SAMHSA’s Current and Future Direction for Prevention in Higher Education

Rich Lucey
Special Assistant to the Director
SAMHSA’s Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
richard.lucey@samhsa.hhs.gov

Illinois Higher Education Center
March 11, 2015
Strategic Initiatives

1. Prevention of Substance Abuse and Mental Illness
2. Health Care and Health Systems Integration
3. Trauma and Justice
4. Recovery Support
5. Health Information Technology
6. Workforce Development
Strategic Initiative #1 - Prevention of Substance Abuse and Mental Illness

1.1 Promote emotional health and wellness, prevent or delay the onset of and complications from substance abuse and mental illness, and identify and respond to emerging behavioral health issues.

1.2 Prevent and reduce underage drinking and young adult problem drinking.

1.3 Prevent and reduce attempted suicides and deaths by suicide among populations at high risk.

1.4 Prevent and reduce prescription drug and illicit opioid misuse and abuse.
Focus on several populations at high risk, including:

- College students
- Transition age youth, especially those at risk of first episodes of mental illness or substance abuse
- American Indian/Alaska Natives
- Ethnic minorities experiencing health and behavioral health disparities
- Service members, veterans, and their families
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals
Trends in Alcohol Use among Youth and Young Adults

Past-month alcohol use by 12- to 20-year-olds

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings.
Rates of alcohol use by 18- to 22-year-olds attending college full time compared to those attending part time or not enrolled

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*. 

![Bar chart showing rates of alcohol use by college attendance status.](chart.png)
Marijuana – Changing Landscape

- Softening of public attitudes
- Changes in state and local laws
- Falling perceptions of risk
- Increased use

Softening of public attitudes
Marijuana: Link Between Use and Mental Illness

Associated with mental health disorders such as: depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts among adolescents

Impairs short-term memory, judgment and motor coordination and causes slowed reaction time

Marijuana effects the release of dopamine in the brain, creating a “HIGH”

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings.
Mental Health of College Students

In the past 12 months:

- 44.6 percent of college students felt things were hopeless.
- 30.8 percent felt so depressed it was difficult to function.
- 51 percent felt overwhelming anxiety.
- 55.6 percent felt very lonely.
- 35.6 percent felt overwhelming anger.
- 7.5 percent seriously considered suicide.
- 1.4 percent attempted suicide.

Source: American College Health Association (Fall 2014)
Suicide among Youth

Age 15-24: 2nd leading cause of death, behind accidents
Preventing Suicide

- At-risk youth and adult populations
- Integrated approaches
- Healthcare system emphasis
- Follow-up of attempted suicides/suicidal crises
- Zero suicides goal
- Public awareness/knowledge
SAMHSA’s Efforts to Curb Prescription Drug Abuse

- Partnerships for Success grants
- Prescription Drug Monitoring Program grants
- Prevention of Prescription Abuse in the Workplace (PAW) Technical Assistance Center
- Promotion of DEA’s national take-back days
- Not Worth the Risk, Even If It’s Legal (pamphlet series)
- Opioid Overdose Prevention Toolkit
First place ($60,000) – Syracuse University
  - BeWise – interactive website re: alcohol poisoning

Second place ($30,000) – University of Central Florida
  - Expectancy Challenge Alcohol Literacy Curriculum – mobile app

Third place ($10,000) – University of Tennessee
  - Alcohol and You – Online module for all first-year students

http://collegestudentdrinking.challenge.gov/
Behavioral Health Among College Students
Information and Resource Kit

Sections include:
• Introduction and Overview
• Alcohol Use, Abuse, and Underage Drinking
• Alcohol Access, Availability, and Norms
• Illicit Drug Use and Nonmedical Use of Medications
• Tobacco Use
• Mental Health Issues
• Selected Web-based Prevention Resources
• PowerPoint slides (with speaker notes)
Core Resources

- [www.stopalcoholabuse.gov](http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov) – Website of federal resources on underage drinking prevention
- [www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov) – National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
- [www.thenetwork.ws](http://www.thenetwork.ws) – Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues
- [www.collegesubstanceabuseprevention.org/index.html](http://www.collegesubstanceabuseprevention.org/index.html) - Coalition of Higher Education Associations for Substance Abuse Prevention
- ED’s Safe and Supportive Learning Environment Technical Assistance Center – includes focus on institutions of higher education ([http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/](http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/))
Questions and Discussion