

## ISSUE BRIEF: SUBSTANCE USE

Preventing drug abuse and excessive alcohol use increases people's chances of living long, healthy and productive lives. Excessive alcohol use includes binge drinking, underage drinking, drinking while pregnant, and alcohol-impaired driving. Drug abuse includes any inappropriate use of pharmaceuticals (both prescription and over-the-counter drugs) and any use of illicit drugs. Alcohol and other drug use can impede judgment and lead to harmful risk-taking behavior. Preventing drug use and alcohol abuse improves quality of life, academic performance, workplace productivity and military preparedness; reduces crime and criminal justice expenses; reduces vehicle crashes and fatalities; and lowers health care costs for acute/chronic conditions.

### KEY FACTS

- Excessive alcohol use is a leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. among all age groups.
- Over half of the alcohol consumed by adults and 90% of the alcohol consumed by youth occurs while binge drinking.
- Prescription drug use is the nation's fastest growing drug problem. ER visits involving the misuse or abuse of pharmaceutical drugs have doubled over the past 5 years.
- Chronic drug use, crime, and incarceration are inextricably connected. At least half of state and Federal inmates in the U.S. were active drug users at the time of arrest.
- 9% of children live with at least 1 parent who abuses alcohol or other drugs. They are more likely to experience physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect and more likely to be placed in foster care.
- Rates of marijuana use by youth and young adults are on the rise and fewer youth perceive great risk from smoking it
- After 40 years of steadily declining smoking rates, the decline in adults smoking rates in the U.S. has stalled
- Smoking during pregnancy poses risks to the mother and fetus. A baby born to a mother who smoked during pregnancy is more likely to have less developed lungs and low birthweight, and is more likely to be born prematurely.
- More than ¼ of the U.S. population (88 million people) and more than half of all children in the U.S are exposed to secondhand smoke on a regular basis.

### *Alcohol and Drug Use*

Substance abuse—involving drugs, alcohol, or both—is associated with a range of destructive social conditions, including family disruptions, financial problems, lost productivity, failure in school, domestic violence, child abuse, and crime. In addition, substance abuse contributes to a number of negative health outcomes and public health problems, including cardiovascular conditions, pregnancy complications, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, motor vehicle crashes, homicide and suicide. Improved evaluation of community-level prevention has enhanced researchers' understanding of environmental and social factors that contribute to the initiation and abuse of alcohol and illicit drugs, leading to a more sophisticated understanding of how to implement evidence-based strategies in specific social and cultural settings. Estimates of the total overall costs of substance abuse in the United States, including lost productivity and health- and crime-related costs, exceed \$600 billion annually.

### *Tobacco Use*

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the US, yet more deaths are caused each year by tobacco use than by all deaths from HIV, illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, suicides, and murders combined. As a result of widespread tobacco use, approximately 443,000 Americans die from tobacco-related illnesses, such as cancer and heart disease, each year. An estimated 49,000 of these deaths are the result of secondhand smoke exposure. Tobacco use poses a heavy burden on the U.S. economy and medical care system. Each year, cigarette smoking costs more than \$193 billion in medical care costs, while secondhand smoke costs an additional \$10 million.

### *Social Determinants of Health*

Several biological, social, environmental, psychological, and genetic factors are associated with alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. These factors can include gender, race and ethnicity, age, income level, educational attainment, and sexual orientation. Substance abuse is also strongly influenced by interpersonal, household, and community dynamics. Family, social networks, and peer pressure are key influencers of substance abuse among adolescents.

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2015 COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Alpena, Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Montmorency, Otsego, and Presque Isle counties

## Tip of the Mitt Data

**Heavy and binge drinking—adults:** More adults in the region drink heavily and/or binge drink in the past 30 days than in the State as a whole (18%). Rates range from 19% in Emmet County to 27% in Antrim County (unable to calculate rates in Montmorency and Presque Isle counties). Similarly,

**Binge drinking—teens:** More youth binge drank compared to the State (6%). The proportion of 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students reporting they had 5+ drinks within a short period of time in the past 30 days ranges from 10% in Charlevoix County to 22% in Presque Isle County

**Marijuana use--teens:** The proportion of high school students who report using marijuana 1 or more times in the past 30 days ranges from 9% in Presque Isle County to 22% in Otsego County. Otsego (22%), Antrim (21%), Emmet (15%) and Cheboygan (13%) counties exceed State rate (9%).

**Deaths due to drug poisoning:** Deaths due to drug poisoning exceed State rate (13 per 100,000 population) in Presque Isle (19), Otsego (17), Antrim (16), Antrim (15) and Cheboygan (15) counties.

**Tobacco use—adults:** A much higher proportion of adults smoke cigarettes in Northern Michigan than the State as a whole (12%). Smoking rates in the region range from 16% in Presque Isle County to 31% in Montmorency County.

**Tobacco use—teens:** The proportion of 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students reporting they smoked at least once in the past 30 days hovers at or exceeds State (10%), ranging from 11% in Emmet County to 23% in Otsego County.

## Community Conversations

117 community members and representatives from local health departments, hospitals and other health care providers, social service agencies, schools, business, and government participated in a Community Conversation to answer the question, “What can we do here in this county to move closer to our vision of a healthy community?” During the Community Conversations, addressing prevention and treatment for alcohol, tobacco and other drug use was identified as an action in the following

AL	AN	CHX-EM	CHB	MON	OTS	PI
X	X	X	X	X	X	

## Major Forces of Change

**Affordable Care Act (ACA):** The ACA includes substance use treatment as an essential service to be offered with all health insurance policies, substantially increasing access

**Michigan Medical Marijuana Program (MMMP):** The MMMP gives many youth—and some parents the impression that marijuana is not a dangerous drug.

**Prescription Drug Use Task Force:** NMRE leads this coalition with representatives from physicians and health care organizations, substance use prevention and treatment agencies, law enforcement, and other community partners

## Health Care Provider Survey N=122

When asked what the 3 top community health problems are in their county, physicians, nurse practitioners, and physicians assistants indicated overweight/obesity (58%), mental health issues (43%), lack of access to health care (38%), substance use (35%), tobacco use (35%), chronic disease (28%), lack of physical activity (19%), aging problems (11%).

## What Matters to You Community Survey N=1,140

The top ranked factors needed for a healthy community were: access to healthcare (69%), good jobs/healthy economy (50%), access to affordable healthy foods (33%), good schools (28%), and affordable housing (27%). Substance use was ranked the #1 need in their counties (48%), followed by overweight/obesity (42%), chronic disease (33%), mental health issues (28%), and affordable housing (26%). 11% of respondents noted they had been diagnosed with alcoholism or other addiction and 93% had a family member who had been diagnosed with alcoholism or other addiction.

