



Substance Use, Mental Health, and Related Issues



The Delaware 2023 Epidemiological Profile: Substance Use, Mental Health, and Related Issues

is prepared for

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Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health
&
The Delaware State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup

The annual Delaware State Epidemiological Profile is a valuable data resource for strategic planning, decision-making, and evaluation. The report includes modules that highlight indicators of mental health and wellbeing, patterns of substance use and its consequences, and risk and protective factors for people in Delaware. The report also highlights crosscutting issues that warrant attention as well as populations that may experience disproportionate risk for these concerns.

This is a Companion Guide for the 2023 Delaware annual profile. To view the modules of the 2023 Profile, infographics, and downloadable slides, please visit the [UD Center for Drug and Health Studies Delaware Epidemiological Reports page](#). Links to presentations referenced in the report are available from the [Presentations webpage](#).

The SEOW is facilitated by a team at the Center for Drug and Health Studies at the University of Delaware that convenes a network of more than 100 representatives from approximately 55 state and nonprofit agencies, community organizations, advocacy groups, and other entities. The SEOW's mission is to bring data on behavioral health and associated issues to the forefront of prevention and treatment efforts in Delaware. To learn more, please visit the [What is the SEOW?](#) webpage.



The annual Delaware Epidemiological Profile is a publication of the Delaware State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW) project. Funding for the SEOW has been provided by the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health through funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Please address all inquiries to M.J. Scales, MPH, CPS, University of Delaware [Center for Drug and Health Studies](#), Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice: mjscales@udel.edu.



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The Companion Guide to the 2023 Delaware Epidemiological Profile

Introduction

The Center for Drug and Health Studies (CDHS) at the University of Delaware facilitates the State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW) on behalf of the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH). Each year, CDHS produces an annual profile of behavioral health indicators for the state. The report includes modules that highlight data regarding mental health and wellbeing, patterns of substance use and its consequences, and risk and protective factors for people in Delaware. It also highlights crosscutting issues that warrant attention as well as populations that may experience disproportionate risk.

The Companion Guide includes data notes to aid in understanding the information highlighted in the report. It also includes a table of data sources used throughout all modules of the profile as well as general background information on the SEOW.

The Role of the Delaware State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup and the Purpose of the Epidemiological Profile

The SEOW is a network of representatives from approximately 55 state and nonprofit agencies, community organizations, advocacy groups, and other entities. Formerly known as the Delaware Drug and Alcohol Tracking Alliance (DDATA), the SEOW's mission is to bring data on behavioral health and associated issues to the forefront of prevention and treatment efforts by pursuing the following goals:

- To build monitoring and surveillance systems to identify, analyze, and profile data from state and local sources;
- To provide current benchmarks, trends, and patterns of substance use consumption and consequences;
- To create data-guided products that inform prevention and treatment planning and policies;
- To train agencies and communities in understanding, using, and presenting data effectively.

The annual Delaware State Epidemiological Profile is a valuable data resource for strategic planning, decision-making, and evaluation. It is one of many data products produced by the Center for Drug and Health Studies at the University of Delaware (CDHS) in their roles as SEOW facilitators. To review previous editions of the annual profile, visit the [SEOW Epidemiological Reports and Profile](#) webpage. To view data presentations and other SEOW events, visit their [YouTube channel](#).

Modules of the 2023 Delaware Epidemiological Profile

- Tobacco and E-Cigarettes (Vaping)
- Alcohol
- Marijuana
- Opioids
- Other Illegal Drugs
- Maternal and Child Behavioral Health
- Gambling
- Mental Health and Wellness
- Persons with Disabilities
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Other Trauma
- Gender and Sexuality
- Protective Factors

SEOW Collaborators

The SEOW Facilitators at CDHS would like to thank all who participate in the SEOW network and their commitment to data-driven prevention planning, practice, and evaluation! We are especially grateful to the team at the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health for their guidance and collaboration.

atTAcK Addiction

Bellevue Community Center

Beebe Healthcare

Children and Families First

Christiana Care Health System

Colonial School District

Delaware Academy of Medicine/Delaware Public Health Association

Delaware Afterschool Network

Delaware Center for Justice

Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Delaware Council on Gambling Problems

Delaware Courts - Office of the Child Advocate

Delaware Criminal Justice Council

Delaware Criminal Justice Information System

Delaware Department of Corrections

Delaware Department of Education

Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families

Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services

Delaware Department of Health and Social Services

Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance

Division of Public Health

Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities

Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security

Delaware State Police

Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement

Division of Forensic Science

Delaware Department of State

Delaware Office of Controlled Substances

Division of Professional Regulation, Prescription Monitoring Program

Delaware Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

Delaware Guidance Services

Delaware Information and Analysis Center

Delaware Multicultural and Civic Organization
Delaware Overdose System of Care
Delaware Prevention Coalition
Delaware State Board of Education
Holcomb BHS/Open Door, Inc.
KIDS COUNT in Delaware, University of Delaware Center for Community Research & Service
La Esperanza Community Center
Latin American Community Center
Mental Health Association in Delaware
Milford School District
NAMI Delaware
Nemours Health and Prevention Services
Network Connect
New Castle County Behavioral Health Unit
New Castle County Police Department
Planned Parenthood of Delaware
Red Clay Consolidated School District
Sun Behavioral Delaware
Sussex County Health Coalition
Transitions Delaware
Trauma Matters Delaware
United States Department of Justice
United Way of Delaware
University of Delaware
 College of Health Sciences
 College of Arts and Sciences
 Partnership for Healthy Communities
 Student Health & Wellness Promotion
Wesley College
West End Neighborhood House
Wilmington University

*If your organization is interested in becoming an SEOW Collaborator, please contact Meisje Scales at:
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Notes: Data Reporting and Interpretation

In order to protect the anonymity of respondents and to ensure that the data reported meet certain statistical standards, the Center for Drug and Health Studies (CDHS) at the University of Delaware has established a set of guidelines for reporting and interpreting data from surveys that it administers to students across the state. As a result, in the Delaware State Epidemiological Profile, data in some tables and figures may be aggregated or otherwise reported differently than in years prior. The following notes summarize the guidelines for interpreting data presented in this report and provide an overview of changes relevant to this year:

- **Reporting small numbers:** For any estimate where the raw number of responses is less than 30, no statistical estimates are reported. Statistics computed from such a small proportion of the total number of students may be unreliable, inflating the significance of existing relationships in the data, and among some special populations, may put individuals at risk of being identified. In some data products, such as heat maps, multiple years of data have been combined in order to increase the sample sizes to a reportable figure (i.e., 30 or above).
- **Rounding:** All figures from Delaware School Survey (DSS) are rounded to the *nearest whole percent*. As such, in some cases the cells in a table may add up to slightly more or less than 100%.
- **Missing Observations:** In analysis conducted by CDHS, any missing observations (responses) are not calculated into the total percentages. Because different questions have varying numbers of missing responses, the total sample size and percent missing may fluctuate slightly from question to question. This is due to a few factors:
 - Students may not answer all questions on a survey, particularly those towards the end if they run out of time or they tire of answering questions.
 - Students may also skip or decide not to respond to certain questions for various reasons (e.g., if they fear their responses will not be kept confidential; if they consider the question too personal or sensitive; if they do not understand the question; etc.)
- **Discrepancies in Reporting:** In some instances, there may be slight differences in estimates reported by CDHS compared to those reported by other state or federal entities for the same data source. In most cases this is due to differing practices in rounding or handling missing observations in the data and does not substantially impact the overall prevalence estimates, trends, and relationships among these data points.
- **Statistical Significance:** Unless otherwise indicated, all reported correlations between variables are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. Null hypothesis testing, used to estimate statistical significance, provides an estimate of the likelihood that the relationship between two indicators is not due to random chance. If the p-value for a given crosstab is less than .05, this suggests that in 95% of cases, the correlation between the relevant variables is because there is a relationship between them.
- **Weighted Data:** Weighting data is a correction technique that compensates for nonresponses, helps correct for unequal probabilities of being selected within the sample, and helps ensure

that the sample drawn is representative of the Delaware student population. If data is weighted, there will be a notation indicating the data is weighted for the specific fact, figure, or table.

- Sample Sizes for CDHS-collected Surveys:
 - The Delaware School Survey (DSS) is administered annually to students in 5th, 8th, and 11th grades of participating public schools. There is one version designed for 5th graders and a secondary version for 8th and 11th graders. These data are important for monitoring behavioral health among youth and are included throughout the report. **The sample sizes for the 2022 DSS are, by grade:**
 - 5th grade: 4,088
 - 8th grade: 3,544
 - 11th grade: 2,936
 - The 2021 Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey is administered in odd-numbered years to a sample of middle and high school students in participating schools. These data are important for monitoring behavioral health among youth and are included throughout the report. **The sample sizes for the 2021 YRBS are, by age group:**
 - Middle school: 657
 - High school: 1,578

Pandemic Impacts on School Survey Data Collection

Since 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected data collection of all kinds. This report compiles the most recently accessible state and national data available to provide a comprehensive profile of behavioral health in Delaware. Given that the timing and methods of various data survey administrations may have changed within the past several years, it will be important to consider this when interpreting trends. Below is more specific information regarding the ways that pandemic constraints have impacted aspects of survey administration and data collection for the three youth surveys regularly administered by the Center for Drug and Health Studies at the University of Delaware.

Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is conducted biennially in odd-numbered years during the spring (January-June) among public, charter, and alternative school students in grades 9-12. However, the 2021 Delaware YRBS administration was postponed to the fall (September-December) due to COVID-19. This was due primarily to Delaware schools' shift to hybrid and virtual school models. A fall administration means students were on average younger than they would have been in the spring, and ongoing pandemic restrictions may have kept some students from participating in classrooms. **Until the 2023 data is analyzed, comparisons of the 2021 data to previous years' data should be avoided, as findings from the 2021 data may be an exception to ongoing trends.**

Delaware YTS

After being conducted via paper and pencil questionnaires since its inception in 1999, the Delaware Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) began using an electronic data collection method as an option starting in 2020 when school instruction went virtual. At that point, many schools were attempting to teach online without appropriate technology and YTS data collection was halted. Once back in the field for the 2021/2022 school year, the dual methodology of paper and pencil and electronic survey collection enabled flexibility with schools when collecting data due to state and local emergency COVID-19 protocols (e.g., distance and hybrid learning models, restricted visitor access). Schools were able to select whether they wanted to participate via a paper and pencil or an online questionnaire. Trained survey administrators were available to assist with both modalities, but schools were able to opt to have their teachers field the survey following instructions that detailed the procedure. Students participated in the survey while at school during a designated class period as part of a classroom activity. Using a school-issued device, students accessed a secure survey website to participate in the survey if the school selected an online administration. **Due to the data gap in 2020 as well as the changes in the methodology for the 2021-2022 administration, comparisons using the results of the 2022 Delaware YTS with previous Delaware YTS survey results should be limited in scope.**

Delaware School Survey

After being conducted via paper and pencil questionnaires since the 1990s, the Delaware School Survey (DSS) began using an electronic data collection method as an option starting in 2020 due to COVID-19. However, data collection was suspended for the majority of the spring of 2020. Schools were unable to accommodate the request to conduct the survey online as concerns focused on online instructional time and providing technology to students. Once back in the field, using a dual methodology during the 2021/2022 school year maximized flexibility with and for schools when collecting data in order to remain compliant with state and local emergency COVID-19 protocols (e.g., restricted visitor access, distance and hybrid learning models). Schools were able to select the type of modality that would work best for their students (i.e., paper and pencil or online questionnaire). Trained survey administrators were available to assist with both types of data collection, but schools were able to allow their teachers to follow instructions for administering. Students participated in the survey while at school during a designated class period as part of a classroom activity. Using a school-issued device, students accessed a secure survey website to participate in the survey. **Due to the data gap in 2020 as well as the changes in the methodology for the 2021-2022 administration, results of the 2022 DSS should be compared with caution to previous DSS survey results.**

A Note on Word Choice Used in this Report

Language frames how people collectively think about behavioral health and is continuously evolving. The SEOW Facilitator Team strives to use word choices that are accurate, respectful, free of stigma, strength-based, trauma-informed, and inclusive and culturally sensitive in its data products. However, much of the data and information reported in SEOW data products are drawn from other sources. To preserve accuracy, whenever possible, the editors use the words, phrases, and data labels that are used in the original sources even if these terms are not necessarily the terms they would use as researchers, practitioners, or prevention specialists. When it is necessary to edit an SEOW product in a way that uses different terminology from the original data source, the original phrasing is included in the accompanying notes.

Data Sources Included in the 2023 Delaware Epidemiological Profile

Data Instrument	Most Recent Data
Crisis Text Line	2023
Delaware’s Annual Traffic Statistical Report	2022
Delaware Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)	2021
Delaware Division of Forensic Science Annual Report	2022
Delaware Division of Public Health, Delaware Health Statistics Center	2016-2020
Delaware Infants with Prenatal Substance Exposure	2020
Delaware Online/NewsJournal Gun Violence Database	2023
Delaware Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP)	2021
Delaware School Survey (DSS) – 5 th grade Delaware Secondary Survey - 8 th and 11 th grades	2022
Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) – High School	2021
Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) – Middle School	2021
Healthcare Cost and Utilization Program (HCUP) Fast Stats – Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome	2016-2020
Household Pulse Survey	2023
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration	2017-2021
National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH)	2020
National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)	2021
Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)	2020
State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS)	
Treatment Admissions Data	2019

Additional data sources cited throughout the narrative of the 2023 Delaware Epidemiological Profile include:

- American Psychological Association
- Center for Drug and Health Studies, University of Delaware

- Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, My Healthy Community
- Delaware Drug Monitoring Initiative
- Drug Enforcement Administration
- Gallup
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
- National Institute on Drug Abuse
- National Institutes of Health
- National Institute on Mental Health
- The Trevor Project
- The Williams Institute
- U.S. Census Bureau
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Alcohol-Related Disease Impact [ARDI])