

February 2015



coalition news

Prevention news and information from the Tiverton Prevention Coalition

Report on Behavioral Health of RI Teens Raises Several Red Flags

Grim may be the word to describe the behavioral health of Rhode Island teens when compared to teens across the country.

The [Behavioral Health Barometer: Rhode Island](#), one of a series of state and national reports that provide a snapshot of substance use, ranks the state's youth higher than national averages in several categories:

■ The percentage of binge alcohol use among people in Rhode Island aged 12 to 20 was higher than the national average. It also reported that 6 out of 10 (62.2%) adolescents in Rhode Island perceived no great risk from drinking five or more drinks, the definition of binge drinking, once or twice a week.

■ Rhode Island's percentage of alcohol dependence or abuse among individuals aged 12 or older was higher than the national average.

■ 20 percent of Rhode Islanders aged 12 or over said they used illicit marijuana during the previous year, the highest rate among the 50 states.

■ About 8 in 10 (79.5%) adolescents in Rhode Island perceived no great risk from smoking marijuana once a month, a percentage higher than the national average of 74.7 percent.

■ Rhode Island's percentage of treatment for a Major Depressive Episode (MDE) depression among adolescents was higher than the national average.

Most of us. "Certainly the report is troubling but it simply confirmed what coalition coordinators throughout the state already know," Coalition Coordinator Rebecca Elwell said. "We hope the report creates more advocates for

protecting teens from the risks associated with substance use. Despite the stats, we are doing something right: Most Tiverton teens and most teens in Rhode Island don't use alcohol and drugs. They should be praised more often. The others need more of our attention and resources."

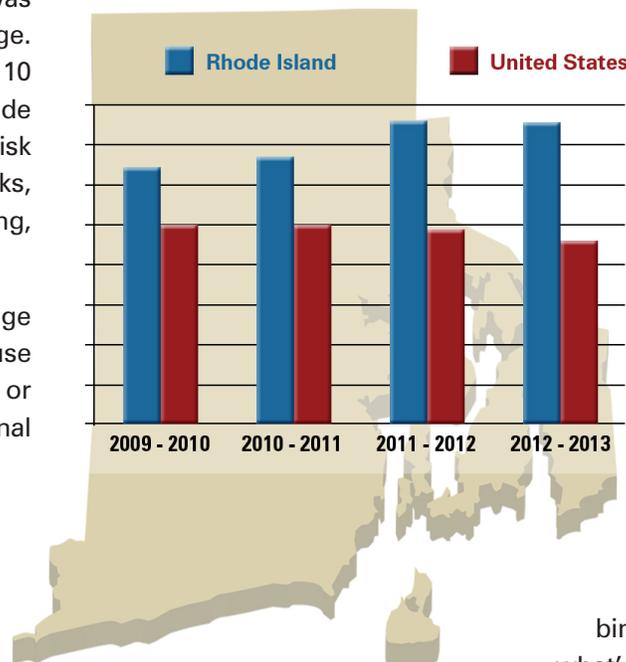
Advocacy needed. The behavioral health survey underscored an important fact in prevention science: If teens don't think substance use is very risky, they're more likely to use alcohol and other drugs.

The SAMHSA statistics show the correlation clearly for both binge drinking and marijuana use. So, what's a state to do?

"One thing we can do is to advocate for restoring prevention funding to the state budget this year," Ellwell said. "Local communities need state support to develop prevention strategies and programs — and our state budget should reflect the priority we place on reducing the harmful effects drugs have on teens in our state."

Illicit Drug Use by Teens: RI vs. US

Source: SAMHSA. Behavioral Health Barometer: Rhode Island, 2014.



 **REBECCA'S** notes



A picture is worth a thousand words. So, I'll let the picture do the talking this month. More than 20 prevention providers from Rhode Island, including me and my associate Jenni McNamee, met with our congressional leaders in Washington in February while attending the CADCA conference. Senators Whitehouse and Reed, Representatives Cicilline and Langevin welcomed their constituents from RI Coalitions and pledged their support on the federal level for the many substance abuse issues facing our state's youth.

Pride and Compassion

THS Boys' Basketball players, members of Tiger Pride, and their coach Dave Landoch attended a memorial service for 15-year-old Will Foreman, a Newport sophomore who collapsed during a morning basketball practice in December and was pronounced dead at Newport County Hospital about an hour and a half later.



"They represented their school and their community honorably on this very sad event," said group advisor Linda Larsen. "They are a group we can all be proud of."

Tiger Pride also announced a CPR training open to teachers, coaches, and support staff to ensure the presence of CPR certified responders at all school events. For more information, contact [Linda Larsen](mailto:Linda.Larsen@tivertonprevention.org).

"SAD" Teens

If your teen seems to be slacking off — not getting homework done, getting up late in the morning, neglecting household chores — it just may be a case of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a form of depression that often happens during the shorter daylight hours of winter.

A [PsychCentral](#) article that suggests spending more time with a person helps tremendously — even though they may not seem to want any company. Bundling up and getting outside together for some exercise and natural sunlight goes a long way toward alleviating SAD feelings. And there's the added bonus of spending more one-on-one time with your teen, when you can let them know that their sad feelings are only temporary and you'll help them get through it.



A doctor's visit should be considered if symptoms are more than mild but for teens and adults with the "winter blues," family time does brighten the day. For more information about SAD — for teens and adults — visit [TeensHealth](#).

\$500 Scholarship Update

A total of \$1,500 was donated by Tiverton residents, organizations and businesses to fund the new Dr. William White Prevention Scholarship, to be awarded for the first time this year to one Tiverton High School senior who is heading to college next September.

For more information about applying for the \$500 Dr. William White Prevention Scholarship this year, please e-mail [Rebecca Elwell](mailto:Rebecca.Elwell@tivertonprevention.org).

