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PreventionFIRST!'s Student Drug-Use Survey Finds Less Teens are Abusing Substances

Peer and Parental Disapproval of Substances Climb in Tristate

Cincinnati, OH (March 20, 2018) — Today, PreventionFIRST!, formerly the Coalition for a Drug-Free Greater Cincinnati, held a press conference to release the findings of the 2018 Student Drug-Use Survey, one of the most valuable local data tools gauging substance use among adolescents in the region. Good news: the majority of 7-12th grade students are not using substances. In fact, as measured by the past 30-day use indicator:

- 97.6 percent report not using prescription drugs non-medically,
- 95.0 percent do not use cigarettes,
- 91.9 percent report not using marijuana, and
- 86.3 percent do not use alcohol.

Peer and parental disapproval rates are at record high levels, which is an important factor as parents and friends are number one influencers in a young person's life. Non-medical prescription drugs had the highest parental disapproval rate at 95.6%; it was also the highest friend disapproval rate at 87.6%.

"We know how important friends and parents are in a young person's life. Students who have peers and family members who express disapproval are more likely to make the healthy choice to not use drugs and alcohol," said, Mary Haag, President/CEO of PreventionFIRST!. "With this data we can increase partnerships and strengthen prevention plans in the Tristate to further reduce and prevent young people from abusing substances and build prevention prepared communities."

Youth prescription drug abuse is trending downward since the questions were first introduced to the survey in 2012; a positive sign, with the current heroin and prescription drug abuse in the Tristate. Along with fewer 7th-12th graders abusing prescription drugs, their perception of harm increased as well parental and friend disapproval rates.

Tobacco use also declined among students with only 5.0% smoking cigarettes according to past 30-Day use.

There was a slight decrease in marijuana use from 2016. Student's perception of harm for marijuana stayed about the same from 2016.

PreventionFIRST! administers their Student Drug-Use Survey every two years. Just under 33,000 students, grades 7th-12th from 80 schools took the survey in the fall of 2017. Alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, non-medical use of prescription drugs, and electronic-vapor products are the most frequently abused substances by 7th-12th graders in the Greater Cincinnati area.

Overall Key Findings:

- Alcohol, cigarette and prescription drug use is trending downward. Past 30-day use of marijuana has remained unchanged the past few cycles.
- Tobacco and prescription drugs are perceived more harmful to health than alcohol and marijuana.
- Parental Disapproval of adolescent substance use continues to improve.
- Friend Disapproval of peer substance use continues to improve.

PreventionFIRST! advocates for a comprehensive multi-pronged approach across the community to support young people and reduce the consequences from abuse. Together, we can use this data to address the needs of our youth and work as a whole to prevent substance abuse in our community.

About the PreventionFIRST!

The PreventionFIRST! is a 501(c)(3) non-profit aimed at promoting wellness through the prevention of substance abuse across the lifespan throughout the Tri-state. The PreventionFIRST! vision is that people make healthy choices in every stage of life.

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