

News Release

For release: Wednesday, August 16, 2006

Lancaster, Ohio—A 2006 survey of more than 2,500 tenth and twelfth graders, encompassing all Fairfield County public schools was conducted by the Fairfield County ADAMH Board, Family Adult and Children's First Council and the Fairfield County Drug Free Coalition. These results were presented at the Fairfield County Youth Summit on August 16, 2006. Results of the study suggest that frequent drug use among Fairfield County twelfth graders is on the decline. The study shows that frequent alcohol use among twelfth graders declined from 37.9% to 34.9% since 2004. Frequent Marijuana use also declined from a high of 18.8% in 2004 to 14.4% in 2006. Frequent use of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco and prescription drug abuse remained at similar levels between the two study periods.

The study further disclosed that alcohol and Marijuana in particular are easily obtained by local high school students with 65% of twelfth graders reporting that alcohol was very easy to obtain and 48% reporting Marijuana was very easy to obtain.

Richard Hunter, Ph.D. presented the results of a statistical modeling study conducted using Fairfield County data. He noted that Fairfield County students can be categorized into "no risk", "moderate risk" and "high risk" groupings. The moderate risk group accounted for approximately 28% of all students. This group was characterized as "weekend party goers". The high risk group accounted for approximately 24% of all surveyed students. Sub-categories of high risk students had varying levels of mental health and substance abuse problems. Virtually all high risk students exhibited significant signs of social withdrawal. Many were also sexually active.

Statistical modeling of 2006 Fairfield County data also shows that parents who establish and enforce rules, have a trusting relationship with their children, and provide opportunities for them to get involved in community and school activities can significantly influence whether or not their children engage in high risk behavior. Eighty-nine and nine-tenths (89.9%) of seniors indicated they had a trusted adult at home compared to 84% in 2004.

Dr. Michael Hogan, Director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and keynote speaker at the youth summit on August 16th, appreciated the degree of collaboration and concern about youth that is evident in Fairfield County. He further noted that “too many people just act on hunches rather than having solid data to support their efforts. These data reveal that in many ways Fairfield County is a healthy and safe place to raise children but a substantial minority of youth face serious challenges. These challenges need an improved response.”

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