



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

LINDA ROSEN, MD, MPH
DIRECTOR

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NEW FINDINGS SHOW HAWAII HIGH AND MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IMPROVE HEALTH BEHAVIORS

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education (DOE), and University of Hawaii (UH) have released new findings from the 2013 Hawaii Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) for the state and all four counties. Administered to public non-charter school students in grades 6-12 throughout the state every two years, the YRBS is the only survey that monitors youth health risk behaviors on a regular basis. The next administration of the Hawaii YRBS will be conducted in spring 2015.

“The YRBS is an important tool to identify focus areas for prevention and treatment efforts,” said Health Director Linda Rosen. “The longstanding collaboration between the DOH, DOE, and UH provides an excellent data tracking system to monitor student health risk behaviors and target interventions where they are most needed,”

“Not all student health risk behaviors are obvious,” stated Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi. “This data provides information that our educators can use to reinforce and advise our students in making positive choices.”

Findings from the Hawaii YRBS indicate that since 2011, there have been positive changes in many student health behaviors; however, there is still room for improvement.

- Physical fighting has declined, with 17 percent of high school and 22 percent of middle school students reporting that they were in a fight at least once during the past 12 months.
- Marijuana use remains steady with 19 percent of high school and 8 percent of middle school students reporting use in the past 30 days.
- Fewer students are binge drinking, but 25 percent of high school and 10 percent of middle school students report drinking some alcohol in the past 30 days.
- The percentage of high school students who report attempting suicide in the past 12 months remains at 11 percent, while the percentage of middle school students who report attempting suicide increased to 12 percent.

For the first time, the Hawaii High School YRBS gathered information on texting and emailing by adolescents while driving. Findings indicate that the use of technology while driving continues to put youth at risk.

- Among students who drove a car, 43 percent reported texting or emailing while driving during the past 30 days.

The Hawaii YRBS 2013 data also indicate varied trends in obesity-related behaviors, such as excessive screen time, physical activity, diet, and sleep.

- The percentage of high school (42 percent) and middle school (41 percent) students who report using a computer for something that was not school work for three or more hours per day on an average school day has been increasing since 2007.
- The percentage of high schools students who met the national recommendation for physical activity (at least 60 minutes per day on each of the past seven days) remains steady at 22 percent and the percentage of middle school students meeting this goal increased to 32 percent.
- Only 27 percent of high school and 55 percent of middle school students indicate that they are getting eight or more hours of sleep on an average school night.
- Soda consumption continues to decrease, with 30 percent of high school students reporting that they did not drink any sugar-sweetened soda in the past seven days.

Survey procedures were designed to protect students' privacy by allowing for anonymous and voluntary participation. Before survey administration, active parental permission was obtained. Students completed the self-administered questionnaire during one class period and recorded their responses directly on a computer-scannable answer sheet.

The Hawaii YRBS is part of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For a comparison of Hawai'i data to the nation, visit <http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Default.aspx>.

For more information on the Hawaii YRBS visit <http://health.hawaii.gov/school-health/health-survey/> or <http://apps.hidoe.k12.hi.us/research/Pages/YRBS.aspx>.

The full survey report, more detailed data reports by county, gender, grade and race/ethnicity, and the survey questionnaires are available at the Hawaii Health Data Warehouse website at www.hhdw.org.

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Janice Okubo
Communications Office
(808) 586-4445