

## KEY FINDINGS OF THE 2009 PARTNERSHIP/ METLIFE FOUNDATION ATTITUDE TRACKING STUDY (PATS)

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America / MetLife Foundation Attitude Tracking Study (PATS) shows an increase in teen abuse of drugs and alcohol for the first time in decade. The national study also highlights the critical need for parents to take immediate action as more teens are using alcohol, Ecstasy and marijuana.

### **PATS 2009 - Teens -- Key Findings:**

After a decade of consistent declines in teen drug abuse, in which methamphetamine use dropped by over 60 percent, and past-month alcohol and marijuana use were reduced by 30 percent, the 2009 study points to **marked upswings** in use of drugs that teens are likely to encounter at parties and in other social situations.

#### Increases in usage:

The number of teens in grades 9-12 that used **alcohol** in the past month has grown by **11 percent**, (from 35 percent in 2008 to 39 percent in 2009),

Past year **Ecstasy** use shows a **67 percent increase** (from 6 percent in 2008 to 10 percent in 2009),

Past year **marijuana** use shows a **19 percent increase** (from 32 percent in 2008 to 38 percent in 2009).

#### Teens' attitudes:

The percentage of teens agreeing that "**being high feels good**" increased significantly from 45 percent in 2008 to 51 percent in 2009.

Those saying that "**friends usually get high at parties**" increased from 69 percent to 75 percent over the same time period.

The study found a significant drop in the number of teens agreeing strongly that they "**don't want to hang around drug users**" - from 35 percent in 2008 to 30 percent in 2009.

#### No change in Rx and OTC usage:

Teen abuse of **Rx medicines** has remained stable with about 1 in 5 teens in grades 9-12 (**20 percent**) or 3.2 million reporting abuse of a prescription medication at least once in their lives.

1 in 7 teens (**15 percent**) or 2.4 million teens reporting abuse of a **prescription pain reliever** in the past year and **eight percent** or 1.3 million teens reported **OTC cough medicine** abuse in the past year.

More than half, or 56 percent, of teens in grades 9-12 believe Rx drugs are easier to get than illegal drugs.

62 percent believe most teens get Rx drugs from their own family's medicine cabinets.

63 percent believe Rx drugs are easy to get from their parent's medicine cabinet, up significantly from 56 percent just last year.

### **PATS 2009 - Parents -- Key Findings:**

20 percent of parents say their child (ages 10-19) has already used drugs or alcohol beyond an "experimental" level.

Among parents of teens ages 14-19, that percentage jumps to 31 percent, nearly one third.

Of those parents of teens who have used, **nearly half (47 percent) either waited to take action or took no action at all.**

### **PATS 2009 - Other Trends in Teen Smoking and Drug Use:**

Teen smoking rates have remained stable with 25 percent of teens reporting smoking cigarettes in the past month.

Teen inhalant use remains steady at 10 percent for past year use, yet only 66 percent of teens report that "sniffing or huffing things to get high can kill you," significantly less than the 70 percent of teens who agreed just last year.

Steroid and heroin use among teens remains low at 5 percent for lifetime use.

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Partnership/MetLife Foundation Attitude Tracking Study 2009