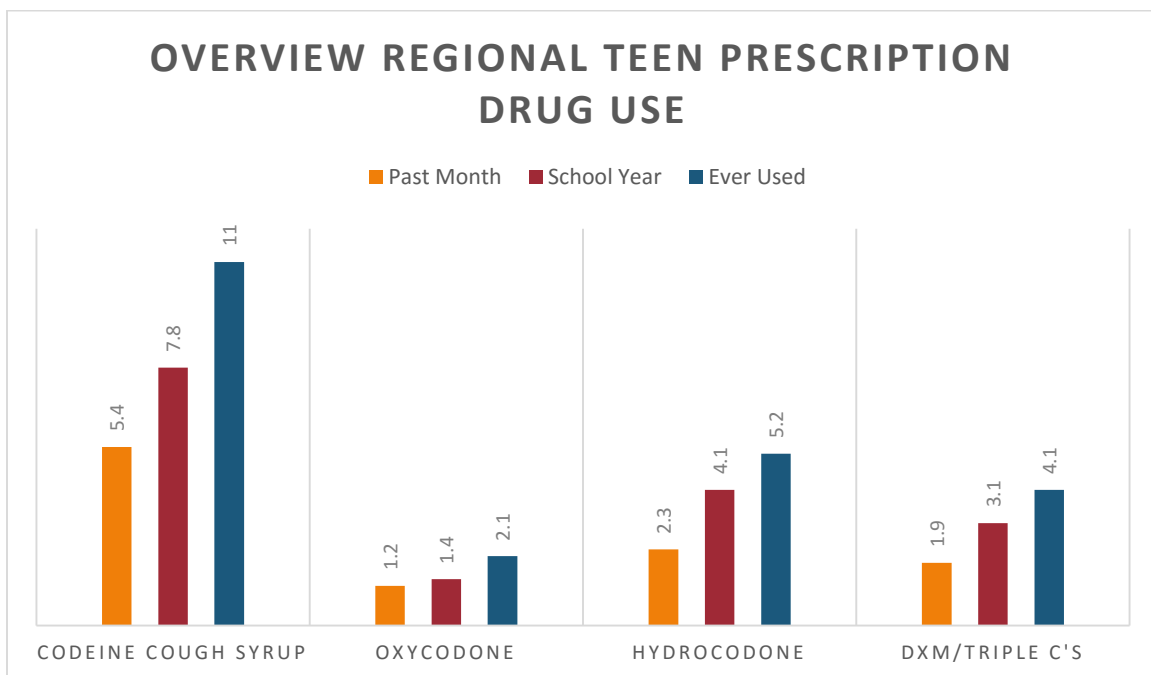
painkillers were prescribed in 2010 to medicate every American adult continuously for a month.²³ Each day, around 50 Americans die from prescription painkiller overdoses²⁴. These drugs are responsible for more than 16,000 deaths and 475,000 emergency department visits each year.²⁵

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.²⁶

OVERVIEW

Region specific data regarding prescription drug use or abuse is relatively limited. However, the VOICES Community Coalition Survey focused on teenagers in Lubbock County with 175 participants ($N=175$) the first year (2012). Prescription drug misuse and abuse was not the focus of the VOICES Community Coalition Survey, but it contained one question concerning teen prescription drug use: “During your life, how many times have you taken a prescription drug without a doctor’s prescription?” Only 9.7% ($N=17$) of Lubbock County teens who participated in this survey reported ever taking a prescription drug without a prescription. This is consistent with the Amarillo data from TPII that reported a rate of 9.9% in 2013.

Figure 2: Overview Regional Teen Prescription Drug Use²⁷



²³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011)

²⁴ Ibid.

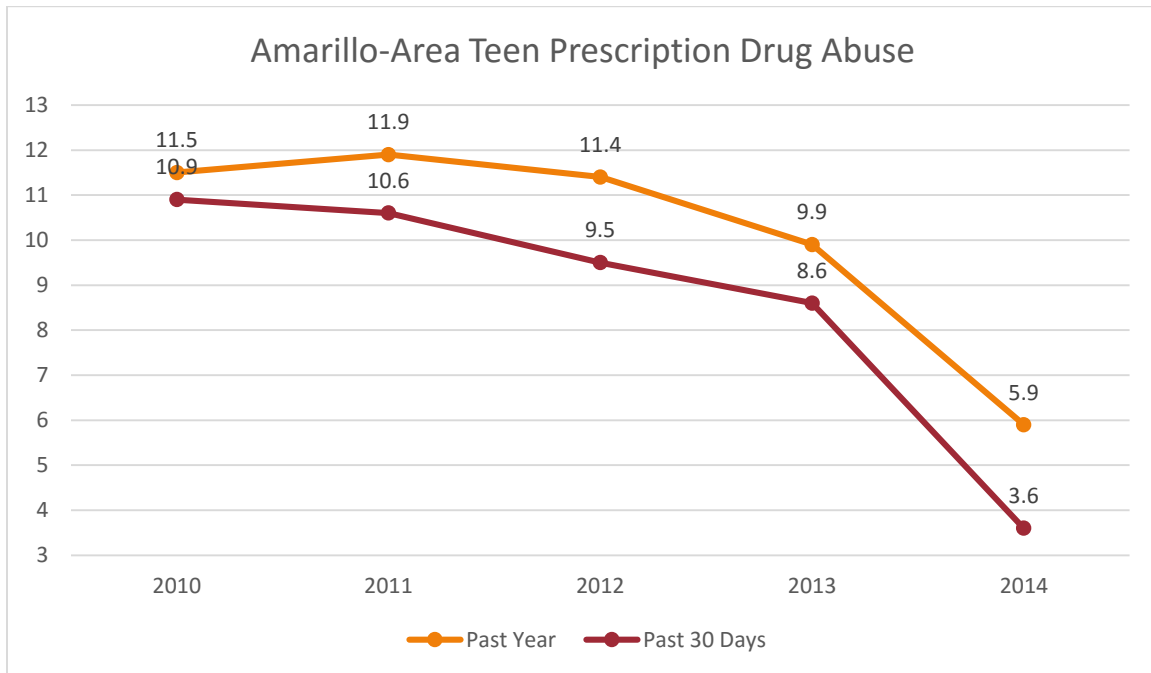
²⁵ Trust for America’s Health (October 2013)

²⁶ Hansen et al (2011)

²⁷ Texas Student Survey, Regions 1-2, 2014

Interestingly, prescription drug misuse and abuse seems to be trending down in Region 1. Teen misuse and abuse of prescription drugs seems to be declining significantly (-5.6%) in our region over the last five years. This decline is counter to the national trend (+33% over last five years) and further research is needed in order to understand and identify the factors contributing to the decline.

Figure 3: Prescription Drug Abuse Amarillo-Area Adolescents²⁸



In order to actively curb the trend of teen prescription drug misuse and abuse, parents and caregivers must safeguard all prescription drugs in the home, educate themselves about the dangers and risks of misuse and abuse of these drugs, and collect and responsibly dispose of unused or expired medications.

Teens' ease of access to prescription drugs in their own homes and in the homes of family and friends enables teens to misuse and abuse prescriptions. In fact, four in ten teens (40 percent) indicate prescription drugs are everywhere, while 43 percent indicate prescription drugs are easier to obtain than illegal drugs.²⁹

Both teens and parents seem to share similar misconceptions concerning prescription drug misuse and abuse. 16% of parents and 27% of teens believe that using prescription drugs to get high is safer than using street drugs. 33% of teens believe it is okay to use prescription drugs not prescribed to them to cope with injury, illness, or pain.

Teens seem to have little idea about the danger of addiction in regard to prescription drugs. 25% of teens say there is little to no risk in using prescription pain relievers without a prescription and 22% of

²⁸ Texas Prevention Impact Index, Amarillo, 2015.

²⁹ SAMHSA (April 11, 2013)

teens say the same thing about Ritalin and Adderall. In addition, 20% of teens believe pain relievers are not addictive at all.

CURRENT USE

Region 1 seems to be experiencing less misuse and abuse of prescription drugs by teens than the national average. However, almost 10% of teens self-report using prescription drugs without a prescription. Parents can reduce the likelihood of their teenage children misusing or abusing prescription drugs by learning about the dangers and risks of this behavior and communicating these risks to their teens. Teens who have learned “a lot” or “a little” from their parents or grandparents are less likely to misuse or abuse prescription drugs over their lifetime than their peers who learn “nothing” from their parents.

Table 2: Recent Use of Prescription Drugs Texas Adolescents³⁰

How recently, if ever, have you taken the following prescription drugs...				
	Past Month	School Year	Ever Used	Never Used
Codeine?				
All Grades	5.4%	7.8%	11.0%	89.1%
Grade 7	2.9%	4.9%	8.3%	91.7%
Grade 8	5.3%	8.7%	12.3%	87.7%
Grade 9	3.7%	5.2%	8.5%	91.5%
Grade 10	8.0%	11.6%	16.3%	83.6%
Grade 11	6.7%	8.8%	11.7%	88.3%
Grade 12	6.7%	9.8%	14.2%	85.8%
OxyContin, Percodan, Percocet, or Oxycodone?				
All Grades	1.2%	1.4%	2.1%	98.0%
Grade 7	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%	99.5%
Grade 8	0.8%	0.8%	2.7%	97.2%
Grade 9	0.8%	0.9%	1.3%	98.7%
Grade 10	3.0%	3.7%	4.3%	98.7%
Grade 11	1.6%	1.7%	2.7%	97.2%
Grade 12	1.4%	1.7%	2.3%	97.8%
Vicodin, Lortab, Lorcet, or Hydrocodone?				
All Grades	2.3%	4.1%	5.2%	94.8%
Grade 7	0.8%	1.1%	1.7%	98.3%
Grade 8	1.7%	4.4%	5.4%	94.6%
Grade 9	1.8%	2.0%	2.5%	97.5%
Grade 10	2.8%	4.5%	6.5%	93.6%
Grade 11	3.2%	6.6%	8.7%	91.3%
Grade 12	6.9%	11.9%	13.8%	86.3%
Valium or Diazepam?				
All Grades	0.3%	0.5%	0.8%	99.3%
Grade 7	0.0%	0.2%	0.6%	99.4%
Grade 8	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%	99.1%

³⁰ Texas Student Survey, Regions 1-2, 2014

Grade 9	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	99.8%
Grade 10	0.5%	0.6%	0.8%	99.3%
Grade 11	0.5%	0.9%	1.2%	98.8%
Grade 12	0.7%	0.9%	1.3%	98.7%
Xanax or Alprazolam?				
All Grades	1.1%	1.5%	2.1%	97.9%
Grade 7	0.3%	0.7%	0.9%	99.2%
Grade 8	0.8%	0.9%	1.7%	98.2%
Grade 9	1.0%	1.3%	1.8%	98.2%
Grade 10	1.2%	2.1%	2.9%	97.1%
Grade 11	1.9%	2.1%	3.2%	96.8%
Grade 12	3.1%	4.2%	5.0%	95.1%
Dxm, Triple Cs, or Coricidin? (Over the Counter)				
All Grades	1.9%	3.1%	4.1%	95.9%
Grade 7	2.0%	2.5%	3.2%	96.8%
Grade 8	1.9%	2.6%	3.6%	96.5%
Grade 9	1.7%	2.4%	3.4%	96.6%
Grade 10	2.7%	3.4%	5.7%	94.3%
Grade 11	3.5%	4.0%	5.0%	95.0%
Grade 12	1.4%	2.1%	3.3%	96.6%

CONCLUSION

Teen misuse and abuse of prescription drugs seems to be declining significantly (-5.6%) in our region over the last five years. This decline is counter to the national trend (+33% over last five years) and further research is needed in order to understand and exploit what factors are contributing to this declination.

Nationally, prescription drug misuse and abuse constitutes a health epidemic that threatens adolescents and adults alike. Each day, 50 Americans die from prescription pain medication overdoses. These drugs are responsible for more than 16,000 deaths and 475,000 emergency department visits each year.

Both teens and parents seem to share similar misconceptions concerning prescription drug misuse and abuse. 16% of parents and 27% of teens believe that using prescription drugs to get high is safer than using street drugs. 33% of teens believe that it okay to use prescription drugs that are not prescribed to them in order to deal with injury, illness, or pain.

Overall, our region seems to be experiencing less misuse and abuse of prescription drugs by teens than the national average. However, 11% of regional teens self-report using codeine cough medicine without a prescription. This is certainly too high. Parents can reduce the likelihood of their teenage children misusing or abusing prescription drugs by learning about the dangers and risks of this behavior and communicating these risks to their teens. Teens who have learned “a lot” or “a little” from their parents or grandparents are less likely to misuse or abuse prescription drugs over their lifetime than their peers who learn “nothing” from their parents.

KEY FINDINGS

- Teen misuse and abuse of prescription drugs seems to be declining significantly (-5.6%) in our region over the last five years
- 13.8% of regional 12th grade students report abusing hydrocodone at least once
- 11.6% of regional 10th grade students report abusing Codeine during the school year
- 94% of Lubbock-area teens report that parents believe Rx drug misuse as wrong
- 11.9% of regional 12th grade students report abusing hydrocodone during the school year
- 3% of regional 10th grade students report abusing oxycodone in the past month
- Nationally, 1 in 5 parents report giving their child a prescription drug not prescribed for them
- 6.9% of regional 12th grade students report abusing hydrocodone in the past month
- Each day, 50 Americans die from prescription pain medication overdoses

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APPENDIX: REGIONAL COALITIONS

Impact Futures is a drug-free community coalition serving the Amarillo and Canyon areas. Their mission is to provide awareness of substance abuse prevention, intervention and treatment services in the Texas Panhandle. They provide opportunities for collaboration and partnerships with interested members who wish to respond to opportunities requiring a community coalition. Their vision is to ensure a healthier community by building assets, strengthening Protective Factors and reducing Risk Factors in the community.

Members of Impact Futures include representatives of youth and adults, parents, businesses, media, schools, youth and adult-serving organizations, law enforcement, faith-based community, civic and volunteer, healthcare, local government and other non-profit organizations. Together, members provide services and programs that educate people about the dangers of synthetic cannabinoids (and other drugs) in order to prevent the selling and consumption of these substances.

University Medical Center's Nurses Educating on Illegal Drugs & Synthetics (NEIDS) is an outreach group of registered nurses that believe synthetic marijuana and other illegal drugs kill and harm too many people. Their mission is to provide education to the public on the health risks and hazards of the use of synthetic marijuana and other harmful drugs.

These medical professionals hope to accomplish their mission by using public service announcements, focused educational offerings to school age children, point of care education, and working with local coalitions against synthetic marijuana. They support new or revised legislation of local and state laws to halt the sale, distribution, and the manufacturing of these synthetic compounds and illegal drugs.

Although a new organization, members of NEIDS are committed to their mission and have recently testified before the Texas Senate Criminal Justice Committee as to the devastating effects of synthetic cannabinoids.

VOICES of Hockley County³¹ 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

³¹ Volunteers Offering Involvement in Communities to Expand Services (VOICES)

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.

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.

VOICES of Lubbock County Community Coalition is funded by the Texas Department of State Health Services, established for the purpose of assisting the community in developing policies, procedures and activities to prevent youth from using alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs and other drugs.

Their mission is to empower communities to create positive changes in attitudes, behaviors and policies to prevent and reduce at-risk behavior in youth with a unified focus on alcohol, marijuana and prescription drug prevention. Recently, they have focused on preventing synthetic cannabinoid abuse as well.

Warriors against Synthetic Pot (WASP) is an organization dedicated to the eradication of synthetic cannabinoids. Ultimately, they are working to stop the selling and using of these drugs by influencing legislation to increase the legal consequences of pushing these products.

WASP is active at both the local and state levels. In Lubbock, they pushed the Lubbock City Council to action, protested the sales of synthetic pot in front of stores known to sell it, and aided Lubbock police in finding those places that are selling. They have also gone to the Texas State Capitol building and contacted local State Representatives concerning synthetic cannabinoids and they have testified before the Texas Senate Criminal Justice Committee as to the devastating effects of these drugs.

Although this organization originated in Lubbock, another chapter has started in Plainview and other chapters are planned state-wide.

CONTACT INFORMATION

<p>Joseph Dickerson Community Liaison</p> <p>Tel: 806-780-8300 Fax: 806-780-8383 joseph.dickerson@mccaod.com</p>	<p>Derrick Bethany Tobacco Specialist</p> <p>Tel: 806-780-8300 Fax: 806-780-8383 derrick.bethany@mccaod.com</p>	<p>Robert Schafer Evaluator</p> <p>Tel: 806-780-8300 Fax: 806-780-8383 bob.schafer@mccoad.com</p>
<p>Jackie J. Johnson Program Director</p> <p>Tel: 806-780-8300 Fax: 806-780-8383 jackie.johnson@mccaod.com</p>		

Prevention Resource Center, Region 1

Managed Care Center for Addictive/Other Disorders, Inc.

1715 26th St. Lubbock, TX 79411

Tel (806) 780-8300

Fax (806) 780-8383

prc1.org