



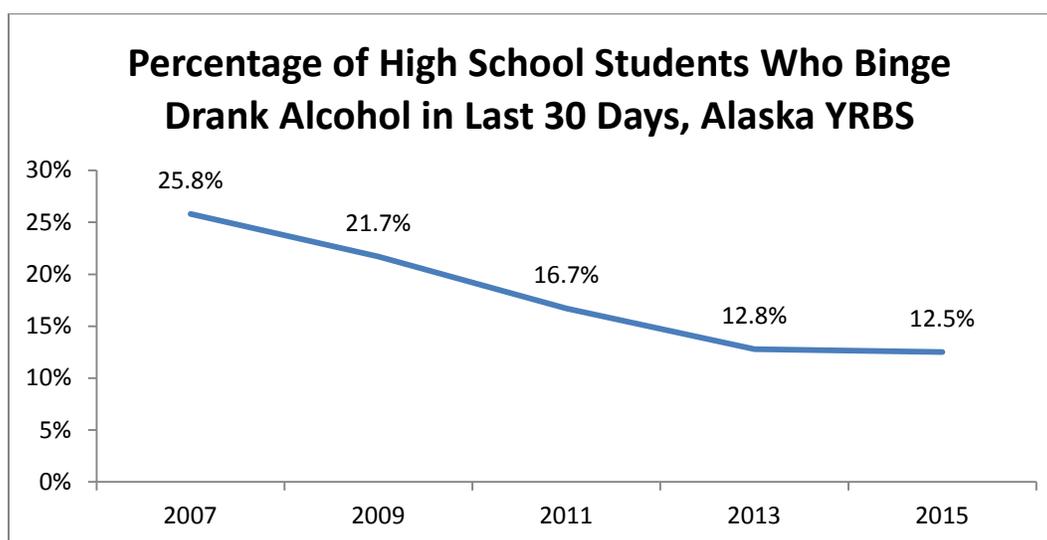
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Alaska high school students are smoking and drinking less

Statewide survey helps prioritize how best to support youth

ANCHORAGE — Every two years, the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services participates in a nationwide survey of high school students. In 2015, students across Alaska reported declines in smoking, substance use, riding with an impaired driver, sexual activity, and fighting, compared to a decade ago.



However, not all measures indicate improving health status. More students said they felt sad, and avoided school because they felt unsafe on their way or at school. Some questions were new in 2015, including questions about e-cigarette use; 18 percent of Alaska high school students reported using e-cigarettes.

“Teens tell us the reality of their lives through this survey”, DHSS Commissioner Valerie Davidson said. “We’re able to see where we need to focus our limited resources to best support our young people in making healthy choices.”

The nationwide Youth Risk Behavior Survey, developed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is anonymous, voluntary, and conducted with parental consent. Several of the health indicators address health priorities in the state’s health improvement plan, [Healthy Alaskans 2020](#). Led jointly by DHSS and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Healthy Alaskans 2020 brings together many partners and communities across Alaska to set goals and strategies to maximize Alaskans’ health.

The complete YRBS data is available at
dhss.ak.local/pub/home/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/yrbs.aspx.

For more information on Alaska's strategies to prevent underage drinking, please visit
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dbh/Documents/Prevention/UnderagedrinkingUpdated.pdf>.

If you or anyone you know is in crisis, is grieving or just really needs to talk, contact Alaska's suicide prevention and help line: Careline, 1-877-266-4357 (HELP). Call any time, or text 4help to 839863 most evenings. For information on risk factors, warning signs and more, visit
carelinealaska.com.

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