



**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

## Media Release

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### **State Will Release Survey on Youth Alcohol and Drug Use at Stakeholder's Meeting**

Results of the 2007 Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment Survey (APNA) will be presented at a meeting of the Arkansas Alcohol and Drug Abuse Coordinating Council at 10:00 am, Wednesday, October 15 in Room 151 at the Arkansas State Capitol.

The survey is a comprehensive look at alcohol and drug use by Arkansas youth across the state. A total of 88,040 students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 from 208 of the 245 Arkansas School Districts from across the state participated in the 2007 survey. Data reports are generated at the state, region, county, school district and building levels. The survey results create a community planning tool that contains valuable data on the local level statewide that can be used to implement alcohol and drug abuse programs tailored to specific communities and their needs.

APNA has been conducted annually since 2002 and 27 Arkansas school districts have voluntarily participated all six years. This participation has provided the respective communities with trend data on those students who completed the survey in 2002 as 6<sup>th</sup> graders and are now 12<sup>th</sup> graders in 2008.

Similar to medical research that has identified risk factors for heart disease and other health problems, the APNA survey uses the Risk and Protective Framework to identify risks factors defined by social scientists that place young people in danger of developing the problem behaviors of substance abuse, delinquency, violence, teen pregnancy and school drop out. They have also identified a set of protective factors that help to buffer the harmful effects of risk.

**Research has shown that as risk factors are reduced and protective factors are increased, academic performance improves.** The premise of the risk and protective factor model is that in order

to promote positive youth development and prevent problem behaviors, it is necessary to address those factors that predict the problem behaviors. Four domains of risk and protection are evaluated: community, family, school, and peer/individual factors. Comparisons can be made between youth in Arkansas and youth from a nationally representative seven-state sample developed by researchers at the University of Washington, School of Social Work.

The APNA survey is conducted with federal funds from the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, (SAMSHA), US Dept. of Health and Human Services. The contract awarded for the 2007 APNA Student Survey was awarded to International Survey Associates (ISA) of Bowling Green, Kentucky in the amount of \$207,365. According to Doug Hall, ISA President, Arkansas is one of less than five states where communities have available this degree of local data, even down to specific building level within a school district.

**2007 APNA Survey highlights include:**

- The age of first use of alcohol in Arkansas is younger than the national average (12.6 vs. 13.2 years).
- The largest antisocial problem among Arkansas youth appears to be with binge drinking with 13.6% binge drinking at least once in the past two weeks.
- Arkansas youth report overall lower levels of risk and equal levels of protection factors than youth in the 7-state norm. Overall, this is a very positive finding for Arkansas.
- The most commonly used substances are alcohol (45.6% of survey participants have used at least once), cigarettes (30% have used), smokeless tobacco (14.8%), marijuana (15.5%), and inhalants (13%).
- 57.3% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders perceive that 5 or more drinks once or twice per weekend DOES NOT place users at “great risk”.
- Students who participated in the survey began using cigarettes before using any other substance. Of the youth that used, average age of first use was 12.1 years.

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