



# 2023 Epidemiological Profile: Executive Summary



## 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 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.

## Purpose

The SEOW is a network of 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, treatment, and recovery 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.**

## Approach

The data presented in this report are compiled from approximately 20 state and national data sources (see the **Companion Guide to the 2023 Delaware Epidemiological Profile** for more detail). CDHS conducts several youth surveys on behalf of the state, including the Delaware School Surveys (DSS) and the Delaware Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS). These data are important for monitoring behavioral health among youth and are included throughout the profile.

- The 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. The sample sizes for the 2022 DSS are, by grade:

**5th grade: 4,088**

**8th grade: 3,544**

**11th grade: 2,936**

- The YRBS 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**

- The Companion Guide to the 2023 Epidemiological Profile has more detailed information regarding pandemic impacts on data collection and trends, sources, and other data notes including approaches to weighting, rounding, and statistical significance.

## Key Findings



According to the Division of Forensics' Annual Report, 537 overdose deaths were reported in 2022.



The 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) estimates that nearly 1 in 5 Delaware adults experienced some type of mental illness in the past year.



The 2021 NSDUH estimates that 1 in 2 Delawareans aged 12 years and older consumed alcohol in the past month.



In the 2021 YRBS, 18% of high school respondents indicated that they had vaped within the past month.

Information reported throughout this infographic are key findings from the corresponding module of the 2023 Epidemiological Profile. For further context please refer to the relevant modules [here](#).



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Module	Key Findings
Tobacco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite declines, 1,400 adults die from smoking each year in DE (CDC, 2023).</li> <li>• Nearly 1 in 5 (19.63%) Delawareans aged 12 and older used a tobacco product in past month (CDC, 2023).</li> </ul>
E-Cigarettes & Vaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the 2022 DSS, vaping is more prevalent than traditional cigarette use among Delaware youth at all grade levels.</li> <li>• Comparably, 4% of middle school students reported vaping in past month (YRBS, 2021).</li> </ul>
Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, 1 in 5 high school students report current drinking (10% among 9th graders and 37% among 12th graders) (YRBS, 2021).</li> <li>• Comparably, 16% of middle school students reported that they ever drank alcohol (YRBS, 2021).</li> </ul>
Health and Safety Consequences of Alcohol Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>CDC Alcohol-Related Disease Impact (ARDI) portal</b> estimates an annual average of 466 deaths in DE attributable to chronic or acute causes related to excessive alcohol use between 2015 and 2019.</li> </ul>
Marijuana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2021, NSDUH estimates that almost 1 in 6 Delawareans over the age of 12 used marijuana in the past month.</li> <li>• 10% of DE 8th graders reported having used marijuana in their lifetime (DSS, 2022).</li> </ul>
Opioids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2021 YRBS reported 8% of high school students have taken a prescription pain medication either without a prescription or in a way other than prescribed at some point in their lifetime.</li> <li>• The rate of Delawareans filling opioid prescriptions has declined from 204 per 1,000 people in 2015 to 124 per 1,000 in 2021 (DE PMP, 2015-2021).</li> </ul>
Other Illegal Drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2021 <b>NSDUH</b> estimates that 3.54% of Delawareans aged 12 and older used an illicit drug other than marijuana in the past month. The highest rate was reported by the 18 to 25 age group (6.45%).</li> </ul>
Maternal and Child Behavioral Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 88% of women reported having a maternal postpartum checkup (PRAMS, 2020).</li> <li>• 1 in 10 Delaware women self-reported postpartum depression symptoms (PRAMS, 2020).</li> </ul>
Gambling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DE high school students responding to the 2021 YRBS reported an overall gambling rate of 40% for the past year. This is similar to the findings reported by 11th grade students on the 2022 DSS.</li> </ul>
Mental Health and Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2022, 24% of 11th graders reported recently experiencing depression (DSS, 2022).</li> <li>• According to the Division of Family Services (DFS), there were 133 deaths by suicide certified in DE in 2022.</li> </ul>
Persons with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nearly 1 in 3 adults with a disability reported 14 or more mentally unhealthy days within the month prior to the survey, compared to 9.3% of adults without a disability (BRFSS, 2021).</li> </ul>
ACES/ Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the <b>2020 – 2021 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH)</b>, 19.2% of Delaware youth have experienced at least one household-based ACE (such as parental incarceration, witnessing domestic violence, etc.) and 13% have experienced 2 or more.</li> <li>• Nearly 1 in 10 Delaware youth (9.8%) have experienced one or more community-based ACE, such as being the victim of, or witnessing, violence in the neighborhood or being treated unfairly due to race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation (NSCH, 2020-2021).</li> </ul>
Gender/Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the 2021 YRBS, 63% of LGB high school students reported periods of depression lasting two weeks or more in the year before responding to the survey compared to 30% of heterosexual students.</li> <li>• The 2022 DSS indicates that 8th grade LGBTQ students reported nearly twice the rate of recent use of alcohol, marijuana, and vaping products.</li> </ul>
Protective Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the 2022 DSS, 11th graders who reported frequently feeling safe in their schools and neighborhoods were less likely than other students to report substance use, anxiety, or depression.</li> <li>• 4 out of 5 DE parents indicated that their child lived in a home with four components of the Family Resilience Composite Index most or all of the time (NSCH, 2020-2021). This index includes measurements related to collaborative problem solving and hope.</li> </ul>