

Statewide Needs Assessment of Prevention for Substance Abuse

Presentation to Colorado's Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force

February 2, 2018



Jenny Wood

Director of Community Prevention and Early Intervention Programs, OBH

Dr. Tom Barrett

*Behavioral Health Consultant,
University of Denver*

Alex Caldwell

*Associate Director,
Colorado Health Institute*

Karam Ahmad

*Research Analyst,
Colorado Health Institute*



ABOUT US

We believe that sound evidence and solid analysis leads to better health policy, and that better health policy leads to healthier Coloradans.

That is our work as Colorado's leading nonprofit and nonpartisan health policy research group.

And we are passionate about it.

Key Takeaways

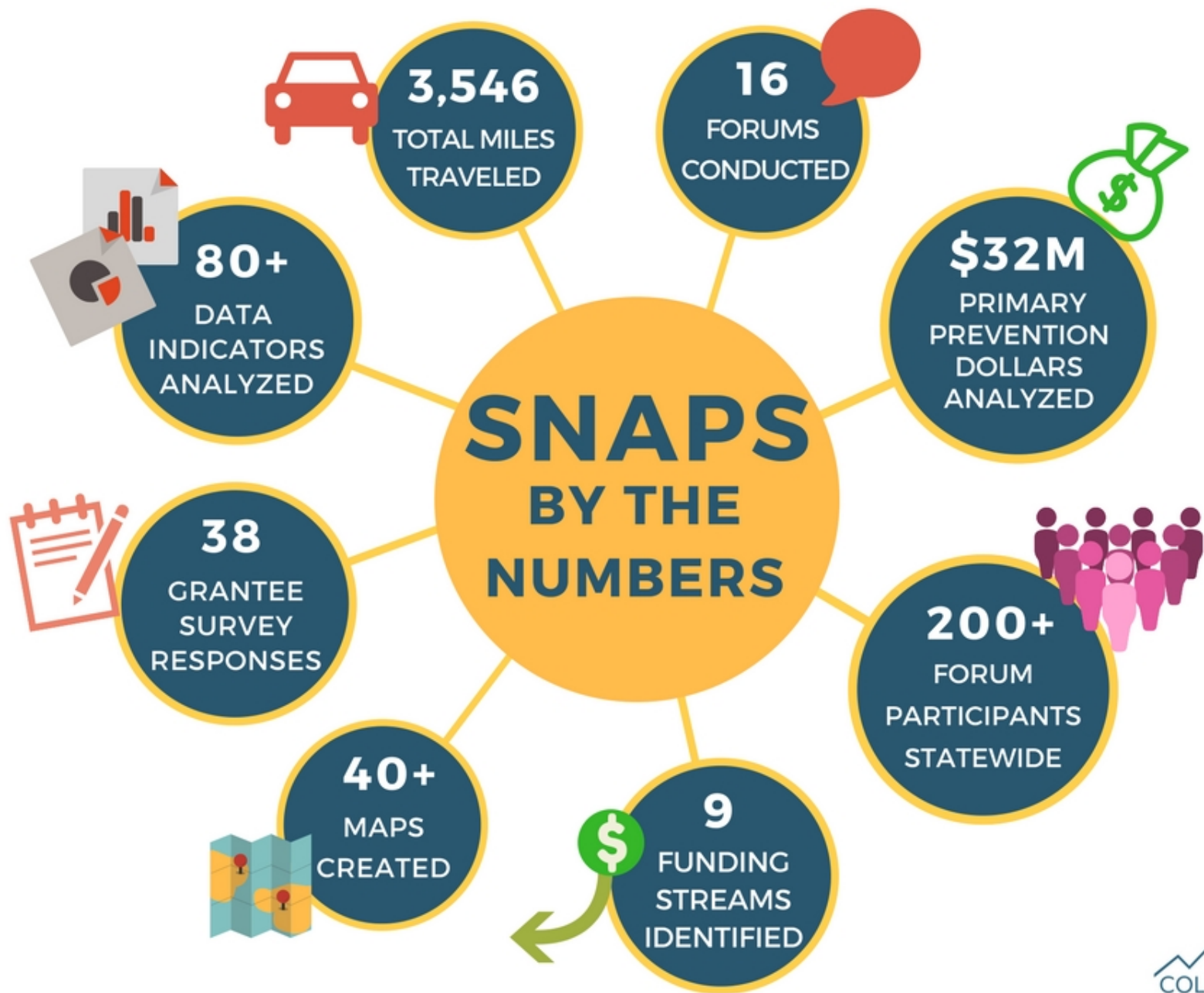
- 1. What we did:** CHI conducted a needs assessment of Colorado's substance abuse primary prevention efforts in 2017.
- 2. What we found:** There are opportunities to improve – at the community level, in local prevention programs, and statewide.
- 3. Next step:** Develop a statewide substance abuse primary prevention strategic plan.



Our Key Question:

**What do communities,
local prevention administrators
and statewide prevention funders
need to strengthen Colorado's
efforts in primary prevention
of substance use?**







Needs Assessment Results

What We Found



Communities need **regionally** targeted investments that change substance use **social norms** for **teens** and their **families**.



Community substance use prevention program administrators need **technical assistance** to adopt EBPs, and they call for **aligned reporting requirements** for funding.



Statewide prevention funders need a systematic way to **coordinate existing efforts**, reduce overlap and address unfunded needs.

CHI's Recommendations



Invest in 2Gen prevention.

Invest in environmental approaches.

Explore ways to align funding with “need.”



- Align grantee reporting requirements.
- Strengthen technical assistance – to identify EBPs, and evaluate and sustain existing programs.



- Collect and share consistent information.
- Align leadership.
- Coordinate and consolidate.

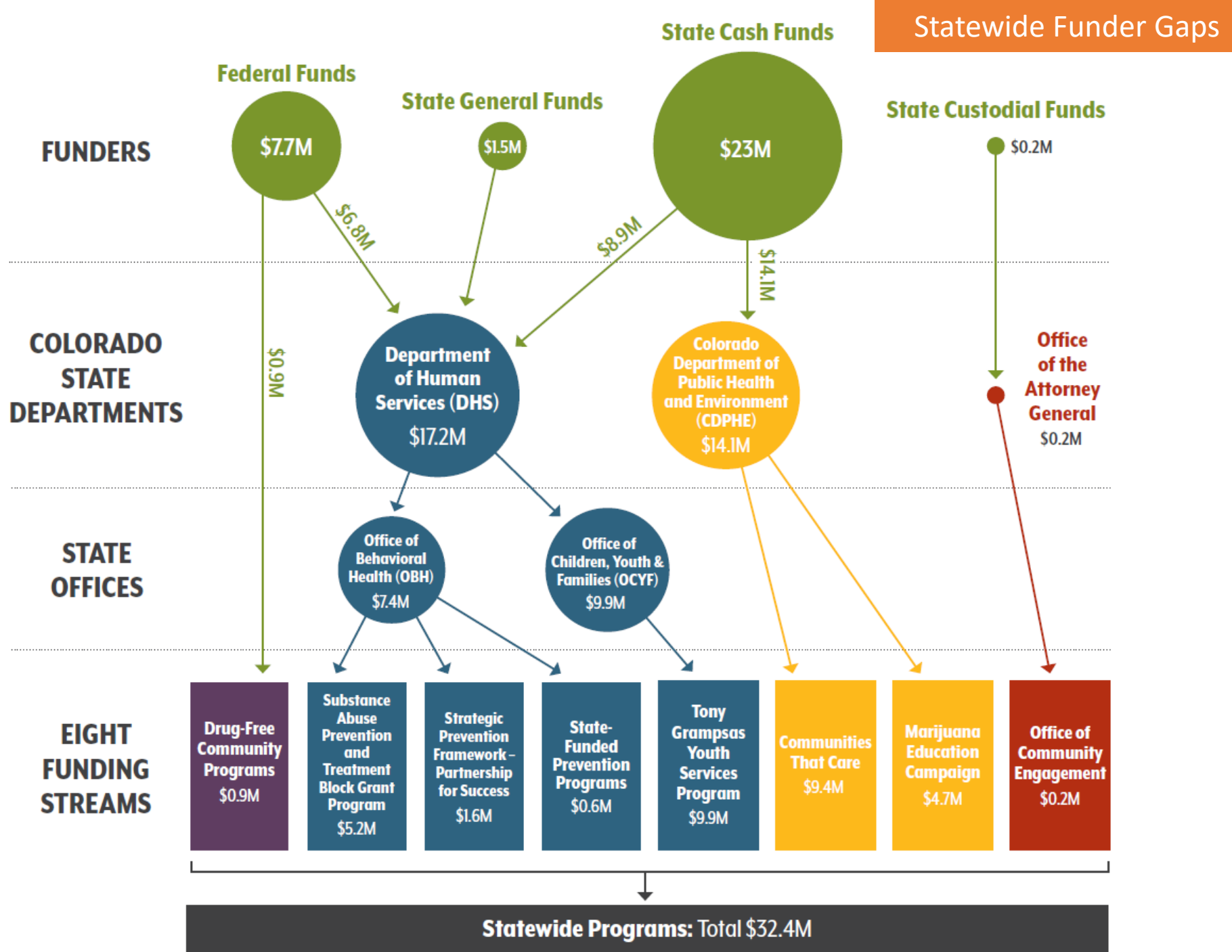
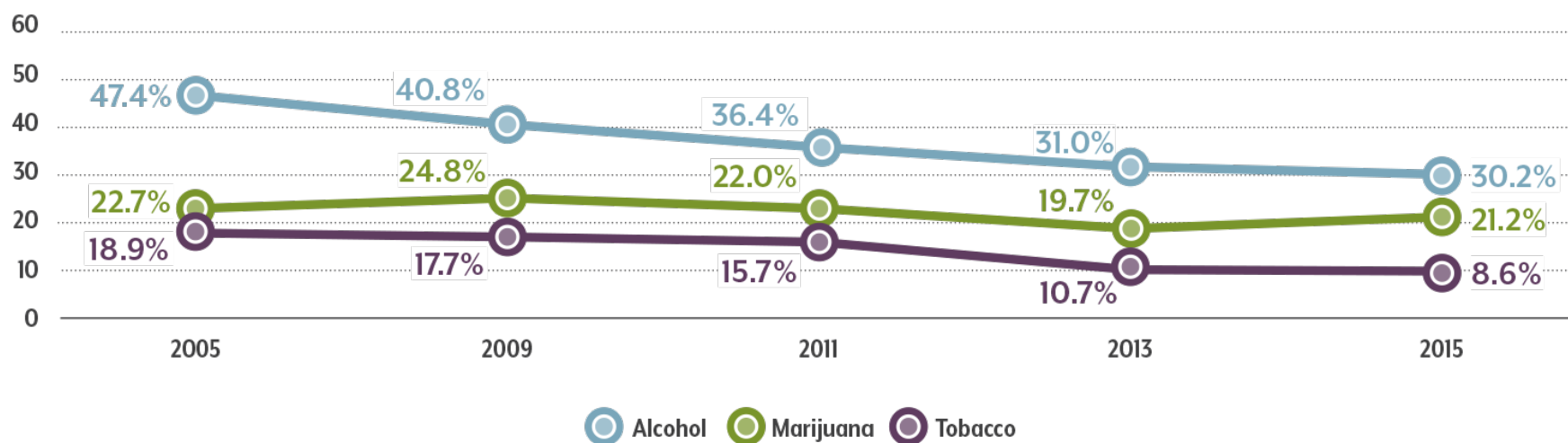


Figure 9. Most Commonly Used Substances in Colorado Youth, 2005-2015





SNAPSHOT

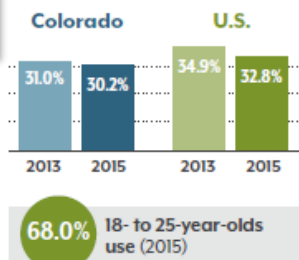
ALCOHOL

Colorado high schoolers use alcohol at a higher rate than any other substance. Nearly six of 10 (59 percent) report ever trying alcohol, closely mirroring the national rate. Alcohol is also the easiest substance for Colorado youth to obtain.

Most used substance among youth in Colorado

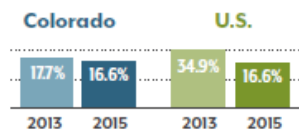
Rate of Alcohol Use:

One of three high school students report currently drinking alcohol, a rate that didn't change from 2013 to 2015. Colorado youth are near the national average.



Binge Drinking:

One of six high school students report binge drinking in the last 30 days.



Access:

58.6 Percent

Nearly three of five high schoolers believe it is easy to get alcohol if they wanted.

18.2 Percent

Nearly one of five report trying alcohol before age 13.

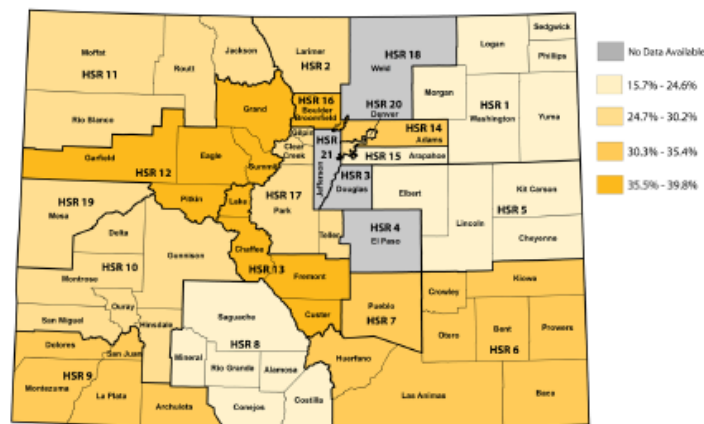
1,623

liquor stores in Colorado
(28.7 per 100,000 residents)

Colorado Youth: Who's Most Likely to Use Alcohol?

Four of 10 (40 percent) high school students in the Interstate 70 mountain counties of Eagle, Garfield, Grand, Pitkin and Summit say they've had at least one drink in the past month, the state's highest rate of alcohol use. The second highest rate is reported by high schoolers in the counties of Boulder and Broomfield at 38 percent.

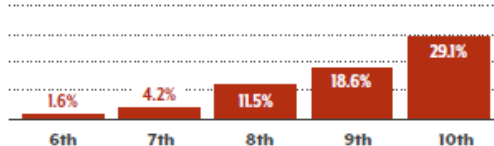
Percentage of High Schoolers Who Drank At Least Once in the Past 30 Days



Current Alcohol Use by Grade:

Two of Five Seniors Regularly Drink

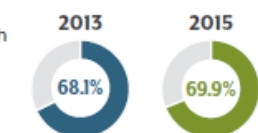
Current alcohol use steadily increases by grade, with an apex in 10th grade.



Perception of Risk

Seven of 10 (69.9 percent) high schoolers believe that regularly drinking alcohol is risky to their health compared with 48.8 percent when it comes to marijuana. But even though high school students think it's riskier to drink alcohol than smoke marijuana, they still drink at a much higher rate.

Believe regular alcohol consumption risks harm to themselves



More youth think that alcohol is risky (70 percent). That's compared with 48 percent who think marijuana is.

Easy to get



SNAPSHOT

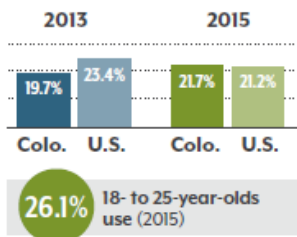
MARIJUANA

Colorado's first-in-the-nation retail marijuana shops opened for business on January 1, 2014. Today, nearly four years later, 509 retail stores dot the state.

Tax and fee collections are on track for a record-setting year. And more states are following Colorado's lead on legalization. The challenge for parents and policymakers — ensure that more Colorado youth don't start using marijuana.

Rate of Marijuana Use: Staying Steady

One of five middle school and high school students report currently using marijuana, a rate that didn't change from 2013 to 2015.



Access

Top Five Colorado Counties: Rate of recreational and medical marijuana shops.

State average: 12.7 per 100,000

1. **Costilla** 118.6 (4 shops)
2. **Gunnison** 110.3 (11 shops)
3. **Pitkin** 107.2 (16 shops)
4. **Routt** 66.4 (4 shops)
5. **La Plata** 37.0 (12 shops)

(Note: Excludes counties with 0, 1 or 2 shops)

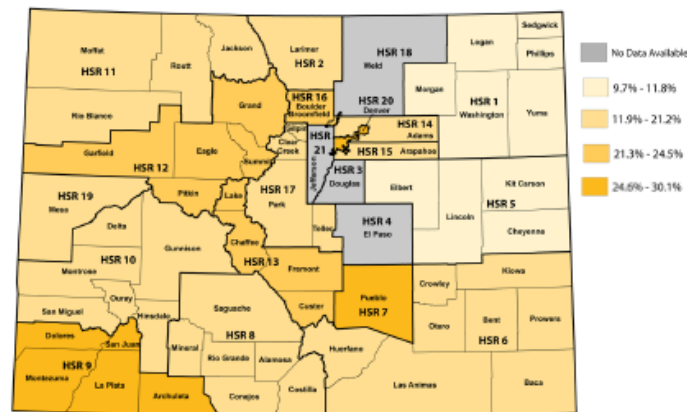
Nearly 6 of 10

high school students reported it was sort of easy/very easy to get marijuana.

Colorado Youth: Who's Most Likely to Use Marijuana?

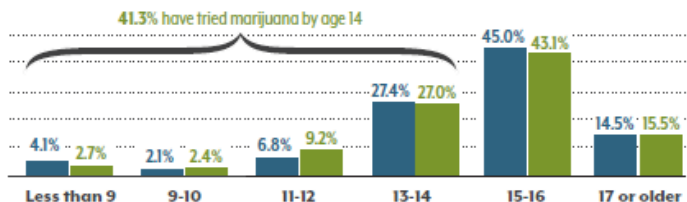
High school students on the Western Slope and in southwest Colorado had higher rates of use than those on the Eastern Plains. **Pueblo County** has the state's highest rate — 30.1 percent.

Percentage of High Schoolers Who Have Used Marijuana at Least Once in the Past 30 Days



First Use of Marijuana: Nearly Half by Age 14

More than 40 percent of high school seniors who say they have ever used marijuana had tried it by the age of 14. ■ 2013 ■ 2015



Marijuana at Home

8 Percent of adults with children under 15 had marijuana products in or around their home.



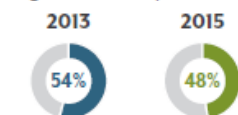
16,000 Homes Had children under 15 with possible exposure to secondhand marijuana smoke or vapor.



6 Percent New mothers who used marijuana during pregnancy.

Perception of Risk

Percentage of kids who think regular use is risky:





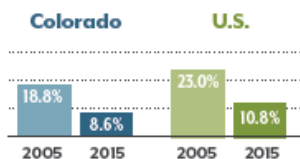
SNAPSHOT

TOBACCO

The earlier someone starts smoking cigarettes, the less likely they are to quit. In Colorado, 8.6 percent of high school students smoke cigarettes, slightly lower than the nationwide rate of 10.8 percent. The good news is Colorado's rate is less than half of what it was 10 years ago. But nearly one of three (30.3 percent) of Colorado high schoolers say they currently use some form of tobacco, either cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, cigars or smokeless tobacco.

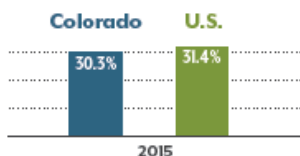
Rate of Cigarette Use:

Fewer high school students are smoking cigarettes in Colorado and nationally. Rates have more than halved in the last decade in Colorado and nationally.



Rate of Any Tobacco Use:

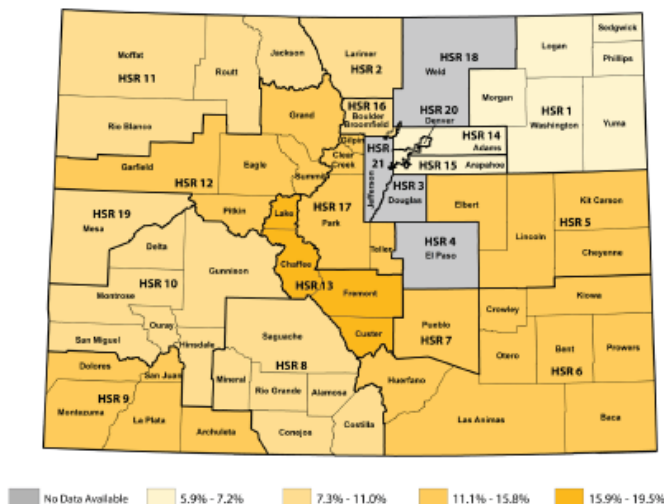
While the rate of current cigarette smoking is at a historic low, nearly one in three high school students in Colorado used a tobacco product in the last month, a trend mirrored nationally.



Colorado Youth: Who's Most Likely to Smoke Cigarettes?

One of five high school students in the Upper Arkansas Valley (19.6 percent) smoke cigarettes, the state's highest rate and more than double the state average. High school students in the Mountain Gateway counties, Pueblo County and the Eastern Plains counties smoke at higher rates as well.

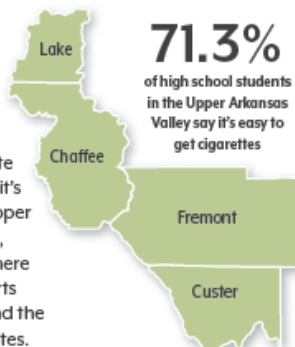
Percentage of High Schoolers Who Have Smoked Cigarettes on One or More of the Past 30 Days



Access

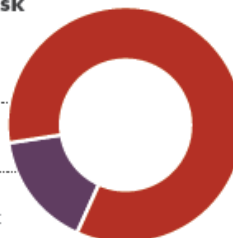
More than half of high school students

(57 percent) say it's easy to get cigarettes. The state's highest rate of high school students who say it's easy to get cigarettes is in the Upper Arkansas Valley counties of Lake, Chaffee, Fremont and Custer, where it's 71.3 percent. This region reports both highest use of cigarettes and the highest ease of access to cigarettes.




Perception of Risk

The majority of high school students (84.3 percent) think smoking is risky, but this still means that 15.7 percent don't think frequent cigarette smokers risk harming themselves. That percentage is holding steady.





Next Steps

A stylized illustration of a winding road on a map. The road is dark grey with white dashed lines. It starts at the bottom right and winds upwards and to the left. Four numbered location pins are placed along the road: a blue pin with the number 1 at the bottom right, a green pin with the number 2 on the left side, an orange pin with the number 3 on the right side, and a red pin with the number 4 at the top left. The background shows a simplified map with grey lines for roads, green areas for parks, and a blue area for a lake.

**What could a
statewide
substance use
primary prevention
strategic plan look
like and achieve?**



Alex Caldwell

CaldwellA@coloradohealthinstitute.org

Karam Ahmad

AhmadK@coloradohealthinstitute.org



COLORADO HEALTH INSTITUTE

coloradohealthinstitute.org   [@COHealthInst](https://twitter.com/COHealthInst)