



## UNH Center on Adolescence

### How Healthy Are New Hampshire's Youth?

New Hampshire earned one of the highest rankings in the nation for indicators of overall child well being for 1996-2000<sup>1</sup>, with fewer youth in New Hampshire than nationally:

- Dropping out of school
- Living in extreme poverty
- Becoming teen mothers - NH has the lowest teen birth rate in the nation at 23.4 births/1000 girls ages 15-19 years old, compared to the US average of 48.5/1000

#### However...

- The teen birth rate is 4 times higher in New Hampshire's poorer communities (40/1000) than in wealthier ones (10/1000).<sup>2</sup>
- At chosen family planning sites, 5% of females less than 25 years old who were screened for chlamydia tested positive. Of those testing positive, 80% had no symptoms.
- An estimated 300-500 adolescents are homeless each night in NH.<sup>3</sup>
- Approximately 23% of NH households include at least one child (birth to 18 years old) with special health care needs, ranking NH 9<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation.<sup>4</sup>
- In 2000 alone, 173 youth ages 15-24 were hospitalized for self-inflicted injuries.
- Approximately 78 NH youth ages 10-24 die from preventable causes every year!

<u>Cause of Death</u>	<u>Deaths per year</u>
Motor vehicle crash	34
Suicide	20
Other unintentional injury	22
Assault	2
<b>Total injury deaths</b>	<b>78</b>

<sup>1</sup> 2003, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 701 St. Paul St., Baltimore MD 21202. <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/databook>

<sup>2</sup> NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Community and Public Health (OCPH), Bureau of Health Statistics and Data Management

<sup>3</sup> Child & Family Services (CFS) of NH, personal communication 4/15/03. <http://www.cfsnh.org>

<sup>4</sup> van Dyck P., McPherson M., Strickland B., Nesseler K., Blumberg S., Cynamon M., & Newacheck P., (2002). The national survey of children with special health care needs. *Ambulatory Pediatrics*, 31, 29-37

**Nationally, 70% of adolescent morbidity and mortality are due to 4 categories of behaviors <sup>5</sup>:**

***Behaviors Resulting in Injury***

- 12.6% of NH high school students never or rarely wore a seatbelt <sup>6</sup>
- 24.7% of NH high school students rode in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol
- 17.8% of NH high school students seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months

***Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use***

- 80% of the 16,404 students surveyed through the 2003 school-wide administration of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey reported use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs at some point in their lifetime.<sup>7</sup>
- 47.2% of NH high school students had at least one drink of alcohol and 30.6% of students report binge drinking (that is, consuming at least 5 alcoholic drinks in a row) in the 30 days prior to taking the survey
- Nearly 1/2 (49.6%) of high school students have used marijuana one or more times during their lifetime
- 62% of students report use of marijuana or other illicit drugs by at least one of their 4 closest friends in the past year.

***Sexual and Reproductive Behaviors***

- 41.5% of NH high school students have had sexual intercourse
- 56.4% of the students who had sexual intercourse in the past 3 months used a condom during their last sexual intercourse<sup>6</sup>

***Physical Activity and Nutrition***

- Nearly 1 in ten high school students (9.9%) are overweight, and 13.4% are at risk for becoming overweight. <sup>6</sup>
- 30.5% of high school students describe themselves as slightly or very overweight <sup>6</sup>
- 44.4% of high school students are trying to lose weight <sup>6</sup>
- Some students are taking steps to lose weight that can negatively impact their health and well-being. In the 30 days preceding the survey,
  - 11% of students went without eating for 24 hours or more to lose weight or keep from gaining weight <sup>6</sup>
  - 7.6% of students took diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor's advise to lose weight or keep from gaining weight <sup>6</sup> and
  - 3.1% of students made themselves vomit or took laxatives to lose weight or keep from gaining weight.<sup>6</sup>

**Parents can strongly influence teen's behaviors:** Teens who believe their parents will disapprove of them smoking, drinking alcohol, or engaging in sexual intercourse are much less likely to partake in these behaviors than those who don't perceive parental disapproval (Source: UNH Cooperative Extension, Teen Assessment Project, 2002. )

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<sup>5</sup> Being, Belonging, Becoming: Minnesota's Adolescent Health Action Plan. MN Department of Health, 2002.

<sup>6</sup>2003 NH Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS); NH Department of Education. <http://www.ed.state.nh.us/HealthHIV/AIDS/2003YRBSResults.htm>

<sup>7</sup> 2003 NH Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Aggregate School-Wide Report; NH DHHS