

FACING ADDICTION IN AMERICA

The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

KEY FINDINGS: PREVENTION PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

- Well-supported scientific evidence exists for robust predictors (risk and protective factors) of substance use and misuse from birth through adulthood. These predictors show much consistency across gender, race and ethnicity, and income.
- Well-supported scientific evidence demonstrates that a variety of prevention programs and alcohol policies that address these predictors prevent substance initiation, harmful use, and substance use-related problems, and many have been found to be cost-effective. These programs and policies are effective at different stages of the lifespan, from infancy to adulthood, suggesting that it is never too early and never too late to prevent substance misuse and related problems.
- **Communities and populations have different levels of risk, protection, and substance use. Well-supported scientific evidence shows that communities are an important organizing force for bringing effective EBIs to scale. To build effective, sustainable prevention across age groups and populations, communities should build cross-sector community coalitions which assess and prioritize local levels of risk and protective factors and substance misuse problems and select and implement evidence-based interventions matched to local priorities.**
- Well-supported scientific evidence shows that federal, state, and community-level policies designed to reduce alcohol availability and increase the costs of alcohol have immediate, positive benefits in reducing drinking and binge drinking, as well as the resulting harms from alcohol misuse, such as motor vehicle crashes and fatalities.
- There is well-supported scientific evidence that laws targeting alcohol-impaired driving, such as administrative license revocation and lower per se legal blood alcohol limits for adults and persons under the legal drinking age, have helped cut alcohol-related traffic deaths per 100,000 in half since the early 1980s.
- As yet, insufficient evidence exists of the effects of state policies to reduce inappropriate prescribing of opioid pain medications.

*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) summarizes strength of evidence as: “Well-supported”: when evidence is derived from multiple controlled trials or large-scale population studies; “Supported”: when evidence is derived from rigorous but fewer or smaller trials; and “Promising”: when evidence is derived from a practical or clinical sense and is widely practiced.

Executive Summary, Full Report, and other details available at www.addiction.surgeongeneral.gov