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MAJOR PROGRESS IN REDUCING TEEN DRUG USE, CIGARETTE AND ALCOHOL USE, GUN CARRYING, ACCORDING TO 13TH PRIDE SURVEY

WASHINGTON, Sept. 5 – American schools became more drug-free and gun-free in the past school year, and students turned away from alcohol and cigarettes in convincing numbers, the Pride Survey reported today.

“The 1999-2000 school year witnessed the healthiest one-year change in student behavior in nearly a decade,” said Dr. Thomas J. Gleaton, author of the nation’s largest independent survey of adolescent drug use and violence.

- Illicit drug use in grades 6-12 registered the strongest single year improvement since 1991.
- Teen drinking fell to the lowest level in 12 years, and cigarette smoking dropped to the lowest level in eight years.
- The number of students carrying guns to school fell to less than half the level of seven years ago.

Annual Use Grades 6-12	1998-99	1999-00
Drugs	27.1%	23.6%
Cigarettes	37.9%	32.0%
Alcohol	56.9%	53.3%
Guns in schools	3.3%	2.7%

“You have to look hard to find bad news in this survey, and that is great news for the nation,” Gleaton said.

For the school year ending in June, the PRIDE Survey found that 23.6 percent of students in grades 6-12 tried an illicit drug at least once, compared to 27.1 percent during the 1998-99 school year – a 12.9 percent rate of decrease in annual use.

This is the strongest one-year decline in overall drug use since 1990-1991.

More

% Annual illicit drug use, grades 6-12												
87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00
15.0	21.8	18.1	12.8	16.0	18.1	21.8	24.0	29.5	30.1	28.7	27.1	23.6

Most figures used in this press releases are stated in annual reported use. The following table contains data for monthly use for grades 6-12 for selected drugs.

% Monthly drug use, Pride Survey 1998-99 vs 1999-2000 Grades 6-12			
	98-99	99-00	% Rate of Decrease
Cigarettes	23.5	18.8	20.0
Any Alcohol	27.1	23.9	11.8
Any Illicit Drug	16.3	13.9	15.3

The clear signs of progress reported today contrast with weaker indications of success in the past two years. The Pride Survey and its government-sponsored counterpart, the University of Michigan Monitoring the Future Survey, both reported mixed success in combating teenage alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use during the 1998-99 school year. (See comparison, page four)

Alcohol use falls sharply

Overall use of alcohol fell significantly from 56.8 percent annual use during the 1998-99 school year to 53.3 percent – a 6 percent rate of decrease.

This marks the lowest level of overall alcohol use since 52.0 percent of students said they drank alcohol in the 1987-88 school year. It is also the largest one-year downturn in alcohol use since the 1991-92 school year.

% Annual alcohol use, grades 6-12												
87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00
52.0	61.7	58.2	62.3	55.1	55.1	53.8	54.2	58.8	58.3	56.9	56.8	53.3

Major progress in cigarette smoking

The most pronounced progress came in the percentage of students who said they smoked cigarettes in the past year, falling from 37.9 percent the previous year to 32 percent. This 15.6 percent rate of decrease represents the strongest year-to-year reduction in smoking in 13 years of the survey.

The 1999-2000 school year marked the fourth consecutive year of declining rates of smoking among students. Smoking among students is now at a eight-year low in the study.

% Annual cigarette use, grades 6-12												
87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00
29.1	34.2	32.1	30.9	31.9	32.7	34.3	36.8	40.5	41.3	40.3	37.9	32.0

More

Fewer guns in schools

The percentage of students who reported carrying a gun to school dropped to 2.7 percent, down from 3.3 percent the previous year. The occurrence of carrying a gun to school has fallen by 55 percent over the seven years since the question was first asked. However, more than two-fifths of students who carried a gun did so on six or more occasions (44 percent).

% Carrying a Gun to School	
1993-94	6.0
1994-95	4.9
1995-96	4.5
1996-97	4.1
1997-98	3.8
1998-99	3.3
1999-00	2.7

Clear signs of progress

For all drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, students reported no statistically significant increases in use as measured on both annual and monthly bases.

Students in grades 6 to 8, mostly ages 11-14, showed the most vigorous reductions in use, while the least movement was seen at the 12th grade level.

Pride estimates that 6 million students consumed an illegal drug last year, down from 6.9 million the previous year. (There are 25,794,744 public and private school students in grades 6-12. *U.S. Dept. of Education, Fall 1998*)

Drug use and other problems still prevalent

Despite the progress reported today, researchers cautioned that drug use and violent behavior remain chronic problems among the nation's young, especially older students.

One in four 12th grade students used illegal drugs on a monthly basis (25.4 percent), and 8.6 percent reported daily drug use. In addition, one in four of the Class of 2000 reported they drank alcohol weekly (24.5 percent) and smoked cigarettes daily (23.1 percent).

Nearly a quarter of all students in grades 6-12 have been in trouble with the police (22.4 percent), and one in ten joined a gang (9.2 percent). Gang involvement dropped from 9.9 percent the previous year and from 14.3 percent in 1993-94.

Two-fifths (40.5 percent) have received a threat of physical harm by another student, and one-fifth (20.8 percent) said other students have actually harmed them by hitting, slapping or kicking.

More than one in ten (11.1 percent) have been threatened with a gun, knife, or club, and 3 percent report other students have actually hurt them using one of those weapons.

“We made remarkable progress in the last year in reducing an array of adolescent behavioral problems, but it is obvious that much more needs to be done,” Gleaton said.

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The Pride Survey

The Atlanta-based Pride Survey queries students about their use of eight types of illegal drugs – marijuana, cocaine, uppers, downers, inhalants, hallucinogens, heroin and steroids – plus alcohol and tobacco. Since 1993-94 it has also asked questions about student behaviors such as carrying a gun to school, making and receiving threats, physical abuse, and joining gangs.

The responses of 114,318 students were contained in the 145-page report.

The Pride Survey is designated by federal law as an official measure of effectiveness of the White House drug policy (H.R. 4328 Div. C Title VII Sec. 706 (a)(4)(B), Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998).

Methodology

The study was conducted during the 1999-2000 school year and involved students nationwide. The Pride Survey represents data from sixth through twelfth grade students collected between August and June of the school year. Participating schools are sent the Pride Questionnaire with explicit instructions for administering the anonymous, self-report instrument.

Schools that administer the Pride Questionnaire do so voluntarily, or in compliance with a school district or state request.

Comparing Pride Survey to others

Results of the Pride Survey are consistent with the National Institute on Drug Abuse's Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF), which has not been released for the 1999-2000 school year.

Any Illicit Drug Annual Use: Pride vs. Monitoring the Future (MTF)																					
YEAR	1998-99			1997-98			1996-97			1995-96			1994-95			1993-94			1992-93		
Grade	8	10	12	8	10	12	8	10	12	8	10	12	8	10	12	8	10	12	8	10	12
Pride	22.1	35.0	40.2	25.1	37.2	41.0	27.9	39.1	41.6	25.9	38.0	40.8	21.3	32.3	35.8	19.3	28.6	31.9	15.0	22.6	28.2
MTF	20.5	35.9	42.1	21.0	35.0	41.4	22.1	38.5	42.4	23.6	37.5	40.2	21.4	33.3	39.0	18.5	30.0	35.8	15.1	24.7	31.0
Differ.	-1.6	+0.9	+1.9	-4.1	-2.2	+0.4	-5.8	-0.6	+0.8	-2.3	-0.5	-0.6	+0.1	+1.0	+3.2	-0.8	+1.4	+3.9	+0.1	+2.1	+2.8

A third survey, the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHS) has historically shown significantly lower drug use in the age 12-17 cohort than either the Pride Survey or the Monitoring the Future Survey. This table compares the Pride Survey with NHS.

The 1999-00 Pride Survey was released in a press conference September 5 at the National Press Club in Washington. Participating in the announcement were Gleaton and Dr. Donald Ian Macdonald, chairman and medical director of Employee Health Programs, and Gen. Barry R. McCaffrey, White House drug policy director.

Any Illicit Drug Monthly Use	
1999-2000 Pride	
vs. 1999 NHS	
Ages 12-17	
Age	12-17
PRIDE	13.8
NHS	9.0
Difference	-4.8

Responses from students in the following states were included in the survey: Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and West Virginia.

State breakouts are not available.