



# How to Talk to Teens about Substance Use

Presented By  
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# Learning Objectives

AFTER THIS SERIES, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

- talk to teens about the implications of substance use and the importance of prevention
- identify the warning signs of teen substance use



# Top 4 Substances Used by Youth



## Vaping

In 2024, **13.8%** of St. Clair County teens reported vaping use in the past 30 days



## Marijuana

In 2024, **11.6%** of St. Clair County teens reported using marijuana within the past 30 days



## Alcohol

In 2024, **10.7%** of St. Clair County teens reported drinking alcohol within the past 30 days



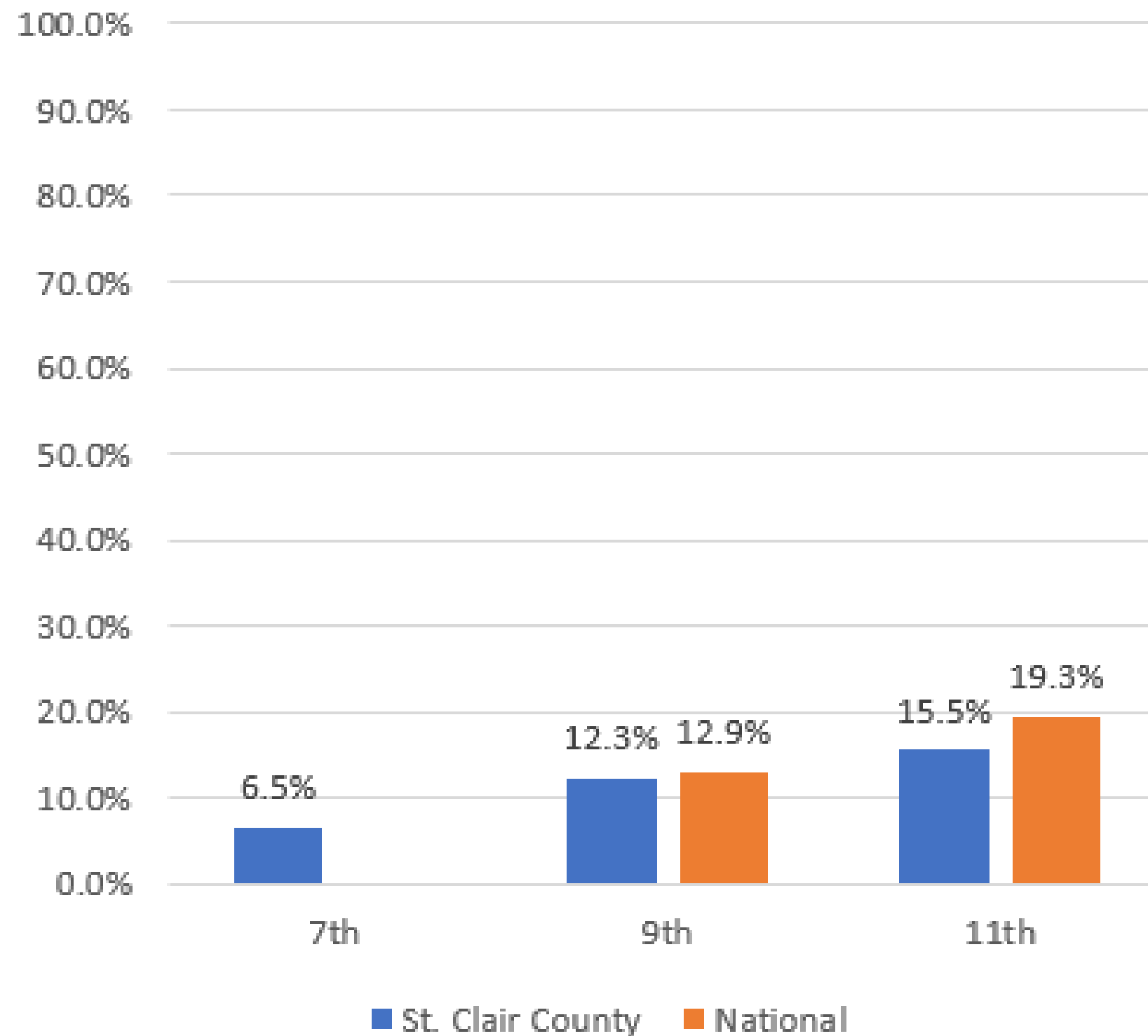
## Prescription Drugs

In 2024, **5.9%** of St. Clair County teens reported using prescription drugs that were not prescribed to them within the past 30 days



# Vaping

## Vaping - Past 30 Day Use

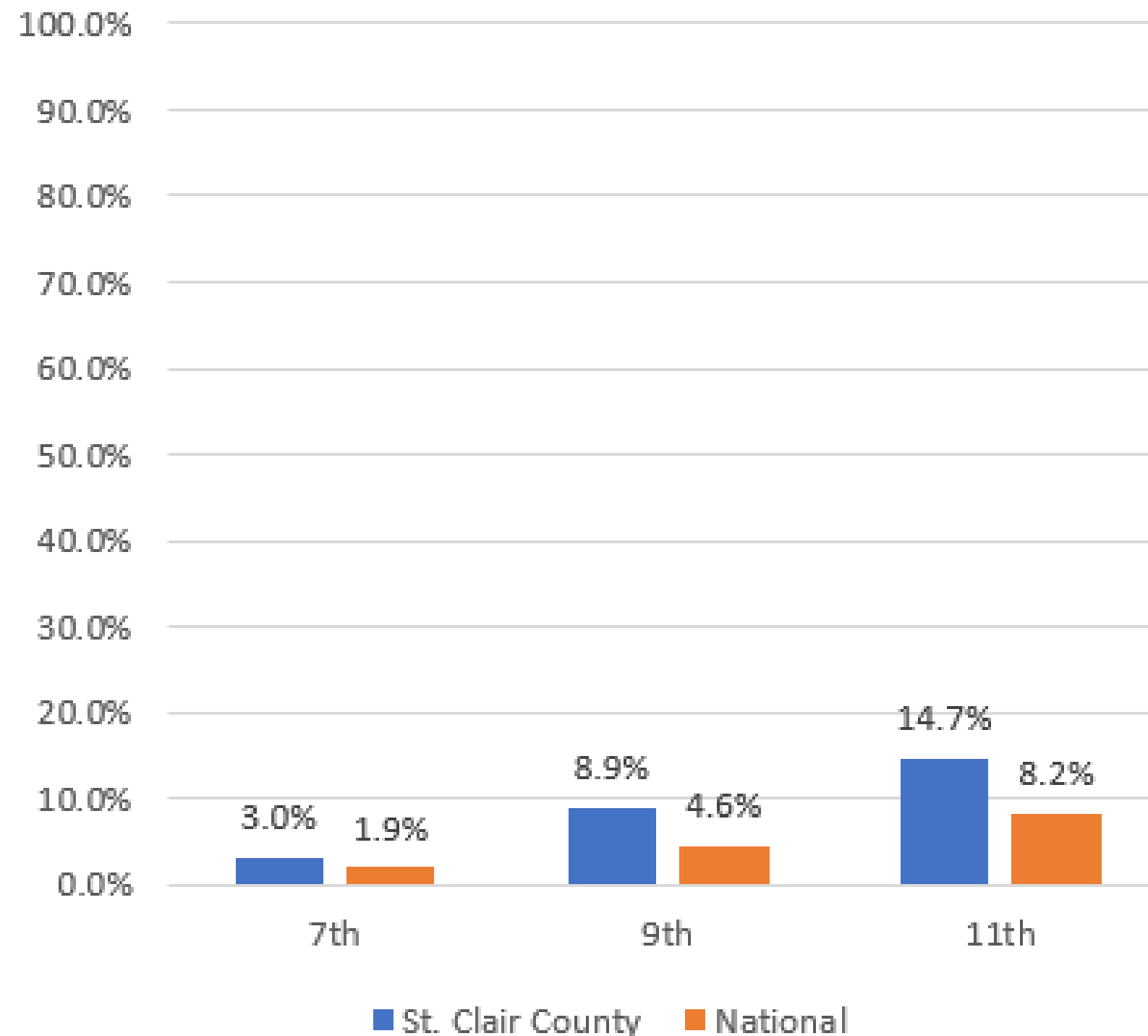


Source: MiPHY 2023-24 school year  
2023-24 PRIDE Survey



# Marijuana

## Marijuana - Past 30 Day Use

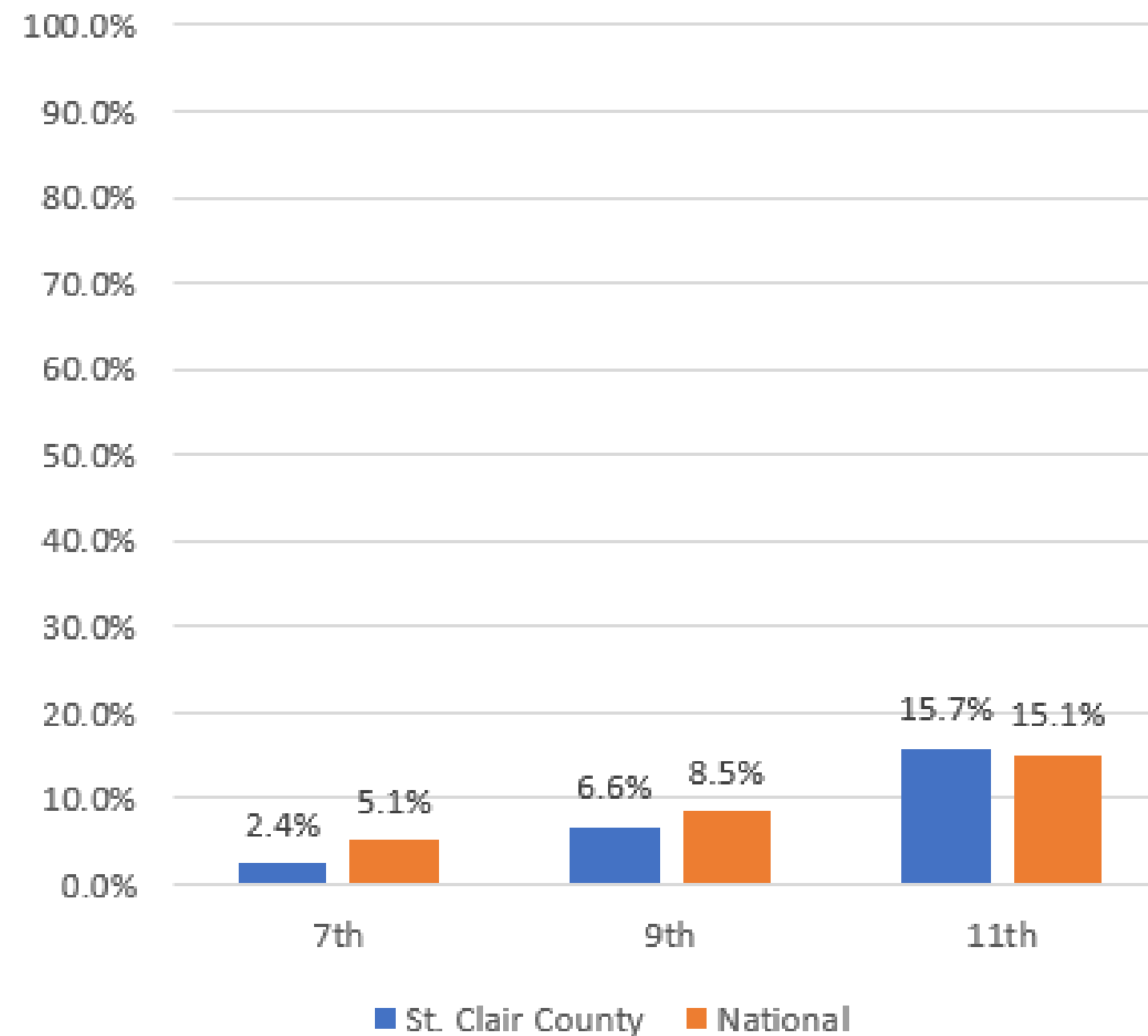


Source: MiPHY 2023-24 school year  
2023-24 PRIDE Survey



# Alcohol

## Alcohol - Past 30 Day Use

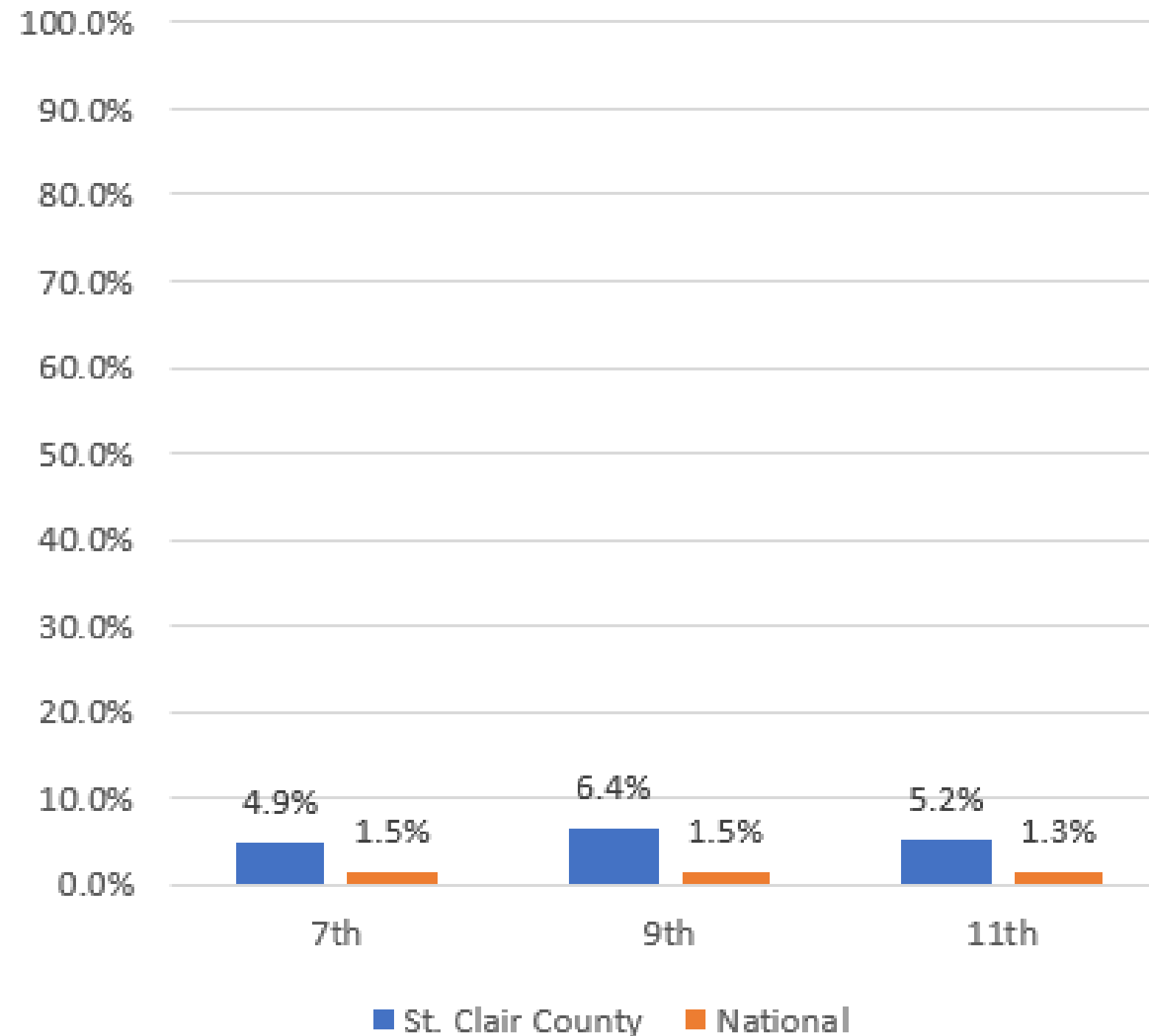


Source: MiPHY 2023-24 school year  
2023-24 PRIDE Survey



# Prescription Drugs

## Prescription Drugs - Past 30 Day Use

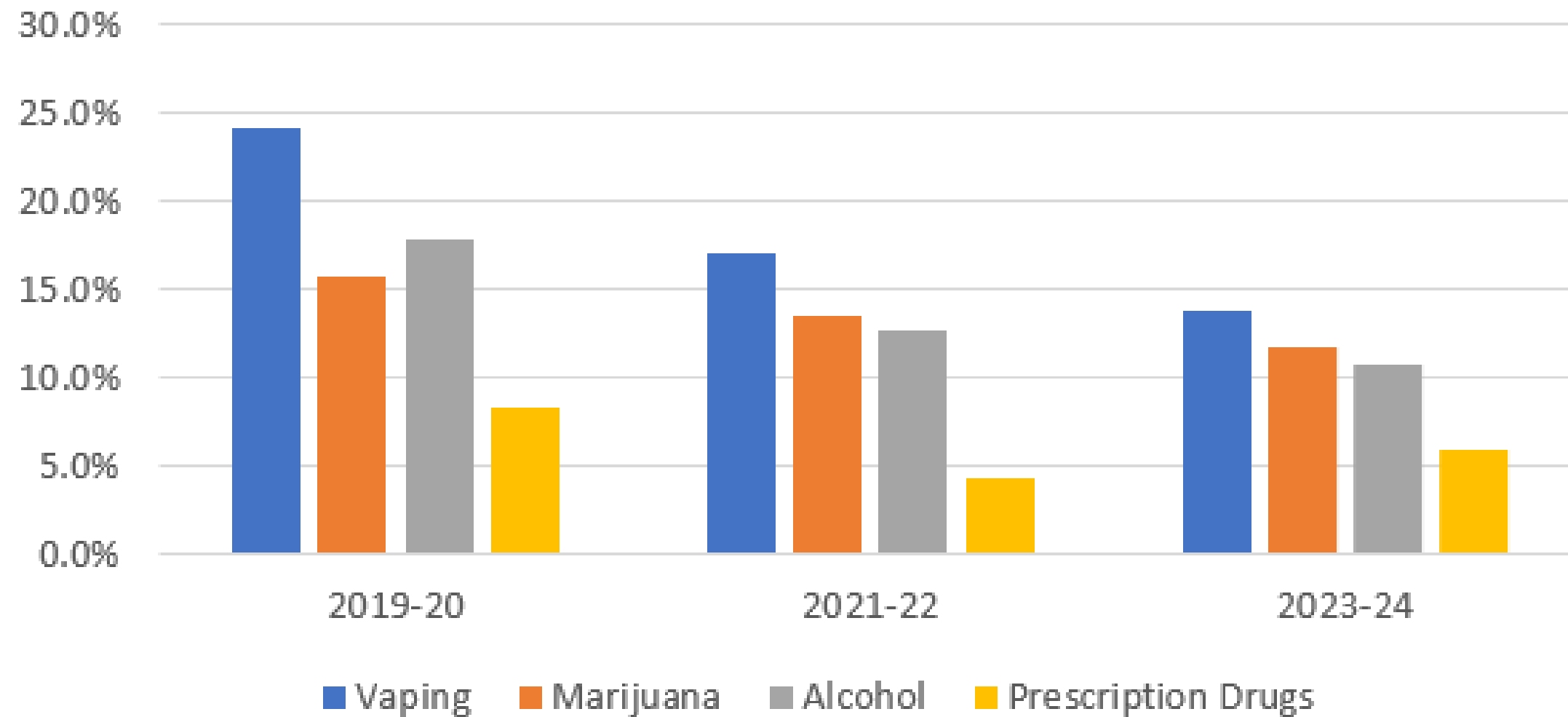


Source: MiPHY 2023-24 school year  
2023-24 PRIDE Survey



# Trending Data

## Substance Use Trends in St. Clair County Teens 2019-2024



Source: MiPHY 2019-2020, 2021-2022, 2023-2024 school years





# It's just "experimentation"

- 90% of addictions begin in adolescence
- Teens are more vulnerable than adults to developing addiction.
- Substance use can have long-term implications for the developing brain



Source: Drugfree.org (2024). Risk Factors for Addiction. Retrieved from: <https://drugfree.org/article/risk-factors-problem-use-addiction/>

Drugfree.org (2024). [Teen Brain Development - Partnership to End Addiction \(drugfree.org\)](https://drugfree.org/teen-brain-development-partnership-to-end-addiction/)



# Brain Development

## Prefrontal Cortex:

- Last to develop (not until mid-20s)
- Problem solving skills, time management, decision-making skills, reasoning, impulse control
- Over-active impulse to seek pleasure & less ability to consider consequences
- Substance abuse in adolescence can cause learning difficulties and long-term health problems in adulthood



**PARENTS: You're a bigger influence  
than you think.**



# Experts Say...

**“A strong bond with your child, especially during the teen years, helps reduce the chances of them engaging in unhealthy behavior and helps set the stage for preventing nicotine, alcohol and drug use.” -Partnership to End Addiction**

**“Parents have a significant influence in their children’s decisions to experiment with alcohol and other drugs.” -SAMHSA**

**“Keep in mind that teens say that when it comes to substances, their parents are the most important influence. That’s why it’s important to talk — and listen — to your teen. So, try to talk. A lot.” –Partnership to End Addiction**

Partnership to End Addiction. (2024). Connecting With Your Teenager to Prevent Drug Use. Retrieved from: [Connecting with Your Teenager - Partnership to End Addiction \(drugfree.org\)](#) Talk They Hear You SAMHSA. (Retrieved 2019). Why You Should Talk with Your Child About Alcohol and Other Drugs. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/talk-with-your-child-about-alcohol-drugs.pdf>



**“76.5% of St. Clair County students had a parent or other adult talk with them about what they expected them to do/do not do when it comes to alcohol or other drug use.”**



# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

ACE Questions	Percent of People With Each ACE		
	St. Clair County	Michigan	United States
How often did a parent or adult in your home ever swear at you, insult you, or put you down? (n=1,208)	40.8%	35.3%	34.4%
Before age 18, how often did a parent or adult in your home ever hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt you in any way? Do not include spanking. Would you say... (n=1,215)	19.5%	17.2%	17.9%
How often did anyone at least five years older than you or an adult, ever touch you sexually, try to make you touch them sexually, or force you to have sex? (n=1,205)	14.3%	10.7%	11.6%
Were your parents separated or divorced? (n=1,223)	26.7%	26.6%	27.6%
Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used illegal street drugs or abused prescription medication? (n=1,223)	37.8%	27.2%	27.6%
Did you live with anyone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal? (n=1,230)	25.9%	15.9%	16.5%
How often did your parents or adults in your home ever slap, hit, kick, punch, or beat each other up? (n=1,214)	19.6%	16.3%	17.5%
Did you live with anyone who served time, or was sentenced to serve time, in prison, jail, or other correctional facility? (n=1,227)	12.3%	7.8%	7.9%

Source: 2021 St. Clair County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)



**HAVE**

*multiple*

~~**TIME**~~

*ongoing*

**CONVERSATIONS***s*





# Starting the Conversation

- **Do not plan a special meeting**
- **Initiate a conversation when you and teen are relaxed and in a comfortable environment**
- **Take advantage of teachable moments**
  - **Movie/TV Show**
  - **Family or Friend Use**





# PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE



WITH MIKE & AMY



<https://youtu.be/fyRi9ceJ5qI>

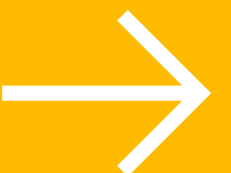


What are some other ways you can initiate a conversation about substance use?



# Making it a Success

- Sit and listen –  
anywhere/anytime
- Share your own life  
experiences (good or bad)
- Teach refusal skills on how  
to resist peer pressure



# Making it a Success- Refusal Skills

- Give a reason
- Be honest
- Be firm
- Use body language
- Suggest another activity
- Be prepared to say no again





# Making it a Success Cont.

- Resist urge to lecture
- Be mindful of any family history
- Talk about consequences
  - Health
  - Relationships
  - Activities



# Preventative Strategies

- **Know your teen's activities.** Pay attention to your teen's whereabouts. Find out what adult-supervised activities your teen is interested in and encourage him or her to get involved.
- **Establish rules and consequences.** Explain your family rules, such as leaving a party where drug use occurs and not riding in a car with a driver who's been using drugs. If your teen breaks the rules, consistently enforce consequences.
- **Know your teen's friends.** If your teen's friends use drugs, your teen might feel pressure to experiment, too.



# Preventative Strategies Cont.

- **Keep track of prescription drugs.** Take an inventory of all prescription and over-the-counter medications in your home.
- **Provide support.** Offer praise and encouragement when your teen succeeds. A strong bond between you and your teen might help prevent your teen from using drugs.
- **Set a good example.** If you drink, do so in moderation. Use prescription drugs as directed. Don't use illicit drugs.





# Risk Factors that May Contribute to Drug Use

- A family history of substance abuse.
- A mental or behavioral health condition, such as depression, anxiety or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Impulsive or risk-taking behavior.
- A history of traumatic events, such as seeing or being in a car accident or experiencing abuse.
- Low self-esteem or feelings of social rejection.





# Signs of Drug Use: Shifts in Mood & Personality

- Sullen, withdrawn or depressed
- Less motivated
- Silent, uncommunicative
- Hostile, angry, uncooperative
- Deceitful or secretive
- Unable to focus
- A sudden loss of inhibitions
- Hyperactive or unusually elated



# Signs of Drug Use: Behavioral Changes

- Changed relationships with family members or friends
- Absenteeism or a loss of interest in school, work or other activities
- Avoids eye contact
- Locks doors
- Disappears for long periods of time
- Goes out often, frequently breaking curfew
- Secretive with the use of their phone
- Makes endless excuses
- Often uses over-the-counter products to reduce eye reddening or nasal irritation
- Has become unusually clumsy: stumbling, lacking coordination, poor balance
- Has periods of sleeplessness or high energy, followed by long periods of “catch up” sleep
- Uses chewing gum or mints to cover up breath



# Signs of Drug Use: Hygiene & Appearance

- Smell of smoke or other unusual smells on breath or on clothes
- Messier than usual appearance
- Poor hygiene
- Frequently red or flushed cheeks or face
- Burns or soot on fingers or lips
- Track marks on arms or legs (or long sleeves in warm weather to hide marks)



# Signs of Drug Use: Physical Health

- Frequent sickness
- Unusually tired and/or lethargic
- Unable to speak intelligibly, slurred speech or rapid-fire speech
- Nosebleeds and/or runny nose, not caused by allergies or a cold
- Sores, spots around mouth
- Sudden or dramatic weight loss/gain
- Skin abrasions/bruises
- Frequent perspiration
- Seizures and/or vomiting





# COMMON EMOJI CODES

## FAKE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

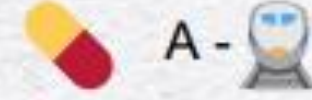
PERCOCET & OXYCODONE



XANAX



ADDERALL



## DEALER SIGNALS

DEALER ADVERTISING



HIGH POTENCY



UNIVERSAL FOR DRUGS



LARGE BATCH



## OTHER DRUGS

METH



HEROIN



COCAINE



MDMA & MOLLIES



MUSHROOMS



COUGH SYRUP



MARIJUANA





# Hidden Vape Activity













# Monitor – Products to Look For



Candy King Strawberry Watermelon Bubblegum Vape Juice 100ml

★★★★★ (526)

\$12.88

NEW



Pod Juice Rocket Pop Synthetic Vape Juice 100ml

\$13.88



NEW



Vaporesso GEN SE 80W Mod



Uwell Caliburn A3S 16W Pod Kit - Moonlight Silver

★★★★★ (400)

\$18.88



# Monitor – Products to Look For



MightySkins Skin for  
Kandy Pens Slim  
Battery with USB...

**\$14.99**



Stash Car Key Fob Remote  
Diversion Safe: FREE Smell/Odor  
Proof Bag Discrete Portable  
Storage Container To Hide Pills...

★★★★☆ 163

**\$11<sup>99</sup>** Typical: \$16.99



Diversion Water Bottle with 13.5oz  
Capacity - Ultimate Hidden  
Compartment for Travel, Beach, Car  
to Store Valuables like Jewelry,...

★★★★☆ 54

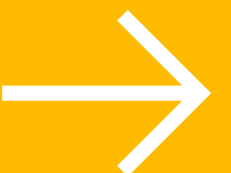
100+ bought in past month

**\$24<sup>99</sup>** Typical: \$26.99



# Common Places Substances are Concealed

- Inside drawers, beneath or between other items
- In small boxes or cases — think jewelry, makeup or pencil cases, or cases for earbuds
- Under a bed or other pieces of furniture
- In a plant, buried in the dirt
- In between or inside books
- Under a loose floor board
- Inside over-the-counter medicine containers (Tylenol, Advil, etc.)
- Inside empty candy bags such as M&Ms or Skittles



# Scenario

You find a disposable vape pen in your teenager's coat pocket when you are doing laundry. How do you react/handle the situation?





# What if you Find Something?

- Try to understand why
  - “What do you enjoy about..?”
  - “How does vaping make you feel?”
- Challenge children on their perceptions of norms
  - **86.2%** of St. Clair County High School students are **NOT** using vapes
  - **93.5%** of St. Clair County Middle School students are **NOT** using vapes



# States & National Resources

## **My Life My Quit (for youth under 18 yrs. old):**

**Text or Call “Start My Quit” to 1-855-891-9989**

- Includes resources on vaping and tobacco/nicotine
- Telephone/ online coaching
- Text/email communication available

## **This is Quitting (for teens and young adults):**

**Text “DITCHVAPE” to 88709**

- Free and anonymous text messaging program
- Incorporates messages from other young people who struggle/struggled with quitting e-cigarettes
- Send evidence-based tips and strategies on how to quit and stay quit

## **SAMHSA’s National Helpline (for anyone):**

**Call 1-800-662-HELP or text 435748**

- Free and confidential information services for people facing mental/substance use disorders
- Provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations



# Local Resources

## Teen Health (SCCHD):



**(810) 987-1311**

- Mental health / substance use prevention programming
- Mental health / substance use counseling
- STI testing/treatment and pregnancy testing

## Personal Health Clinic (SCCHD):

**(810) 987-5300**

- STI testing/treatment
- Syringe Service Program (SSP)
- Pregnancy testing
- Family planning services (birth control, sex education, etc.)

## Additional Resources:

- Region 10 Access Line (888) 225-4447
- Community Mental Health (810) 985-8900



# Contact Information

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# How to Talk to Teens about Substance Use

