

UNDERSTANDING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT HEALTH PRIORITIES: SCHOOL PERSONNEL PERSPECTIVES

OVERVIEW:

The West Virginia Prevention Research Center at WVU and WV schools share the goal of creating environments for teens that facilitate lifelong health. We want to work with schools to understand students' health priorities and factors that influence successful implementation of health programs in schools.

MAIN QUESTIONS:

What are school personnel's perceptions of the health priorities of WV high school students? What are the factors that contribute to successful implementation of health and risk reduction programs in schools?

STUDY:

We asked WV superintendents, high school principals and assistant principals, school nurses and other high school personnel to complete a short survey in order to better understand the health needs of WV's high school students. They also provided information about what factors are most important when they implement health programs for students. 120 respondents from 43 counties completed the survey.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Although we reported the top five health priorities identified by school personnel, there are many others that impact students' lives. Health programs are most easily implemented when they align with the goals and mission of schools and are flexible to students' and schools' needs.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We would like your feedback on what you think of these results. If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions, please contact:

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SPOTLIGHT ON RESULTS

- The top five health priorities for high school students were illegal drug use, alcohol use, bullying or intimidation, sexual health issues, and misuse of prescription drugs.
- 120 high school personnel from 43 WV counties responded to the survey. 10.5% were superintendents, <1% other administrators, 8.6% principals, 18.2% assistant principals, 6% teachers, and 59.1% school clinical providers. All eight RESAs are represented.
- Responded represented schools with an average enrollment of 854 students. Average dropout rate was 4% and graduation rate was 76%.
- Most health programs are suggested by principals, teachers, and superintendents. The least likely ways health programs are considered are via research journals or from researchers.
- The factors most important to health program implementation are the potential health benefits to students, proven effectiveness through research, total amount of time required for implementation, ability for the program to be modified for the needs of the students/school, and ensuring the program is consistent with the academic mission.