

# SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON REGION'S NEEDS ASSESSMENT

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Youth Marijuana Prevention & Education Program

In 2012, Washington State passed Initiative I-502 legalizing the production, processing, and sale of MJ for adults 21 and older. Washington State legislature allocated a percentage of tax funds to the Department of Health for a marijuana education and public health program. Part of this I-502 directive was a grants program for local community agencies to support development and implementation of coordinated intervention strategies for the prevention and reduction of marijuana use by youth (ages 12-20). The Southwest Region, consisting of Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat counties, is one of nine regions funded for the Youth Marijuana Prevention and Education Program. The Southwest region was initially defined by the Department of Health as Clark and Skamania Counties, and Klickitat County was added in the fall of 2017 with the expectation that all three counties are served with this grant.

This regional needs assessment was conducted through the Prevent Coalition Youth Now Prevention Initiative, in partnership with Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat County stakeholders.

### **Assessments began from April 2016 and June 2017 included:**

1. *Analysis of the Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) data.*
2. *A stakeholder survey regarding community priorities and needs. These findings were essential to developing effective strategies to meet the challenges in Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties as well as the statewide goal to reduce initiation and use of youth marijuana use.*

By examining the HYS data in conjunction with the gaps and needs identified in the stakeholder survey, it was clear that the highest risk factors involve issues that crossed demographic and behavioral characteristics.

Both analyses clearly established that marijuana use affects all communities in the region, and identified **three priority populations affected by youth marijuana use:**

1. *Youth who perceive no or low risk of harm from regular marijuana use*
2. *Youth who report marijuana is easy to get*
3. *Youth who report having Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)*

Each priority population described above was assessed further to identify strongly correlated risk and protective factors. Early initiation of marijuana use (at age 14 or younger) and favorable attitudes towards drug use were two top risk factors associated with all three priority populations.

The findings of this needs assessment supported the development of a five-year Strategic Plan (2017-2022) and informed strategies to reduce initiation and use of marijuana by youth in the tri-county region. Proposed strategies include educating youth and parents, supporting marijuana school policy development, and building capacity with trainings on current research and gaps. This assessment process is ongoing in conjunction with the strategic planning process to meet the ever-changing needs of youth in our region. As this report is shared with community leaders, it is important to consider the role of resilience and cross-sector strategies in primary prevention and continue capturing local conditions to assess the best opportunities for community-based prevention efforts.

**See the stats** —>

# IN 2016, 10TH GRADERS WERE SURVEYED ABOUT MARIJUANA USE AND BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS



said they view marijuana use does very little to no harm



said they have easy access to marijuana



said they currently use marijuana

## OF ALL SW REGION 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS:

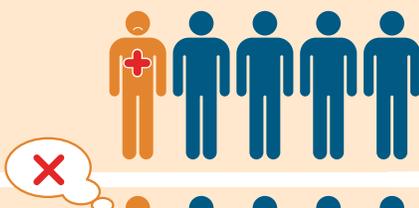
**HOWEVER,** when **STRESSORS** are present, youth marijuana use goes UP 

**1 in 3** is depressed  
35%



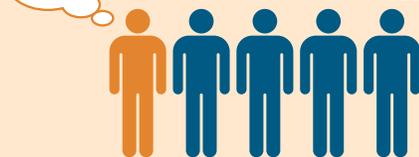
**24%** of **depressed** 10th graders use marijuana

**1 in 5** is physical abused  
21%



**24%** of **physically abused** 10th graders use marijuana

**1 in 5** considered suicide  
20%



**28%** of 10th graders **considering suicide** use marijuana

**1 in 7** lacks adult support  
14%



**28%** of 10th graders **lacking adult support** use marijuana

**1 in 10** attempted suicide  
9%



**34%** of 10th graders who have **attempted suicide** use marijuana