

## **Island County Healthy Youth Survey Key Findings (2008)**

### **Logistics**

- ◆ The Healthy Youth Survey is done every two years in Grades 6, 8, 10 and 12. It is a coordinated effort of five large state agencies (Washington State Department of Health, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Social and Health Services, Community, Trade and Economic Development, and the Family Policy Council) that minimizes over surveying of students.
- ◆ Island County findings are a composite of three school districts (South Whidbey, Coupeville, Oak Harbor). Stanwood-Camano data gets included into Snohomish County data.
- ◆ We had over 70% participation in Grades 6 (91%) and 8 (78%). This allows us to say results are probably representative of public school students in these grades in Island County with the following exceptions. We had only 68% and 63% participation in 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, respectively, so results are not representative of these grade levels. Results are not applicable to students enrolled in the Cedar School, Home Connections or in the South Whidbey 10<sup>th</sup> grade (53%) or 12<sup>th</sup> grade (33%).

### **Tobacco Use Findings**

- ◆ Tobacco use has not changed much since 2002 although it is up slightly in all grades
- ◆ IC use in grades 6, 10 and 12 is slightly higher than state percentages of tobacco use for youth in the same grades.
- ◆ One in four seniors report smoking cigarettes in 2008
- ◆ More older local youth are continuing to use cigarillos, a trend that has occurred since 2006. There is also an increase in the use of bidis and hookahs.

### **Alcohol Use Findings**

- ◆ We are happy to report that 55-86% of grades 8-10 report no use of alcohol, slightly up from 2006.
- ◆ The percentage of youth that report using alcohol is progressively higher from one grade level to the next.
- ◆ Alcohol use doubled for 12<sup>th</sup> graders between 2004 and 2006, going from 20% to 43% to 44% in 2008, slightly higher than the state percentage of 12<sup>th</sup> graders using alcohol regularly.
- ◆ Alcohol use for grades 6, 8 and 10 has remained fairly constant since 2002 with slight decreases in use locally for grades 8 and 10 in 2008.
- ◆ Binge drinking has decreased slightly in grades 8 and 10 since 2004 and has stayed the same for 12<sup>th</sup> graders. From 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade, IC youth are the same or slightly lower than state percentages except in 6<sup>th</sup> grade where the number is slightly higher but not significantly (3.8 vs 3.1).
- ◆ Alcohol is implicated in nearly a third of youth traffic fatalities. We are concerned that nearly 25% of older youth report riding in vehicles driven by a person who had been drinking.
- ◆ Many youth in 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grader report that alcohol is easy to get.
- ◆ Research has shown that parents are the primary influence on their children's decision to use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Over 12% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders report getting alcohol at home with permission.

### **Drug Use Findings**

- ◆ Marijuana use has stayed the same or decreased over time since 2002 in all grades sampled except 8<sup>th</sup> grade, where it has steadily increased over time. Despite this increase, the percentage of youth who report using marijuana locally is lower than the statewide percentages across all grades. Use of marijuana in grades 8, 10, and 12 is similar to tobacco use.
- ◆ The percentage of youth who report using any illegal drugs to get high has stayed about the same over time except for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. In 2008, 6% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders in island county report using any type of illegal drug and this is significantly higher than the state (3.8%).
- ◆ In general, the percentage of youth using methamphetamines in our county is low although the increase from 2006 to 2008 is significant for grades 8 and 12. Use by 6<sup>th</sup> graders has also climbed from less than a percent in 2006 to 2.4% in 2008. Among 12<sup>th</sup> graders, use has increased to 4.2%, higher than state (3.6%).
- ◆ Since 2006, the percentage of youth using inhalants has increased in grades 8 and 12. The percentage of youth who report having tried inhalants in 6<sup>th</sup> grade is alarmingly higher than the state percentage for this age group (4.5% versus 2.9%).

- ◆ We are concerned with the number of youth who are using painkillers to get high. The percentages of youth who report using painkillers to get high has increased among 8<sup>th</sup> graders (3.9% in 2006 to 5.2% in 2008, higher than the state). For the past two HYS about 12-13% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders report using painkillers to get high.
- ◆ Local youth access to painkillers is higher than state percentages from their own prescriptions (grades 8,10,12), getting them from a friend (grades 10 and 12), and taking from their own home or someone else's home.
- ◆ High percentages of youth report drugs as easy to obtain, have a favorable attitude toward drug use, don't see use as risky, intend to use drugs and report their parents have favorable attitudes toward drug use.

#### **Weight, Eating and Physical Activity Findings**

- ◆ Overall we compare favorably to the state and the nation on the percentages of overweight and obese youth, however, about ¼ of our youth are overweight or obese.
- ◆ High percentages of our youth are not getting enough moderate physical exercise, and the percentage of youth receiving vigorous physical exercise decreased from 74.8% in 2002 to 62.4% in 2008.
- ◆ A high percentage of youth are not eating regularly with their families. Research has shown that teens who frequently eat dinner with their family are more likely to be emotionally content, work hard at school, and have positive peer relationships. Kids who eat with their families at least five times per week are less likely to take drugs, be depressed or get into trouble. Family meals are also associated with higher intake of fruits and vegetables, grains, and proteins and decreased intake of soft drinks and snack foods.
- ◆ A high percentage of youth are not eating breakfast. Skipping breakfast put youth more at risk for eating poorly later in the day.
- ◆ Almost 14-19% of youth report skipping meals or cutting meals due to lack of money.
- ◆ Less than 1 out of 3 youth eats enough fruits and vegetables a day.
- ◆ Less than half of our youth walk to school and less than 10% bike to school.

#### **Screen Time Findings**

- ◆ The percentage of youth who report watching TV/DVDs/videos or playing video/computer games on school nights for 2 or more hours a day remains high in all grades, especially among 8<sup>th</sup> graders (significantly higher than state).
- ◆ Too much screen time can take away from time with family and friends, affect reading skills, cause attention span problems, glamorize violence, expose children/youth to adults behaviors such as sex, alcohol, tobacco and drug use, and take the place of physical activity and engagement in the real world.
- ◆ The Children's Commission has identified exposure to video violence as a top issue of concern.

#### **Unintentional Injury**

- ◆ Unintentional injury is the number one cause of death among children and youth.
- ◆ We are proud of the number of youth who wear their seatbelt and use a lifejacket.
- ◆ Less than half of youth wear bike helmets when biking (decreases by grade level) and only one in three 6<sup>th</sup> graders wear a helmet when skateboarding/rollerblading.
- ◆ We are concerned about the number of homes with children in the household that have loaded and unlocked guns. This number rose from 4% in 2000 to 13% in 2006 (BRFSS data).
- ◆ There has been a rise in the number of gun sales both locally and nationally.

#### **Safe EnvironmentsL Weapons, Physical Fighting and Bullying**

- ◆ Youth who report carrying a weapon to school 6 or more days during the month has decreased across all grades since 2004, but in grades 8 and 10 still remains higher in 2008 than the statewide percentage of youth carrying weapons to school.
- ◆ One in four 6<sup>th</sup> graders perceive that they can get easy access to handguns while one in five 12<sup>th</sup> graders perceive that handgun access is easy.
- ◆ Between 25-37% of youth have been involved in a physical fight in the past year.
- ◆ Bullying is highest among 6<sup>th</sup> graders (33.5% have been bullied in the past month) and decreases among the older grades (24.8% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 21.8 % of 10<sup>th</sup> graders and 18% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders).

### **Mental Health Findings**

- ◆ Between 16-19% of all youth have seriously considered attempting suicide. This is slightly higher than state percentages. Of concern is the number of youth who have attempted suicide and which has increased in grades 8-12 since 2006.
- ◆ Over one quarter of all youth report being depressed (8<sup>th</sup> grade: 36% (2004), 23.5% (2006), 26% (2008); 10<sup>th</sup> grade: 35% (2004), 29.6% (2006), 29% (2008); 12<sup>th</sup> grade: 36% (2004), 29.1% (2006), 29% (2008)).
- ◆ 19-25% of youth report having ever been physically abused by an adult.
- ◆ Although most youth report that they have an adult they can turn to for help when feeling sad, consistent with youth statewide, over 1 in 4 do not feel they can go to a parent with a personal problem or turn to an adult when they feel sad or hopeless.
- ◆ Many youth report they would talk to someone if they were contemplating suicide and that friends would make adults aware of people they were concerned about.

### **School and Community Environments and Involvement**

- ◆ Between 83-87% youth in all grades feel safe at school.
- ◆ Youth report there are lots of chances to get involved in sports, clubs and activities. Almost 2 in 3 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders are involved in at least one supervised activity after school. We are concerned with students in those grades who never participate in after school activities.
- ◆ Consistently most youth report their community offers opportunities to be involved. Sports team, service and activity club availability is high.
- ◆ Almost 50% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders have volunteered in the past year. Older youth seem to feel like people in the neighborhood or community encourage them to do their best or are proud of them compared to 6<sup>th</sup> graders.
- ◆ Many youth report working out conflicts/disagreements by talking.