



PRESS RELEASE

FRANKLIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Commissioners Presented with Report on Student Health and Wellness

July 17, 2018 – Chambersburg, PA – Every two years, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) conducts a state-wide survey of students in 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th grades to gain insights on their behavior, attitudes and knowledge of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and violence. The Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) gathers data to inform school administration, state agency directors and legislators of trends critical to the health and wellness of Pennsylvania students. The survey also assesses risk factors for substance use and violence as well as protective factors that guard against them. Locally, the data is used to plan prevention and intervention programs. Schools can tailor their programs and priorities based on the district-specific report findings.

In 2017, approximately 75% of students in Waynesboro, Greencastle-Antrim, Fannett-Metal, Tuscarora and Chambersburg participated in the survey. Christy Unger of Healthy Communities Partnership presented the results of the 2017 Franklin County PAYS data to the Franklin County Commissioners this morning.

“Our children are our future. This survey gives us a glimpse into their daily lives and suggests things we can do to promote their health, safety and general well-being. The healthier and safer our children are the more successful they will be in school and the brighter their futures -- and the future of our county -- will be,” said Commissioner Chairman Dave Keller.

The results show youth strengths as:

- Decline in use of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco
- Slight decline in high school alcohol use
- No increase in marijuana use
- More than 8 of every 10 students are involved in pro-social activities
- Extremely low rates of heroin use

The PAYS data also shows areas that need improvement:

- Vaping is increasing among youth and many youth are unsure of what they are vaping
- Alcohol use – Alcohol continues to be the most used substance. Over 10% of seniors report being drunk or high while at school.
- Prescription narcotic use is higher than the state average.

“This is important information. The community needs to hear this, parents need to hear this. Together, we can direct resources to where they need to go with these survey findings,” said Commissioner Bob Thomas.

Franklin County youth report strong family attachment and family pro-social involvement, as well as strong belief in ‘the moral order,’ factors that protect against youth engaging in risky

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behaviors. Conversely, the highest risk factors include youth not feeling bonded to their neighborhoods, and large numbers of youth report permissive parental attitudes toward drug and alcohol use. Also of concern is an increase in symptoms of depression in Franklin County students.

Ms. Unger urges parents to speak to their children about substance use when they are young—especially alcohol and tobacco because clear parental expectations is shown to make a difference in a child's decision-making. Commissioner Ziobrowski thanked the presenters for the hard work that Healthy Communities Partnership is doing to make our community better.

If you are interested in getting involved in local prevention efforts, contact Christy Unger at Healthy Communities Partnership at (717) 264-1470 or Christy.hcp@gmail.com. For more information on 2017 PAYS, please visit: [http://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Pages/Pennsylvania-Youth-Survey-\(PAYS\)-2017.aspx](http://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Pages/Pennsylvania-Youth-Survey-(PAYS)-2017.aspx).

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