Youth Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Usage

Smoking and secondary smoke have serious health consequences for people of all ages. However, tobacco use by young people is particularly problematic as earlier use is correlated with higher use later in life. Similarly, the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse indicates that teens who experiment with alcohol are “virtually certain” to continue using alcohol in the future. Youth alcohol consumption is also correlated with risky sexual activity, school dropouts, overdose deaths and suicides.4

From 2006 to 2007, over one-half of high school students reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days. Older students reported drinking at higher percentages (54–55%) than younger students (24–25%). Smoking was less prevalent but still a concern. Between 8% and 14% of high school students reported using tobacco in the past 30 days.

Percent of High School Students Who Have Used Alcohol and Tobacco in the Past 30 Days by Grade


Substance Abuse indicates that teens who experiment earlier use is correlated with higher use later in life. Similarly, the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse notes that 24% to 37% of San Joaquin County youth in grades 9 and 11 have used marijuana at some point in their lives. Lithium-based had been used by 9 - 14% of high school students while cocaine and methamphetamine had been used by 4 - 8% of 9th and 11th graders. Overall, drug use increased as the youth became older, except in the case of inhalants.

Summary

San Joaquin County children under age 18 had a high rate of health insurance coverages in 2005 (92%). However, only about 86% of the adults in the County had health insurance coverages, which is similar to the state. In 2007, 11% of adults answering the telephone survey and 24% of those-telephone respondents indicated they used the emergency department as their primary source of health-care. From 1997 to 2006, the percentage of San Joaquin County women receiving prenatal care during the first trimester was consistently lower than the state of California. Meanwhile, in 2006, teen births in the County were higher than the state. Some chronic diseases are more prevalent in San Joaquin County than the state of California such as diabetes and obesity. Additionally, obesity for both children and adults is a particular problem for the County. Moreover, these health conditions are emerging in a county where women have increasingly fewer resources to devote to health care costs as the region has been especially impacted by foreclosures and high housing costs.

San Joaquin County Community Health Assessment Collaborative (SJC HAC) In-Kind Contributors

Financial Contributors

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Percent of High School Students Who Have Ever Used Drugs, by Grade and Substance

Drug use is also linked to educational failure, family and social problems. Unfortunately, drug use is cyclical as children of drug users are more likely to use substances themselves.5

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Most adult residents (83-85%) in both San Joaquin County and California reported having health insurance coverage from 2001 to 2005. For children and youth (0-17 years), the percentage of coverage was 92% in 2005. Additionally, 95% of residents in San Joaquin County reported having medical information from a doctor or nurse in the fall of 2007.

**Housing Affordability and Foreclosures**

San Joaquin County was among the top three counties that had the highest foreclosure rates in the United States in the fall of 2007. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as costing no more than 35% of a household’s annual income. Spending more than 35% impacts residents’ ability to afford other basic needs such as health care and food. In 2007, 22% of San Joaquin County telephone survey respondents and 37% of face-to-face respondents reported spending more than 35% of their household income on housing costs.

**Health Insurance Coverage**

Health insurance is a crucial component of health care. In San Joaquin County and California, people with medical insurance can have a usual source of care and to receive adequate health care compared to those without insurance. Prevention and early detection of illnesses lead to better health outcomes for residents and monetary savings for the government, businesses and patients.

**Teen Births**

Teenage girls face a greater risk of delivering low birth weight babies than older mothers and their babies have a higher risk of morbidity and mortality. The National Center for Health Statistics and the California Department of Public Health report that in 2005, 13% of San Joaquin County births were to teens; this was a higher percentage than that of the State of California (9.1%). During the same year, only 90% of teen mothers (15-19 years) received adequate prenatal care in the County. The Healthy People 2010 Objective is that no more than 6% of births will be to women age 15 or younger.

In 2005, the same percentage of youth 1 - 17 in San Joaquin County and California had been diagnosed with asthma (16%). However, youth 0 - 17 years, the incidence of asthma among those with asthma (16%) compared to the state (17%).

**Diabetes**

Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, blindness, amputations, and as a leading contributor to strokes and heart attacks. An estimated 20.8 million people, or 7% of the population in the United States, had diabetes in 2005. The vast majority of U.S. residents who have diabetes have type 2 diabetes, previously called adult onset diabetes. The remaining 5 - 10% of U.S. residents have type 1 diabetes. People with type 1 diabetes must take insulin daily to survive but good self-management and care help control the disease and prevent complications.

**Asthma**

Asthma is a chronic respiratory condition characterized by breathlessness, sneezing, and chest tightness and has been recognized in the U.S. for at least 160 years. Asthma is the leading cause of activity restriction among children and is the second most common chronic childhood condition.

In San Joaquin County, 9% of adult residents had been diagnosed with asthma. In 2005, over 9% of adults in San Joaquin County had been diagnosed with diabetes compared to 7% in California. In 2005, 22% of children and teens (5 - 17 years) were overweight. In 2007, over 39% of adult telephone survey respondents reported being overweight while 26% reported being obese. Consuming five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables each day helps maintain good health and reduces the risk of type II diabetes, previously called adult onset diabetes. The remaining 5 - 10% of U.S. residents have type 1 diabetes. People with type 1 diabetes must take insulin daily to survive but good self-management and care help control the disease and prevent complications.

**Obesity and Nutrition**

Obesity is a growing public health concern in the United States.18 It is associated with diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and heart disease. Obesity is also a major risk factor for the leading cause of activity restriction among children and is the second most common chronic childhood condition.

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