



PINELLAS HIGHLIGHTS

# ALCOHOL & DRUG USE



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Healthy St. Petersburg

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**Foundation for a  
Healthy St. Petersburg**

# **ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE DRASTICALLY IMPACT POPULATION HEALTH**

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It can lead to loss of employment and a loss of income. Decreased income can diminish access to housing, transportation, health care, healthy food, and social support resources. Alcohol and drug abuse can also directly impact population health by causing liver disease, injury, and death.

# Alcohol & Drug Abuse

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration,<sup>i</sup> by 2020 mental and substance use disorders will surpass all physical diseases as a major cause of disability worldwide. Substance abuse has both emotional and financial costs. In fact, addressing the impact of substance use alone is estimated to cost Americans more than \$600 billion each year.<sup>ii</sup>

Substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including illicit drugs and alcohol.<sup>iii</sup> Although moderate alcohol use is associated with health benefits – such as reduced risk of heart disease and diabetes – excessive alcohol use is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Excessive alcohol use costs \$249 billion<sup>iv</sup> in lost productivity, health care, and criminal justice expenses each year.

Pinellas County is experiencing increasing rates of adults who report engaging in heavy or binge drinking (drinking five or more drinks on an occasion for men or four or more drinks on an occasion for women).<sup>v,vi</sup> Excessive alcohol use, including underage drinking and binge drinking can lead to increased risk of health problems, such as injuries, violence, liver diseases, and cancer. In addition, binge drinkers are 14 times more likely to report alcohol-impaired driving than non-binge drinkers .

Alcohol abuse is not the only problem. The United States is currently experiencing an opioid overdose epidemic. Opioids (including prescription opioids, heroin, and fentanyl) killed more than 42,000 people in 2016, more than any year on record. On average, 115 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose<sup>vii</sup> and 40% of all opioid overdose deaths involve a prescription opioid.

According to the Pinellas County Opioid Taskforce, a total of 204 opioid-related deaths were reported in the county in 2016. While historical mortality data in Pinellas County has shown low rates of heroin use; heroin and fentanyl seized by law enforcement, in the county, from 2010-2016 has increased sharply.<sup>ix</sup>

## The Pinellas County Substance Abuse Profile, 2016 Medical Examiner Report,<sup>x</sup> and 2016 Florida Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System<sup>xi,xii,xiii</sup> Data Report highlight some key substance abuse statistics in Pinellas:

- 277 accidental deaths were due to drugs in 2016; 106 were due to prescription drugs.
- 20.9% of adults in Pinellas engage in heavy or binge drinking compared to 17.5% of adults in Florida.
- 28% of motor vehicle crash deaths were related to alcohol use as compared to 26% in the state.
- 7.9% of adults in Pinellas used marijuana or hashish during the past 30 days (at the time of the survey) as compared with 7.4% of adults in Florida.
- 22.1% of high school students in Pinellas report using marijuana/hashish ion the past 30 days (at time of survey) as compared to 17% in Florida.
- 11.5% of high school students in Pinellas report binge drinking as compared to 10.9% in Florida.
- Every 32 hours in Pinellas County someone dies of a drug overdose.

# ABOUT THE FOUNDATION FOR A HEALTHY ST. PETERSBURG

The Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg (FHSP) is a private foundation formed in 2013 following the sale of the nonprofit Bayfront Health St. Petersburg. It is the steward of almost \$180 million in assets to support health equity in Pinellas County. Our mission is to end differences in health due to social or structural disadvantages to improve population health. We do this by inspiring and empowering people, ideas, information exchange, organizations and relationships.

Not everyone in Pinellas County is able to attain their highest level of health and well-being. Too often, the place where a person is born, grows, lives, works, learns, or ages contains impediments stemming from entrenched social or demographic factors such as race, gender, personal attribute, income, or geography. This is unacceptable and ultimately unsustainable. The Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg seeks to address health disparities, advance population health, and achieve health equity in Pinellas County.

The Foundation is focused on social factors, which directly impact health outcomes, such as housing, income, education, transit, and many others as listed in the Social Determinants of Health Framework below.



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### PLEASE NOTE:

*This series of Pinellas Highlights is intended to illustrate the Foundation's definitions of the Social Determinants of Health framework and to provide specific data related to the Foundation's geographic focus area. The data presented is not comprehensive.*