



## MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

Informing data driven school and community  
health policies and practices

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# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE METROWEST ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY

## NATICK HIGH SCHOOL

### 2012

**METROWEST  
HEALTH  
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# Highlights from the 2012 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey Natick High School Report

## Background and Methodology

The MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey (MWAHS) is a decade-long initiative of the MetroWest Health Foundation (MHF) to support efforts to improve the health of youth in the region. Beginning in 2006, the MWAHS has been administered every other year to middle and high school students in the region to monitor trends in health and risk behaviors and identify emerging health issues at the local and regional levels. 2012 was the first year that all 25 communities served by the MHF participated in the survey, with a total of over 40,000 students surveyed. Natick High School has participated in the MWAHS since 2006.

The most recent 2012 high school survey was administered to a census of students in grades 9 through 12 in all 26 high schools in the region. In total, 24,459 students participated in this voluntary and anonymous survey. At Natick High School, 1,180 students in grades 9 through 12 participated in the 2012 MWAHS, representing 86% of students.

Findings from the MWAHS are used by schools and communities to improve health education, inform prevention efforts, and set priorities for achieving a healthier youth population. Highlights from your district's data in the areas of substance use, violence, bullying, mental health, sexual behavior, and physical activity are provided below.

## Substance Use: Natick High School

### Cigarette Smoking

#### 2012 PATTERNS

- **17% of students have smoked a cigarette in their lifetime, and 6% smoked recently (in the past 30 days).**
- More males than females report smoking in their lifetime (19% compared with 15%) and in the past 30 days (8% compared with 5%).
- Initiation of smoking increases during high school, from 9% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 26% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### 2006-2012 TRENDS

- **Fewer youth are smoking: Reports of lifetime smoking have steadily decreased from 34% in 2006 to 17% in 2012.**
- Recent smoking decreased from 12% in 2010 to 6% in 2012.
- Cigarette smoking decreased among both males and females.
- In the MetroWest region, reports of cigarette smoking have declined steadily since 2006.

## Alcohol Use and Drinking and Driving

### 2012 PATTERNS

- **51% of students drank alcohol in their lifetime, 33% drank in the past 30 days, and 18% reported recent binge drinking (defined as consuming 5 or more drinks in a row on one or more occasions in the past 30 days).**
- Lifetime and current alcohol use are similar among males and females. Reports of binge drinking are higher among males (21%) than females (16%); this does not take into account body weight or other factors that influence intoxication levels.
- Alcohol use increases substantially by grade: Current drinking increases from 13% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 57% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and binge drinking increases from 3% to 35%.
- 21% of students report being a passenger in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol in the past 30 days. Reports are similar among both genders and increase by grade, from 14% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 29% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### 2006-2012 TRENDS

- **Drinking in high school has declined. From 2006 to 2012, lifetime alcohol use decreased from 66% to 51% and current use decreased from 42% to 33%.**
- Binge drinking also decreased during this time, from 24% to 19%.
- Reports of riding in a car driven by someone who had been drinking declined from 25% in 2010 to 21% in 2012.
- Drinking declined among both males and females. For example, current drinking decreased from 41% in 2006 to 32% in 2012 among females, and from 43% to 34% among males.
- The local decline in drinking is consistent with a decline in the MetroWest region.

## Marijuana Use

### 2012 PATTERNS

- **27% of youth have used marijuana in their lifetime, and 20% used marijuana in the past 30 days.**
- Males are more likely than females to initiate marijuana use (31% compared with 24%) and report recent use (24% compared with 16%).
- Marijuana use increases substantially by grade. For example, lifetime use increases from 9% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 47% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### 2006-2012 TRENDS

- **Reports of lifetime use were similar from 2006 to 2010 (32-35%) and then decreased to 27% in 2012.**
- In 2012, 20% of youth reported recent marijuana use, which is lower than in 2010 (27%) but similar to 2006-2008 levels.
- Marijuana use in the region decreased slightly from 2010 to 2012 and is now similar to 2006-2008 levels.

## Prescription Drug Misuse

### 2012 PATTERNS

- **7% of youth have misused prescription drugs in their lifetime (without a doctor's prescription).**
- More males than females have misused prescription drugs (9% compared with 5%).
- Lifetime prescription drug misuse increases from 9th grade (4%) to 12<sup>th</sup> grade (12%).

### 2006-2012 TRENDS

- **After decreasing from 13% in 2006, prescription drug misuse has remained steady at 8-9% from 2010 to 2012.**
- There has been a slight decrease in prescription drug misuse in the MetroWest region since 2006.

## Violence: Natick High School

### Physical Fighting

### 2012 PATTERNS

- **15% of youth have been in a physical fight in the past 12 months, and 5% have been in a fight on school property.**
- Many more males than females report fighting (21% compared with 10%) and fighting on school property (7% compared with 3%).
- Reports of physical fighting range from 11% to 17% during the high school years and are highest in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades.

### 2006-2012 TRENDS

- **Physical fighting in the past 12 months has decreased steadily, from 24% in 2006 to 15% in 2012.**
- During this time, reports of fighting on school property in the past 12 months decreased from 10% to 5%.
- There were notable decreases in fighting among both males and females: From 2006 to 2012, fighting decreased from 32% to 21% among males, and from 16% to 10% among females.
- In the MetroWest region, physical fighting has decreased steadily since 2006.

### Weapon Carrying

### 2012 PATTERNS

- **7% of youth carried a weapon in the past 30 days, and 2% carried a weapon on school property.**
- Consistent with gender patterns for fighting, more males (11%) than females (3%) report carrying weapons.
- Reports of weapon carrying are similar in grades 9 through 12 at 6-7%.

### 2006-2012 TRENDS

- **Reports of weapon carrying in the past 30 days remained similar from 2006 to 2012 at 6-8%**
- Since 2006, weapon carrying on school property was also similar at 2-4%.
- In the MetroWest region, weapon carrying remained similar from 2006 to 2012.

# Bullying and Cyberbullying: Natick High School

## Bullying

### 2012 PATTERNS

- **29% of youth have been bullied in the past 12 months, and 25% have been bullied on school property. 13% of students report bullying other students.**
- More females than males are victims of bullying (37% compared with 21%) and bullying on school property (31% compared with 18%). There is no gender difference in reports of perpetration.
- Reports of bullying decrease during the high school years, from 36% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 23% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Many bullying victims do not seek help from adults: Among students who were bullied at school in the past 12 months, 31% had talked to a school adult about being bullied, and 47% had talked to a parent or other adult outside of school.
- 34% of youth have intervened as bystanders by trying to stop a student from bullying someone else at school, and 10% have told an adult at school that someone else was being bullied.

### 2006-2012 TRENDS

- **From 2006 to 2012, reports of bullying victimization in the past 12 months were similar at 29-31%.**
- Since 2006, reports of bullying victimization on school property have been similar in the range of 25-28%.
- Among males, bullying on school property has decreased slightly, from 26% in 2006 to 18% in 2012. Among females, reports of school bullying victimization do not show a consistent trend.
- Bullying victimization decreased in the MetroWest region from 2010 to 2012.

## Cyberbullying

### 2012 PATTERNS

- **19% of youth report being victims of cyberbullying in the past 12 months, and 7% report cyberbullying someone else.**
- Females are more likely than males to be cyberbullying victims (26% compared with 12%), but there is no gender difference in reports of perpetration.
- Cyberbullying victimization ranges from 17-22% during the middle school years and is highest in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- The majority of cyberbullying victims do not seek help from adults: Among students who were cyberbullied, only 9% had talked to an adult at school and 19% had talked to a parent or other adult outside of school.
- 13% of youth have tried to stop a student from cyberbullying someone else.

### 2006-2012 TRENDS

- **More youth are reporting cyberbullying: Victimization increased from 15% in 2008 to 19% in 2012.**
- The increase in cyberbullying victimization was driven by an increase among females, from 17% in 2008 to 26% in 2012. Among males, cyberbullying did not change during this time.
- Cyberbullying victimization has increased in the MetroWest region since 2006.

## Mental Health: Natick High School

### 2012 PATTERNS

- **32% of students reported that their life was “very” stressful in the past 30 days. 18% reported depressive symptoms in the past 12 months (defined as feeling sad or hopeless for two or more weeks in a row).**
- 14% of youth reported self-injury (defined as cutting, burning, or bruising oneself on purpose) in the past 12 months.
- 11% of youth said they had considered suicide in their lifetime, and 3% had made a suicide attempt.
- Females are more likely than males to report stress, depressive symptoms, self-injury, and suicidal ideation.
- Reports of stress increase substantially during the high school years, from 24% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 49% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### 2006-2012 TRENDS

- **Overall reports of mental health problems have remained relatively similar from 2006 to 2012.**
- While there may be slight changes in some measures, such as stress and depressive symptoms, there is no consistent trend across mental health indicators.
- Mental health problems among high school youth in the region have been similar since 2006.

## Sexual Behavior: Natick High School

### 2012 PATTERNS

- **22% of youth have engaged in sexual intercourse during their lifetime, and 18% are currently sexually active (had intercourse within the past three months).**
- Among sexually active youth, 67% used a condom the last time they had intercourse.
- Slightly more males than females report having had intercourse (24% compared with 19%), and engaging in recent sexual activity (20% compared to 16%).
- The proportion of youth who have had intercourse in their lifetime increases from 9% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 40% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. 36% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade youth are currently sexually active.

### 2006-2012 TRENDS

- **There is a decrease in the proportion of youth reporting lifetime sexual intercourse, from 33% in 2006 to 22% in 2012.**
- During this time, reports of recent sexual activity also decreased from 26% to 18%.
- Reports of condom use at last intercourse among sexually active youth have varied from 63% in 2006 to 71%; in 2012, 67% of youth reported using a condom.
- Regional data shows a recent decrease in sexual intercourse and a small increase in condom use.

## Physical Activity and Body Weight: Natick High School

### 2012 PATTERNS

- **49% of youth meet national recommendations for physical activity (defined as exercising moderately for 60 minutes on 5 or more occasions in the past week).**
- 19% of youth are overweight or obese (based on self-reported height and weight, which is used to calculate body mass index).
- Males are more likely than females to report physical activity (53% compared with 46%), yet they are also more likely to be overweight or obese (23% compared with 15%).
- Reports of physical activity decrease by grade, from 55% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 44% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### 2006-2012 TRENDS

- **The proportion of youth exercising moderately on five or more days per week increased from 38% in 2006 to 49% in 2012.**
- Overweight/obesity may be decreasing slightly, from 22% to 19%.
- In the MetroWest region, physical activity has increased and overweight/obesity has remained similar since 2006.

## Conclusions

The fourth administration of the MWAHS in 2012 provides important data to monitor trends in several key areas of youth risk behaviors. Additional time points are important for establishing trends, especially in areas where the data does not show a consistent trend. The 2012 data show that Natick High School is making important advances in some behavioral health areas, such as cigarette smoking, alcohol use, and physical fighting. While these demand continued attention, the data also highlight other areas of concern, including cyberbullying and mental health. The 2014 MWAHS will mark a decade of data collection in the region, and will provide additional information to inform school and community efforts to improve the health of high school youth.



## Natick High School (Grades 9-12)

### 2006-2012 Trends in Key Indicators\*

	Year of Survey (%)			
	2006 (1,083)	2008 (1,120)	2010 (1,114)	2012 (1,180)
<b>SUBSTANCE USE</b>				
Lifetime cigarette smoking	34.4	29.7	22.7	16.6
Current cigarette smoking (past 30 days)	13.9	9.9	12.1	6.4
Lifetime alcohol use	66.0	63.1	55.7	50.8
Current alcohol use (past 30 days)	41.5	40.1	36.9	33.0
Binge drinking (past 30 days) <sup>†</sup>	24.2	21.1	21.8	18.5
Rode with driver who had been drinking (past 30 days)	25.7	22.0	24.6	20.9
Lifetime marijuana use	34.5	32.3	35.0	27.4
Current marijuana use (past 30 days)	22.0	21.0	26.5	20.0
Lifetime prescription drug misuse <sup>‡</sup>	12.8	8.4	8.1	7.1
<b>VIOLENCE</b>				
Physical fighting (past 12 months)	24.3	20.7	19.6	15.2
Physical fighting on school property (past 12 months)	10.1	8.3	7.4	5.4
Carried a weapon (past 30 days)	8.1	6.0	6.1	6.6
Carried a weapon on school property (past 30 days)	4.4	3.3	2.3	2.2
<b>BULLYING VICTIMIZATION</b>				
Bullying victim (past 12 months)	30.2	28.7	30.9	28.5
Bullying victim on school property (past 12 months)	28.3	25.6	28.3	24.7
Cyberbullying victim (past 12 months)	17.6	14.9	17.4	18.8
<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b>				
Life "very" stressful (past 30 days)	29.0	28.2	27.3	31.6
Depressive symptoms (past 12 months)	21.9	19.2	17.0	17.7
Self-injury (past 12 months)	15.1	12.6	11.5	13.7
Considered suicide (past 12 months)	9.9	8.7	8.3	11.3
Attempted suicide (past 12 months)	5.0	4.1	2.4	3.3
<b>SEXUAL BEHAVIOR</b>				
Lifetime sexual intercourse	32.9	29.1	27.4	21.7
Currently sexually active (past 3 months)	25.7	22.0	20.8	17.9
Condom use at last intercourse (among sexually active youth)	63.1	66.4	71.0	67.3
<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND BODY WEIGHT</b>				
Exercised for ≥60 minutes on 5 or more days/week	38.4	37.0	46.7	49.4
Overweight or obese <sup>§</sup>	22.4	21.3	20.0	18.6

\* Source: MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

† Consumed 5 or more drinks in a row on one or more occasions

‡ Without a doctor's prescription

§ Students who were ≥85th percentile for body mass index by age and gender, based on reference data

## Natick High School (Grades 9-12)

### 2012 Gender Patterns for Key Indicators\*

	<b>Gender (%)</b>		<b>Total (%)</b>
	<b>Female</b> (571)	<b>Male</b> (591)	(1,180)
<b>SUBSTANCE USE</b>			
Lifetime cigarette smoking	14.7	18.6	16.6
Current cigarette smoking (past 30 days)	5.1	7.8	6.4
Lifetime alcohol use	51.9	49.9	50.8
Current alcohol use (past 30 days)	32.0	34.4	33.0
Binge drinking (past 30 days) <sup>†</sup>	16.3	20.7	18.5
Rode with driver who had been drinking (past 30 days)	20.4	21.1	20.9
Lifetime marijuana use	23.5	31.2	27.4
Current marijuana use (past 30 days)	15.8	24.1	20.0
Lifetime prescription drug misuse <sup>‡</sup>	5.0	9.2	7.1
<b>VIOLENCE</b>			
Physical fighting (past 12 months)	9.5	20.8	15.2
Physical fighting on school property (past 12 months)	3.3	7.2	5.4
Carried a weapon (past 30 days)	2.5	10.8	6.6
Carried a weapon on school property (past 30 days)	0.7	3.8	2.2
<b>BULLYING VICTIMIZATION</b>			
Bullying victim (past 12 months)	36.7	20.5	28.5
Bullying victim on school property (past 12 months)	31.2	18.2	24.7
Cyberbullying victim (past 12 months)	25.5	12.4	18.8
<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b>			
Life "very" stressful (past 30 days)	43.1	20.4	31.6
Depressive symptoms (past 12 months)	22.1	13.5	17.7
Self-injury (past 12 months)	20.1	7.3	13.7
Considered suicide (past 12 months)	15.0	7.5	11.3
Attempted suicide (past 12 months)	3.0	3.7	3.3
<b>SEXUAL BEHAVIOR</b>			
Lifetime sexual intercourse	19.1	23.8	21.7
Currently sexually active (past 3 months)	15.8	19.6	17.9
Condom use at last intercourse (among sexually active youth)	63.2	70.5	67.3
<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND BODY WEIGHT</b>			
Exercised for ≥60 minutes on 5 or more days/week	46.4	53.2	49.4
Overweight or obese <sup>§</sup>	14.6	22.5	18.6

\* Source: MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

† Consumed 5 or more drinks in a row on one or more occasions

‡ Without a doctor's prescription

§ Students who were ≥85th percentile for body mass index by age and gender, based on reference data

## Natick High School (Grades 9-12)

### 2012 Grade Patterns for Key Indicators\*

	Grade (%)				Total (%)
	9 <sup>th</sup> (359)	10 <sup>th</sup> (289)	11 <sup>th</sup> (276)	12 <sup>th</sup> (243)	(1,180)
<b>SUBSTANCE USE</b>					
Lifetime cigarette smoking	9.0	14.0	20.7	26.4	16.6
Current cigarette smoking (past 30 days)	3.1	5.2	8.1	10.9	6.4
Lifetime alcohol use	27.3	44.2	69.9	72.9	50.8
Current alcohol use (past 30 days)	13.2	26.2	45.9	57.0	33.0
Binge drinking (past 30 days) <sup>†</sup>	3.4	15.0	27.8	34.5	18.5
Rode with driver who had been drinking (past 30 days)	14.3	17.4	25.9	28.5	20.9
Lifetime marijuana use	9.0	24.7	37.2	47.1	27.4
Current marijuana use (past 30 days)	6.0	18.7	26.9	35.2	20.0
Lifetime prescription drug misuse <sup>‡</sup>	4.0	5.3	8.6	12.2	7.1
<b>VIOLENCE</b>					
Physical fighting (past 12 months)	17.0	17.5	14.7	10.9	15.2
Physical fighting on school property (past 12 months)	3.1	6.6	6.2	6.3	5.4
Carried a weapon (past 30 days)	5.6	6.9	6.9	6.7	6.6
Carried a weapon on school property (past 30 days)	0.8	1.7	3.3	3.3	2.2
<b>BULLYING VICTIMIZATION</b>					
Bullying victim (past 12 months)	35.7	31.0	21.6	22.6	28.5
Bullying victim on school property (past 12 months)	29.1	27.5	21.2	18.4	24.7
Cyberbullying victim (past 12 months)	21.6	17.8	18.4	17.2	18.8
<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b>					
Life "very" stressful (past 30 days)	23.5	24.7	34.3	48.7	31.6
Depressive symptoms (past 12 months)	14.7	20.3	17.8	19.4	17.7
Self-injury (past 12 months)	15.6	11.7	12.6	14.2	13.7
Considered suicide (past 12 months)	11.3	12.8	10.9	10.3	11.3
Attempted suicide (past 12 months)	3.2	2.9	3.7	3.5	3.3
<b>SEXUAL BEHAVIOR</b>					
Lifetime sexual intercourse	9.0	16.5	27.2	40.4	21.7
Currently sexually active (past 3 months)	7.3	10.1	24.2	35.8	17.9
Condom use at last intercourse (among sexually active youth)	54.2	60.7	67.7	73.8	67.3
<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND BODY WEIGHT</b>					
Exercised for ≥60 minutes on 5 or more days/week	55.4	50.0	47.2	43.9	49.4
Overweight or obese <sup>§</sup>	16.6	18.0	19.7	19.6	18.6

\* Source: MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey

† Consumed 5 or more drinks in a row on one or more occasions

‡ Without a doctor's prescription

§ Students who were ≥85th percentile for body mass index by age and gender, based on reference data

Education Development Center, Inc.  
Health and Human Development Division  
Center for Research on High Risk Behaviors  
43 Foundry Avenue  
Waltham, Massachusetts 02453-8313  
617-969-7100