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JOINT RELEASE

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**National 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) results released**

*Alaska youth less likely to smoke, but more likely to chew tobacco*

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today released the results from the 2009 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Results are based on the 16,410 high school students that were randomly selected from across the country to represent high school students nationwide. In addition, results from 42 states and 20 cities that conducted separate YRBS surveys (including Alaska) can be found at [www.cdc.gov/yrbss](http://www.cdc.gov/yrbss).

“One piece of good news for Alaska is that our teen smoking numbers have decreased over the years to the point where they are now below the national average,” said Patty Owen, YRBS coordinator for the state. “Alaska youth are still more inclined to use smokeless tobacco than their national counterparts, which is a challenge we continue to face.”

The data indicate progress in many areas, but show the need for continued resolve in combating some unhealthy behaviors.

“Dating violence, although just slightly higher than the national average, is unacceptable at any level,” Owen said. “We’re pleased to see the progress made in many areas, and committed to continuing our work where the numbers show we need to improve.”

**KEY FINDINGS:**

In general the prevalence of risk behaviors of Alaska high school students was very similar to youth nationally.

The following are **statistically significant differences** between Alaska and U.S. youth. *(In statistics, a result is called **statistically significant** if it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. "A statistically significant difference" simply means there is statistical evidence that there is a difference; it does not mean the difference is necessarily large, important, or significant in the common meaning of the word. For the purposes of the 'Alaska 2009 and United States 2009 Results' document, comparisons for which the p-value is .05 or smaller are considered statistically significantly different from one another.)*

(more)

## **In 2009, Alaska high school students were:**

### **Tobacco**

- less likely to smoke cigarettes than U.S. students (16 percent AK vs. 20 percent U.S.)
- less likely to smoke on 20 or more days during the past 30 days than U.S. students (5 percent AK vs. 7 percent U.S.)
- more likely to use chewing tobacco, snuff or dip than U.S. students (14 percent AK vs. 9 percent U.S.)

### **Injury**

- more likely to wear a bicycle helmet than U.S. students (73 percent AK vs. 85 percent U.S. rarely or never wore a bike helmet)
- less likely to ride with a driver who had been drinking alcohol than U.S. students (21 percent AK vs. 28 percent U.S.)

### **Teen Violence**

- less likely to have been in a physical fight in the past year than U.S. students (28 percent AK vs. 32 percent U.S.)
- more likely to have carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property on at least one day than U.S. students (8 percent AK vs. 6 percent U.S.)
- more likely to have been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the past year than U.S. students (13 percent AK vs. 10 percent U.S.)
- more likely to have ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse (when they did not want to) than U.S. students (10 percent AK vs. 7 percent U.S.)

### **Alcohol and other Drugs**

- less likely to have ever drunk alcohol during their life (67 percent AK vs. 73 percent U.S.) or to have had a drink of alcohol before the age of 13 compared to U.S. students (17 percent AK vs. 21 percent U.S.)
- less likely to have drunk alcohol in the past 30 days than U.S. students (33 percent vs. 42 percent U.S.)
- more likely to have tried marijuana before the age of 13 than U.S. students (10 percent AK vs. 8 percent U.S.)
- more likely to have used marijuana once or more times during their life than U.S. students (45 percent AK vs. 37 percent U.S.)

### **Sexual Behavior**

- more likely to have used both a condom and birth control pills or Depo-Provera before last intercourse (among student who were sexually active) than U.S. students (14 percent AK vs. 9 percent U.S.)

### **Diet and Physical Activity**

- less likely to eat fruits and vegetables five or more times a day (17 percent AK vs. 22 percent U.S.)
- less likely to drink 100 percent fruit juices than U.S. students (77 percent AK vs. 81 percent U.S.)
- less likely to drink soda or pop (non diet) at least one time per day than U.S. students (20 percent AK vs. 29 percent U.S.)
- less likely to attend physical education classes in an average week (46 percent vs. 56 percent) or daily physical education than U.S. students (18 percent AK vs. 33 percent U.S.)

For more information on Alaska YRBS with new special features visit:

<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/school/YRBS.htm>

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