

WHY SCHOOL-BASED PREVENTION?

Substance use is hurting children, adults, families and communities in La Porte and across the state.



In Indiana, an adult is now more likely to die from a drug overdose than a car accident. In 2017, more than 1,700 Hoosiers – and 116 La Porte County residents – died of a drug overdose between 2012 and 2017.



12,500 Hoosiers die prematurely each year from a smoking-related illness, and 151,000 Indiana children who are now under the age of 18 will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.

In addition to the loss of human life, the substance use crisis comes at a high economic price to Indiana.

Annually, tobacco use costs Indiana nearly \$8.3 billion, and according to recent estimates from the Indiana University Kelley School of Business, the opioid epidemic costs the state an additional \$4.3 billion in economic damages.

Research shows that substance use often begins in middle school and worsens through high school.

By their senior year of high school, 18 percent of students nationwide report having used a prescription drug for a non-medical reason. Nationwide, nearly 90 percent of smokers start by age 18. In 2018, seniors at North Central (Cass, Elkhart, Fulton, Howard, Kosciusko, La Porte, Marshall, Miami, St. Joseph, Tipton, and Wabash Counties) high schools, 8 percent reported smoking cigarettes; 24 percent reported using e-cigarettes; 25 percent reported drinking alcohol; 16 percent reported using marijuana; and 4 percent reported misusing prescription drugs in the past 30 days. What's more, research shows that substance use in adolescence increases the likelihood of addiction later in life – a problem that is made even more urgent by high rates of fatalities from drug overdoses and smoking-related illnesses in Indiana.

School-based prevention is an effective long-term strategy to stop substance use and save lives. Schools have an opportunity to address this public health issue and put their students on a path for success in school and beyond.

Schools in La Porte have an opportunity to equip students with skills that not only help them avoid drugs but can also help improve their academic achievement, attendance, classroom behavior and social and emotional well-being. These programs can also help reduce bullying and violence.

Principals, teachers and other educators care deeply about their students. Of the schools that do not have

evidence-based programs in place, many cited insufficient time during the school day and lack of funding as key barriers to implementation. **Schools need support to find the prevention program that works best for their students as well as the adults in their school buildings.**

Proven prevention programs equip students with skills that not only help them avoid drugs but also help improve their academic achievement, attendance, classroom behavior and social and emotional well-being.

Through **Partners in Prevention**, the Healthcare Foundation of La Porte (HFL) will award up to \$2.8 million to La Porte County Schools for planning and three years of implementation grants to reduce students' substance use. The initiative will give all eligible schools the opportunity to access funding and connect with prevention experts who will provide free, step-by-step guidance to help 1) identify the proven prevention program that best meets the needs of each applicant's students, staff and school environment and 2) develop a plan for sustainable implementation. **School leaders can feel confident knowing the programs they select can and will work.**

If we can prevent La Porte County's young people from experimenting with substance use, we can stem the addiction crisis and improve the well-being of these students now and into adulthood.

Visit hflaporte.org/partnersinprevention/ to learn more.

Examples of Evidence-Based Success **FOUR SAMPLE PROGRAMS AND THEIR IMPACT***



PAX GOOD BEHAVIOR GAME

PAX Good Behavior Game, or PAX GBG, is a classroom-behavior management strategy for elementary school, generally first or second grade, designed to reduce aggressive, disruptive behavior. The program is delivered through a classroom game played ten minutes each day. Studies of the program find reductions in aggressiveness and disruptive classroom behavior, especially for highly aggressive males. These reductions persist into middle school. By middle school, students who received the program have also been shown to be 66 percent less likely to initiate use of heroin, crack and cocaine. Longer-term studies find that by the time students who participated in the program in first or second grade were 19-21 years old, they were 50 percent less likely to have drug abuse or dependence disorders, 68 percent less likely to smoke and, among initially aggressive males, 32 percent less likely to engage in violence or criminal behavior. When enhanced with additional components related specifically to academic achievement, the program has been found to increase the likelihood of graduating high school by 18 percent and attending college by 41 percent.



LIFESKILLS TRAINING

LifeSkills Training, or LST, is a classroom-based program for middle school students. It teaches personal self-management skills, social skills and resistance skills specifically related to substance use and is taught in 30 classroom sessions of 30-45 minutes over three years. Multiple studies, across a variety of school settings, find consistent impacts on substance use and other behaviors as well. For example, one study found students who participated in the program were 28 percent less likely to smoke after a six-year follow-up, 66 percent less likely to use marijuana after a three-year follow-up and 50 percent less likely to report binge drinking in one- and two-year follow-ups, relative to similar students who did not participate in the program. In addition, these studies have found that the program led to a 32 percent drop in delinquency and 26 percent drop in fighting in a three-month follow-up. Long-term impacts have also been shown for methamphetamine use, hallucinogen use and illicit drug use, including use of narcotics like heroin and misuse of prescription drugs, as well as risky sexual behaviors and risky driving.



POSITIVE ACTION

Positive Action is a curriculum-based program for elementary and middle school that teaches self-control, communication and decision-making strategies and is designed to improve academic achievement, school attendance and problem behaviors like substance use, aggression and dropping out. It requires 15 minutes per day to deliver. Studies across multiple settings have found the program leads to not only reductions in substance use outcomes but also improvements in academic outcomes as well. For example, one study found that by fifth grade, students who received the program saw 15 percent lower absenteeism, 21 percent higher performance on state reading tests and 51 percent higher performance on state math tests, in addition to 47 percent reductions in tobacco use, 47 percent reduction in alcohol use and 73 percent reduction in use of illegal drugs like marijuana and cocaine. These studies find substantial impacts on bullying, violence and disciplinary referrals and suspensions as well.



PROJECT TOWARDS NO DRUG ABUSE

Project Towards No Drug Abuse, or TND, is a classroom-based program for high school that teaches students self-control, communication and decision-making. It is taught over 12 40-minute classroom sessions. Studies of the program find students who participate in the program saw a 27 percent reduction in cigarette use, 22 percent reduction in marijuana use and 25 percent reduction in hard drug use, which includes cocaine, hallucinogens, stimulants, inhalants and other substances. In addition, studies find that students who participate in these programs are 21 percent less likely to carry weapons and 23 percent less likely to be victims of violence.

*Descriptions and review of evidence comes from summaries from Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development and SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices.