Substance abuse is a severe issue challenging our county residents' current and future health and well being. In 2010, Washtenaw County Public Health and Washtenaw Community Health Organization published a report entitled “Community Focus - A Closer Look at Substance Abuse Issues in our Community.” The findings cover both Washtenaw and Livingston counties and include:

- Significantly fewer Washtenaw County youth report having parents who would feel substance use would be “very wrong,” compared to Livingston County youth.
- Washtenaw County youth were more likely than Livingston County youth to report initiating use of alcohol, marijuana, and cigarettes before age 13.
- Adult DUI arrest rates for Michigan and Livingston County decreased between 2000 and 2006, but increased 40% in Washtenaw County.
- Washtenaw and Livingston Counties had the highest rates of marijuana initiation during 2006-2008, compared to other Michigan counties and nearly all of the United States.

**HIP Year 2020 Health Objectives related to Substance Abuse:**

**Healthy Kids:**

- Reduce the proportion of high school students who smoked cigarettes during the past month from 5% to 2%.
- Reduce the proportion of high school students who had at least one drink of alcohol during the past month from 17% to 10%.
- Reduce the proportion of high school students who have used marijuana in the past month from 17% to 8%.
- Reduce the proportion of high school students who have ever taken prescription drug such as Oxycontin, Codeine, Percocet, Vicodin, or Tylenol III without a prescription from 5% to 2%.

**Healthy Adults:**

- Decrease the proportion of adults 18-29 years who binge drink from 23% to 14%.
- Reduce illicit drug use in adults 18-29 years from 15% to 7%.
Health Outcomes

From 2000 to 2009, the number of deaths associated with alcohol in Washtenaw County increased from 18 to 22 per year. Other drug-related deaths increased from 27 to 40 per year during the same time period. In 2005, drug-related deaths surpassed motor vehicle fatalities, peaking in 2006 at 54 deaths per year, as seen below.¹

Deaths due to alcohol, other drugs, and motor vehicle crashes
Washtenaw County residents, 2000-2009

Source: Michigan Department of Community Health and Washtenaw County Public Health

Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C infection, primarily associated with intravenous drug use, has increased in Washtenaw County young adults. The proportion of Washtenaw County Hepatitis C cases that were reported among young adults under aged 30 has more than doubled between 2006 and 2011, as seen below.²

Source: Washtenaw County Public Health – Communicable Disease Reports
**Health Factors**

**Health Behaviors**

**Alcohol Use**
Binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks on a single occasion at least once in the past month. As seen below, the percentage of Washtenaw County adults reporting binge drinking decreased by almost half, from 24% to 13% between 1995 and 2010.³

Heavy drinking is associated with a number of health issues, such as cirrhosis, cancers, and untreated mental and behavioral health needs. In Washtenaw County, 13% of adults aged 18 and older report heavy alcohol consumption (defined for men as two or more drinks per day or 14 or more drinks per week, and for women as one or more drinks per day or 7 or more drinks per week). This is lower than the state (17%) or the nation (15%).⁴

Nearly 20% of Washtenaw County high school respondents reported that they rode in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol at least once during the past 30 days.⁵
**Illicit and Prescription Drug Use**
Approximately 7% of Washtenaw County adults report that in the past year they used medicine, drugs, or other substances to get high without a prescription or with greater frequency or quantity than prescribed. These rates are somewhat high among younger adults, persons with “some college,” low-income adults, and Ann Arbor residents.\(^6\)

![Misuse of drugs/substances in past year](image)

Approximately 5% of Washtenaw County high school students and 15% of middle school students report misusing prescription drugs such as painkillers during the past 30 days.\(^7\) During January 2010-March 2012, there were, on average, seven emergency department admissions for opiate-related overdoses per month for Washtenaw County residents at University of Michigan Health System or St. Joseph Mercy Health System.\(^8\)

**Marijuana Use**
According to the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency (SAMHSA) National Surveys on Drug Use and Health, estimated rates of marijuana use in the past month increased slightly between 2006 and 2010 among Washtenaw and Livingston County residents. At the same time, the estimated percentage of residents who perceive that monthly marijuana use can cause “great risk” to the user declined somewhat, as presented below.

![Washtenaw/Livingston substate region estimates of marijuana use and perceptions](image)

Clinical Care

Substance Abuse Treatment
Approximately 5% of Washtenaw County adults say their drug use has interfered with their home or work life. The only consistent data available for treatment services are those for publicly funded programs. In 2012, there were 693 public treatment admissions in Washtenaw County. Males and younger, white adults comprise the majority of these admissions.\(^9\) Together, alcohol and heroin or other opiates account for nearly 80% of all primary substances mentioned as cause for admission.\(^{10}\)

Over time, the average age for publicly-funded substance abuse treatment admissions in Washtenaw County has decreased. For prescription drug treatment admissions, the average age was 32 in 2005 and 30 in 2012. For illicit opiates, the average age was 34 in 2005 and down to 31 in 2012. The same is not true for alcohol, marijuana, or stimulant-related treatment admissions. The proportion of publicly-funded substance abuse treatment admissions for heroin increased 40% between 2006 and 2011.\(^{11}\)

Emergency Room Visits
Between April of 2011 and June of 2012, there were approximately 398 emergency room admissions associated with unintentional, non-therapeutic drug overdoses among Washtenaw County residents. Of those, 235 were for heroin and other opiates, hallucinogens, depressants, and steroids. In fact, nearly half (46%) of all these admissions were for heroin and other opiates.\(^{12}\)

Social and Economic Factors
According to the Washtenaw County 2010 HIP Survey, younger adults (19%), persons with “some college” (14%), lower-income residents (11%), Ann Arbor residents (13%), and students (9%) all report higher rates of illicit drug use than the county on average (7%). In addition, younger adults (9%), students (7%), white adults (6%), and females (6%) are more likely to report heavy drinking than county residents overall (4%).

Physical Environment
The number of liquor stores in Washtenaw County is slightly lower than in the state as a whole, but higher than in the nation. Washtenaw County has a liquor store establishment rate of 12 per 100,000 residents; the state rate is 15 per 100,000 and the nation 10 per 100,000.\(^{13}\)
Data Sources:
2 Washtenaw County Public Health Communicable Disease Program.
9 Michigan Department of Community Health, Bureau of Substance Abuse & Addiction Services, Statistical Report for Fiscal Year 2012, Primary Substance Reported at Admission by County.
10 Michigan Department of Community Health, Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration, Bureau of Substance Abuse and Addiction Services, Statistical Report for Fiscal Year 2012, Treatment Demographics.
11 Washtenaw Community Health Organization, internal communication 2012.