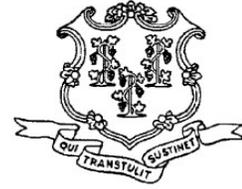


# News



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Family, social support vital in protecting youth from risky behavior**

Results of 2007 Connecticut School Health Survey now available

**Hartford** – New survey data continue to demonstrate the importance of families in helping youth avoid risky behaviors. Connecticut youth who have supportive adults in their lives are less likely to consider suicide, drink alcohol, smoke tobacco, use drugs, or experience sexual activity.

“There are very encouraging signs for Connecticut coming out of this survey, including an increase in seatbelt use since 1997, a decrease in drinking and driving, and a decrease in the use of inhalants,” said Department of Public Health Commissioner J. Robert Galvin, M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A. “Many risky behaviors are linked, with students who report they are current cigarette smokers are more likely to be involved in other risk behaviors, including sexual activity, dating violence, drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana.”

State Department of Education Commissioner Mark K. McQuillan, Ed.D., noted that while many students reported involvement in risky behaviors, such as smoking or drinking, the survey provides evidence that parental involvement has a strong influence on students’ behaviors.

“This survey tells us that the attention and concern of caring adults makes a difference in teenagers’ lives,” said Commissioner McQuillan. “Parents and teachers can have a great deal of influence on young people in making positive choices in their lives.”

“Students who say that their parents usually know they are,” he pointed out, “are approximately 30% less likely to drink alcohol, binge drink, have sex, or be depressed and 50% less likely to smoke cigarettes, experience dating violence, smoke marijuana, attempt suicide, or have no post high school plans in comparison to students who report that their parents rarely know where they are,” he stated, noting that schools across the state, in addition to teaching the required courses, deal with such social issues daily.

New issues addressed in the survey include gambling, computer use, and sleep. When asked if they gambled for money or possessions in the past year, 32.0% of students said yes. Males were more than twice as likely to have gambled in the past year (45.2%) as compared to females (18.7%). Twenty-six percent of students report using a computer for other than school work three or more hours per day, and only 21.1% report getting 8 or more hours of sleep a night.

Connecticut administers the survey in two sections:

- The Youth Tobacco Component (YTC) is a comprehensive survey of tobacco use, access, cessation, knowledge and attitudes, and exposure among Connecticut students in grades 6-12;
- The Youth Behavior Component (YBC) is intended to monitor priority public health risk behaviors that contribute markedly to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. The YBC survey questions include topics such as school environment, alcohol & drug use, dietary behaviors, sexual behaviors, physical activity, unintentional injuries and violence, and positive life influences and behaviors that contribute to healthy decision making.

In 2007, 4,356 youth completed the YTC, achieving a 70.8% response rate in middle schools and 65.8% response rate in high schools. Also, 2,072 youth completed the YBC in 2007, achieving a 61.1% response rate. Both components met the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) criteria to be considered representative of high school students in Connecticut (and middle school students for the YTC).

To view more results from the Connecticut School Health Survey please visit <http://www.ct.gov/dph/> - search word CSHS.

*The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph) or call (860) 509-7270.*

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