

Alcohol and Drug Abuse



This document provides an update to information in the Community Action Network (CAN) Prescription For Wellness released in April 2001 and "Frequently Asked Questions About Alcohol and Drug Abuse," released in November 2002. All data included is the most current available.

Highlights

Alcohol and drug abuse in Travis County affects people from all walks of life. Substance abuse imposes high costs on individuals, families, employers, taxpayers and society, and continues to be a primary factor contributing to crime, reduced workforce productivity, human suffering and loss of lives.

Alcohol and drug abuse imposes heavy social and economic costs to communities. The total economic costs of alcohol and drug abuse in Texas were estimated at \$25.9 billion for 2000. Alcohol abuse cost an estimated \$16.4 billion (63%), while drug abuse or dependency accounted for \$9.5 billion (37%). According to TCADA's *Substance Abuse Prevention Framework and FY 2005*

Services Recommendations, Texas spent more than \$2 billion in health care costs associated with drug and alcohol abuse in 2000; lost productivity due to alcohol and drugs cost Texas \$11.2 billion that same year. **On a per capita basis, the 2000 amount translates to \$1,244 per man, woman, and child in the state or \$10,881,728 in Travis County based on 2004 population projections** (Economic Costs of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Texas-2000, TCADA December 2002).

Addiction is a treatable, chronic disorder

Treatment for alcohol, drug abuse and addiction reduces the need for social, medical and criminal justice systems while strengthening families and helping individuals become healthy and productive citizens. The earlier an alcohol or drug problem is impacted, the greater the benefits and savings (TCADA). Effective treatment is less costly than incarceration and expensive hospitalization (National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIDA).

Positive elements do exist. Current prevention, intervention and treatment services do work and are reducing some of the overall human and economic impacts of substance abuse on Travis County. Successful prevention, intervention and treatment are supported by evidence-based practices, and when incorporated into our service system, ensure accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of services.

Overview

The cost to Travis County for incarcerating people charged with/ convicted of drug or alcohol offenses is roughly \$15 million a year and expected to increase as a result of Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA)* cuts in treatment. (Travis County Justice and Public Safety, Research and Planning). In September 2004, Austin Recovery reported a decrease in state funding of \$739,990 from the previous year with a projected impact on 1,834 individuals and a loss of 19.4 slots across program areas. Phoenix Academy reported a loss of 22 Day Treatment slots for youth and 20 residential slots for the same time period. *TCADA became a part of the Department of State Health Services (www.dshs.state.tx.us) on September 1, 2004.

169,721 (27%) adults living in Travis County reported alcohol problems and 88,586 (14%) reported drug problems in 2001. (TCADA: 2000 Texas Survey of Substance Abuse Use Among Adults).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

Q: How does alcohol and drug abuse affect us?

Public Health:

- **Health risk factors related to alcohol and drug abuse disorders include heart disease, stroke, hypertension, some forms of cancer and unintentional injuries which result in death** (www.emedicinehealth.com/articles/19039-1.asp).
- Serious mental illness is highly correlated with substance dependence or abuse (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA: Office of Applied Studies)
- In Texas in 2003, 41% of persons testing positive for hepatitis C (HCV) were exposed through injecting drug use.
- As of 2003, the cumulative HIV/AIDS count in Travis County was 5,030. When surveyed, 35% of 420 females living with HIV/AIDS and 22% of 2,341 males living with HIV/AIDS reported substance abuse (Austin/Travis County Health & Human Services Department, April 2004)
- During 2001 in Travis County, there were 716 motor vehicle alcohol or drug abuse injury crashes; an increase of 39 since 1999. These crashes resulted in 1168 non-fatal injuries and 35 deaths (TCADA: Substance Related Motor Vehicle Accidents, Travis County).
- In the year 2002, 444 alcohol and drug related deaths were reported in Travis County (Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, TCADA).

Alcohol and Drug Related Deaths in Travis County - 2002

Alcohol Related Deaths In Travis County

	Total Alcohol Related Deaths	Direct Alcohol Related Deaths	Indirect Alcohol Related Deaths
Adult/Youth			
2000	321	75*	246
2002	331	57*	274

Drug Related Deaths In Travis County

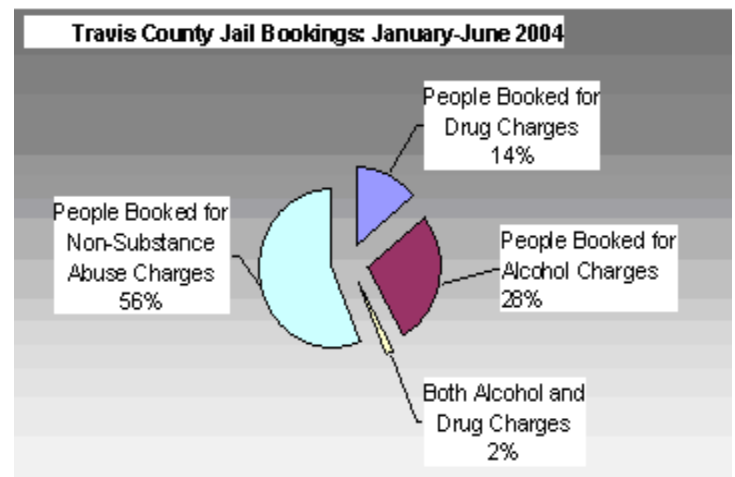
	Total Drug Related Deaths	Direct Drug Related Deaths	Indirect Drug Related Deaths
Adult Only			
2000	94	74	20
2002	113	95	18

*Adult only

Source: Raw Data from 2000 Texas Department of Health Vital Statistics, analyzed by TCADA

Public Safety

- From January through June 2004, there were 27,366 people with 43,226 charges booked into the Travis County Central Booking Facility. **Of these, 44% (11,822) people had a substance abuse related charge**, such as public intoxication, driving while intoxicated, possession of marijuana, and manufacture/delivery/sale/possession of controlled substances (Travis County, Criminal Justice Planning)



Source: Corrections Management System (CMS)

Domestic Violence

- In 3 out of 4 cases of domestic violence, the victim reported that alcohol or drugs had been a factor and **parental alcohol and drug abuse causes or contributes to 7 out of 10 child abuse or neglect incidents and ¾ of all foster care placements** (TCADA).

Mental Health

- **In the United States, about 4 million of the 17.5 million adults with serious mental illness in 2002 also were dependent on or abused alcohol or an illicit drug; they had a co-occurring substance abuse and mental disorder.** Among adults with co-occurring disorders, only 12% received both mental health and specialty substance use treatment. (SAMHSA, 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

- A recent survey by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism revealed that around 9% of Americans abuse alcohol. It found that 4.2% or two million Americans meet the criteria for a drug use disorder. **20% of people with a substance abuse disorder also have a mood or anxiety disorder.** (CNN)

Q: How many people are affected?

- Nationally between 2000 and 2001, youths using drugs between the ages of 12-17 increased from 9.7% to 10.8%, and the percentage of adults age 18-25 increased from 15.9% to 18.8% (2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, NHSDA).

Austin is a major polydrug (multiple) usage area (Austin, TX: Profile of Drug Indicators- July 2004, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Drug Policy Information)

Q: What are the substances being used by individuals seeking treatment?

- Self-reporting upon admission indicated use of amphetamines, cocaine (powder), crack cocaine, downers, hallucinogens, heroin, other opiates, and marijuana (The Gulf Coast Addiction Technology Transfer Center, The Center for Social Work Research, School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin, *Substance Abuse Trends in Texas, December 2003, February 2004*).
- Of the 2,272 adults admitted to TCADA funded substance abuse treatment facilities in Travis County during 2002, 46% (1,052) had a primary problem with alcohol, 30% (679) with either heroin or crack cocaine, 9% with marijuana, and 7% with powder cocaine (TCADA-Funded Programs Clients, Travis County, 2002).
- During 2002 in Travis County, there were 301 youth admissions to substance abuse treatment facilities. 92% (277) of those admissions noted marijuana use as the primary problem and 3% (9) noted alcohol use as the primary problem (TCADA-Funded Programs Clients, Travis County, 2002).
- **According to the Austin American-Statesman (October 3, 2004), area heroin deaths are higher than any year in more than 12 years** (Travis County Medical Examiner's Office).

Q: What is treatment?

- **Treatment is the planned, structured and organized array of services designed to initiate and promote a person's sobriety and to maintain the person free of alcohol or illegal drugs.** (TCADA Strategic Plan 2003-2007, Executive Summary)
- Types of state funded treatment services include detoxification services, residential treatment services, outpatient treatment services, and recovery maintenance services. Some services are targeted at special populations, including women and children, adolescents, injecting drug users and those with both psychiatric and substance use disorders. (2002 Annual Report TCADA)

Q: Does treatment work?

- Treatment reduces drug use by 40-60%; reduces crime by 40-60%; and increases employment prospects by 40% (NIDA).
- Drug treatment is as successful as treatment of diabetes, asthma and hypertension (NIDA).

The current capacity to treat individuals who need and desire treatment is inadequate to meet the demand for services. **Lengthy waiting time for treatment slots results in increased harm, reduced motivation for treatment and greater likelihood for increased crime. In Travis County, the wait time for residential services is five to six months for the adult population (both for the general population and the offender/probation population) and one to two months for outpatient services. Youth are waiting from two to three months for residential beds.** (Substance Abuse Planning Partnership, SAPP)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

Q: Does prevention work?

- Effective prevention programs are cost effective. For every \$1 spent on drug use prevention, communities can save \$4 to \$5 in costs for drug abuse treatment and counseling (Pentz, M.A. "Costs, Benefits and Cost Effectiveness of Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention" NIDA Research Monogram).
- **A child who reaches age 21 without smoking, abusing alcohol or using drugs is virtually certain never to use tobacco, alcohol, or abuse drugs** according to Joseph Califano, Jr., President and Chairman of Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse.
- Nationally, middle and high school students-past year and past month use declined 7% according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), 2003 Monitoring the Future Survey.
- The Travis County Underage Drinking Prevention Program conducted over 500 alcohol awareness/anti-DWI presentations to students in seven school districts as well as youth groups and private schools in FY 2002, a 25% increase over FY 2001. Other local agencies collaborating in this effort are local police departments, non-profit agencies, colleges and universities.

Q: How do people get help?

- National hotline for alcohol and drug information and/or treatment resources in our local community: 1-800-662-HELP M-F 9-3 and Sat and Sun 12-3
- Statewide hotline for alcohol and drug abuse resources in your area: 1-877-9-NO DRUG (1-877-966-3784) or www.drugfreetexas.com.
- Region 7 Prevention Resource Center, 1-888-PRC-TEXX
- In Travis County
 - Outreach, Screening, Assessment and Referral (OSAR), 1-800-508-0834
 - United Way of Capital Area's 211 (<http://www.unitedwaycapitalarea.org/gethelp/index.cfm>)

Q: What can I do to help?

- Volunteer or make a donation to agencies providing increased prevention and treatment services for alcohol and drug abuse (<http://www.unitedwaycapitalarea.org/volunteer/index.cfm>)
- Contact your elected officials to advocate for increased treatment funding/capacity.
- Request that community and employee health fairs include alcohol and drug awareness issues.

Please see the CAN Urgent Issues Action Plan at www.caction.org for additional information about specific and Community-wide approaches to addressing alcohol and drug abuse in our community.

Additional Information

To access the 2001 CAN Prescription For Wellness refer to: www.caction.org. To obtain a copy of this or any other CAN report, please visit the CAN offices, email Brenda Ahrns at bahrns@austin.isd.tenet.edu, call 512-414-8203, or write to The Community Action Network, 1111 W. 6th Street, Suite B220, Austin, Texas 78703.

For regularly updated statistics across all issue areas please see The CAN Community Overview document at www.caction.org.

This FAQ was created and reviewed by members of the CAN Substance Abuse Planning Partnership.

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