

# Key Findings from the 2018 Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors

Partners in Prevention (PIP) is Missouri's higher education substance abuse consortium dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses. The coalition is comprised of 21 public and private college and universities in the state. The campuses in the coalition work to lower high-risk behaviors by implementing strategic plans for prevention which include evidence-based strategies. These strategies include education, social norming campaigns, policy review and enforcement, and the implementation of approaches to address the riskiest behaviors on campus. To measure progress and obtain data needed for the implementation of programs, PIP created the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB) Survey. The MACHB is an annual, online survey that has been implemented each spring since 2007. The survey assesses the role that alcohol, drugs (illegal and prescription), tobacco, interpersonal violence, and mental health issues have on student health and wellness.

## The following are key findings from the 2018 MACHB

### Alcohol Use

Seventy-five (75%) of Missouri college students report using alcohol in the past year, and 63% report using in the past month. The percentage of students who report binge-drinking (consume 5 or more drinks in a two hour period) at least once in the past two weeks declined to 25% in 2018 from 27% in 2017 and is below the national average of around 38%. Of students who binge-drink, approximately 7.1% are frequent binge drinkers, defined as binge-drinking 3+ times in the past two weeks.

### Underage Alcohol Use

While alcohol is illegal for those under age 21, 66% of underage Missouri college students report consuming alcohol in the past year and 23% of underage students report binge-drinking in the past two weeks. The majority of students (71%) report that they first started drinking before age 21. Underage students report that they obtain alcohol in a variety of ways, the most common being from an over 21 friend or from family members.

### Concerning Alcohol-Related Behaviors and Consequences

One of the most concerning behaviors regarding alcohol use among the college population is drinking and driving. Of Missouri college students, 16% report driving after drinking at least once in the past year and 21% report riding in a car with someone who had been drinking at least once in the past year. However, only 0.5% of students report being arrested for DUI/DWI in the past year. Other concerning consequences of alcohol use include having a hangover (49%), being hurt or injured (9.3%), engaging in risky sexual behavior (13%), being forced or coerced to drink more (12%), experiencing a "blackout" or memory loss (25%), and having alcohol poisoning (4.6%) at least once in the past year.\* On average, students will pay \$1,000 for a DWI offense and \$1,500 per night for a hospital stay related to alcohol poisoning or injury.

\*Answer is select all that apply\*

### Marijuana

Marijuana is the most commonly used drug by Missouri college students after alcohol. Approximately 31% of

students have used marijuana in the past year, and of those, 9.9% use at least once per week. Of students who report using, 44% report driving after using marijuana at least once in the past year. Interestingly, the majority of students (90%) perceive that their peers have used marijuana at least once in the past year, while the reality is that 69% of students have not. It is important to correct these misperceptions as it can help lead to behavior change.

## Illegal and Prescription Drugs

Illegal and prescription drug use are of concern among college students and are associated with adverse academic and health outcomes. Approximately 8.6% of students report using at least one illegal drug (not including marijuana) in the past year. Usage rates of various illegal drugs are below. Missouri college students report use at the following rates: hallucinogens: 5.1 %, cocaine: 4%, and heroin: 0.4%.

Approximately 11% of Missouri college students report prescription drug use without a doctor's prescription in the past year. Of those students, 36% have combined them with alcohol at least once and 30% report driving after use. While not all prescription drugs impair driving, many common prescription drugs can cause reactions that may affect an individual's ability to drive. Usage rates of various prescription drugs areas follows: stimulants: 6.4%, pain medications: 4.2%, benzodiazepines/sedatives: 2.6%, and sleeping medications: 1.5%.

## Tobacco

Most Missouri college students (75%) have not used any tobacco products in the past year. Of the 25% of students who have used, the most common forms of tobacco used are cigarettes (13%), e-cigarettes (13%), cigars (8.1%), and hookah (7.2%). Among all Missouri college students, 78% believe that their university should have smoke-free outdoor areas and 82% would prefer to go to a bar or restaurant that is completely smoke free.

## Interpersonal Violence

Approximately 21% of Missouri college students have experienced non-consensual sexual contact in their lifetime, and 7.6% have experienced it in the past year.

Of all sexual assaults, 36% occurred while the student was attending their current college or university. The majority of assaults occurred on-campus (37%) or off-campus and not related to university events (60%). In the past year, 15% of students have experienced abuse in a relationship (e.g. verbal, physical, psychological, etc.) and 7.9% of students report being stalked. The most common forms of stalking include via social networking, cell phone, and showing up at a residence or place of work.

## Well-Being and Mental Health

Approximately 30% of Missouri college students report experiencing stress that is overwhelming or unbearable and that it impacts their academic life (27%) and personal life (35%) more than moderately. The most common sources of stress are academics (92%), financial concerns (58%), and future plans (54%).\*Missouri college students self-report experiencing issues related to mental health, the most common being major depression (27%), anxiety (52%), panic attacks (25%), and chronic sleep issues (19%). Of students who report experiencing a mental health concern, 36% did not seek assistance, and among all students approximately 11% do not feel that they can go to anyone on campus when personal concerns arise.

In the past year, 20% of students have had suicidal thoughts and 1.8% attempted suicide. For those who had thoughts or attempts, 35% have sought assistance. Additionally, 42% of Missouri college students have been concerned about a friend having suicidal thoughts or exhibiting behaviors.

\*Check all that apply\*

## Positive Behavior Changes

While these data are concerning, it is important to point out encouraging trends as well. The rate of students who report drinking and driving continues to decline (16% in 2018 vs 24% in 2013), as does the rate of students who have ridden with a drinking driver (21% in 2018 vs 30% in 2013). The binge drinking rate statewide has decreased from 2017 (27% to 25%), and underage drinking (25% to 23%) and underage binge-drinking have also declined (68% to 66%). The rate of students who use prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription has also declined in the past few

years (11% vs 15% in 2013). More students than ever are not using tobacco products (75%) and of those who use, most do not use every day. Students also indicate that they are interested in completing an online suicide prevention training at higher rates than ever (54% in 2018 vs 50% in 2017) and are more likely to bring up the topic of suicide with a friend (64% in 2018 vs 62% in 2017) and refer friends to resources (83% in 2018 vs 82% in 2017)

## Summary

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Partners in Prevention continues to work to change the high-risk behaviors of college students on Missouri campuses using prevention that is balanced, comprehensive, evidence-based, evaluated, and a

shared responsibility. By using a variety of approaches such as social norming campaigns, individual interventions, environmental management, and more, our partner institutions across the state are able to impact students and create healthier and safer environments. For more publications of our data from the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors please visit [pip.missouri.edu/research.html](http://pip.missouri.edu/research.html).

To request a campus specific research brief, please visit [garners.wufoo.com/forms/x8qe6kz0jvzjb0/](http://garners.wufoo.com/forms/x8qe6kz0jvzjb0/)

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