

All Together Upper Valley Region



Results 2015

Annual Community Survey

Prepared by Community Health Institute/JSI

INTRODUCTION

One objective of the Upper Valley Region - All Together Coalition is to positively change community norms so that substance use is not viewed as a normal and accepted behavior by the members of the community. The Coalition received 5-year funding from the Drug Free Community Coalition program in the fall of 2014. In order to assess their progress towards meeting the Coalition's objectives, a community survey was developed and administered in the spring of 2015 to collect baseline information of community norms and will be used again to assess whether any changes occurred. This community survey was used to collect information from residents in the Upper Valley using a series of questions around community norms and perception of harm, as well as questions intended to elicit feedback to provide information in directing strategic prevention initiatives.

METHODS

During the spring of 2015 a survey was administered by the Coalition to members of the Upper Valley communities at a number of events between April and August. In order to reach the largest number of individuals, the survey was administered in two formats; paper and online. The survey asked community members a series of questions about Coalition related activities, perceptions about the use of alcohol and drugs in their communities, as well as their perception of harm from substance use/misuse. A total of 614 surveys were completed in the Upper Valley in 2015. The breakdown by sub region is provided in Table 2.

**Table 1: All Together Community Surveys Completed
2015**

Completed Surveys	614
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**Table 2: All Together Community Survey Completion Rates,
by Sub Region**

	Completed Surveys n (%)
Hanover	56 (10.6%)
Hartford	136 (25.7%)
Lebanon	165 (31.2%)
Mascoma Valley	47 (8.9%)
Rivendell	37 (7.0%)
Other	88 (16.6%)

This survey served as a convenience sample and is not necessarily representative of the larger community. These data should be reviewed and considered in the context of the broader coalition and community prevention efforts and used more descriptively to give a general idea of the participants' responses and the impact on strategic planning moving forward.

RESULTS

Description of Respondents

TABLE 3: Description of Survey Respondents	
	Upper Valley Region % (n)
Are you a member of All Together and/or Upper Valley Substance Misuse Prevention Partnership, including the related community groups?	
Yes	7.2% (38)
Gender Distribution	
Female	74.9% (394)
Male	23.4% (123)
I prefer not to say	1.7% (9)
Primary Language Spoke at Home	
English	99.0% (520)
Spanish	0.6% (3)
Other (Russian and Other)	0.4% (2)
Race & Ethnicity	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.7% (9)
Asian	0.8% (4)
Black or African American	0.5% (3)
Black or African Native	0.5% (3)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.7% (4)
White	98.1% (508)
Age	
18-25	6.1% (32)
26-35	15.8% (83)
36-50	40.5% (213)
Over 50	37.6% (198)
How long have you resided in the Upper Valley?	
Less than 1 year	2.3% (12)
1-2 years	4.5% (23)
3-10 years	18.6% (96)
More than 10 years	74.6% (385)

TABLE 3: Description of Survey Respondents

	Upper Valley Region % (n)
Are you a parent or guardian?	
Yes	80.8% (425)
No	19.2% (101)
Do you have children in the following age ranges?*	
No children	18.5% (98)
0-5 years of age	13.2% (70)
6-11 years of age	24.6% (130)
12-14 years of age	18.0% (95)
15-18 years of age	22.3% (118)
Over 18 years of age	38.6% (204)
<i>*NOTE: Distribution values may not equal 100% due to multiple possible answers or rounding.</i>	

Awareness of Coalition Activities

The first question asked community members whether or not they had heard about the Coalition, and if they had, to what extent. Specifically, the Coalition was interested in determining the awareness level of the All Together / Upper Valley Substance Abuse Prevention Partnership.

Table 4: Awareness of Coalition

The percentage of respondents that indicated they have heard and know a lot or have heard and know a fair amount about the following coalition activities.	Upper Valley Region* % (n)
All Together and/or Upper Valley Substance Misuse Prevention Partnership, including the related community groups: Circle Up!; Hartford Community Coalition; Twin State Safe Meds.; Indian River School Steering Committee.	13.0% (80)

** The percent and number of those who said I have heard and know a lot or I have heard and know a fair amount about it.*

Social Norms

In order to address substance misuse and abuse in a community it is important to understand how community members feel on a number of related factors. A higher percentage of respondents reported *strongly agreeing or agreeing* that occasional use of alcohol (28.9%) and marijuana (21.2%) is OK for those under the age of 21, as long as it doesn't interfere with schoolwork or other responsibilities; this drops to 11.3% for occasional alcohol use and 8.8% for occasional marijuana use for young people under 18. As the Coalition moves forward it may be useful to further investigate the community's feelings around these types of social norms.

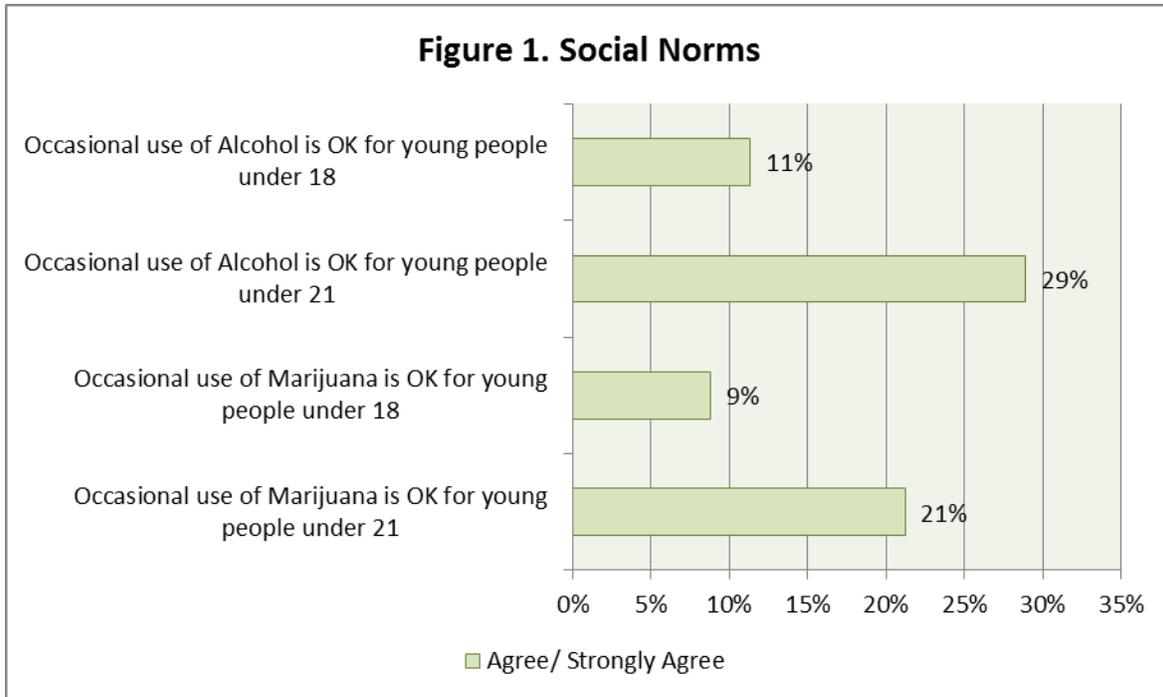


Table 5. Social Norms

The extent to which respondents agree or strongly agree with the following statements.	Upper Valley Region* % (n)
It is OK for youth under the age of 18 to use alcohol at parties if they don't drive.	5.4% (33)
It is OK for adults to provide alcohol to young people under the age of 18.	3.8% (23)
It is OK for an older brother or sister to provide alcohol to a younger sibling under the age of 18.	3.6% (22)
Occasional use of alcohol is OK for young people under 18 if it doesn't interfere with schoolwork or other responsibilities.	11.3% (69)
Occasional use of alcohol is OK for young people under 21 if it doesn't interfere with schoolwork or other responsibilities.	28.9% (177)

Table 5. Social Norms

The extent to which respondents agree or strongly agree with the following statements.

**Upper Valley Region*
% (n)**

Occasional use of marijuana is OK for people under 18 if it doesn't interfere with schoolwork or other responsibilities.	8.8% (54)
Occasional use of marijuana is OK for people under 21 if it doesn't interfere with schoolwork or other responsibilities.	21.2% (130)

* The percent and number of those who Strongly Agree or Agree.

Perceptions of Use

When asked about whether or not respondents were concerned about substance use in the Upper Valley, community members expressed the highest level of concern about prescription drug use (90.7%) in their community, followed by alcohol use (76.3%) and marijuana use (69.1%) in their community.

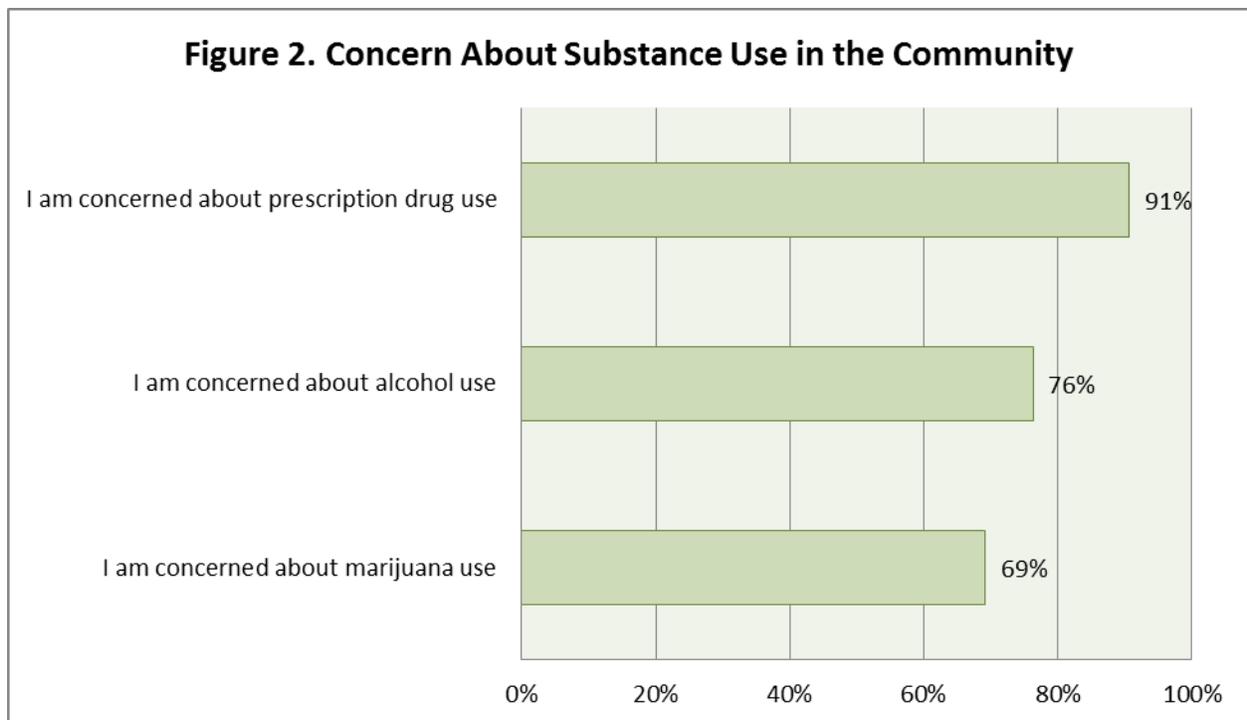


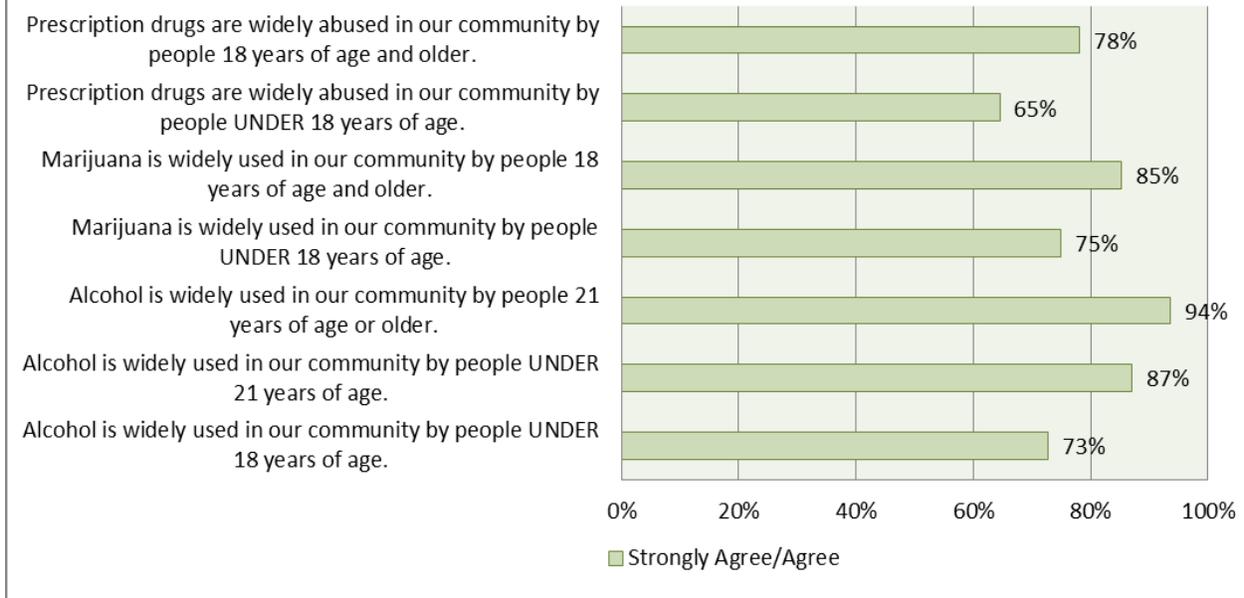
Table 6. Perceptions of Use

The extent to which respondents agree or strongly agree with the following statements.	Upper Valley Region* % (n)
I am concerned about alcohol use in the community.	76.3% (435)
I am concerned about marijuana use in the community.	69.1% (393)
I am concerned about prescription drug use in the community.	90.7% (516)
Alcohol is widely used in the community by people under 18 years of age.	72.7% (383)
Alcohol is widely used in the community by people under 21 years of age.	87.1% (461)
Alcohol is widely used in the community by people 21 years of age and older .	93.6% (516)
Marijuana is widely used in the community by people under 18 years of age.	75.0% (391)
Marijuana is widely used in the community by people 18 years of age and older .	85.2% (449)
Prescription drugs are widely abused in the community by people under 18 years of age.	64.5% (329)
Prescription drugs are widely abused in the community by people 18 years of age and older .	78.1% (407)

* The percent and number of those who Strongly Agree or Agree.

The perception that substances are widely used and/or abused, in the community, is fairly high. At least two-thirds of respondents indicated that alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs are widely used and/or abused in the community by people over and under the age of 18.

Figure 3. Perception of Substance Use and Abuse in the Community



Perception of Risk

Community members reported the highest risk of harm from the use of prescription drugs other than as prescribed (96.8%) and the use of prescription drugs without a doctor’s prescription (96.7%), followed by taking five or more drinks in a row once or twice each weekend (89.3%), and smoking marijuana regularly (74.3%). Less than half of respondents (42.1%) reported moderate or great risk from smoking marijuana occasionally.

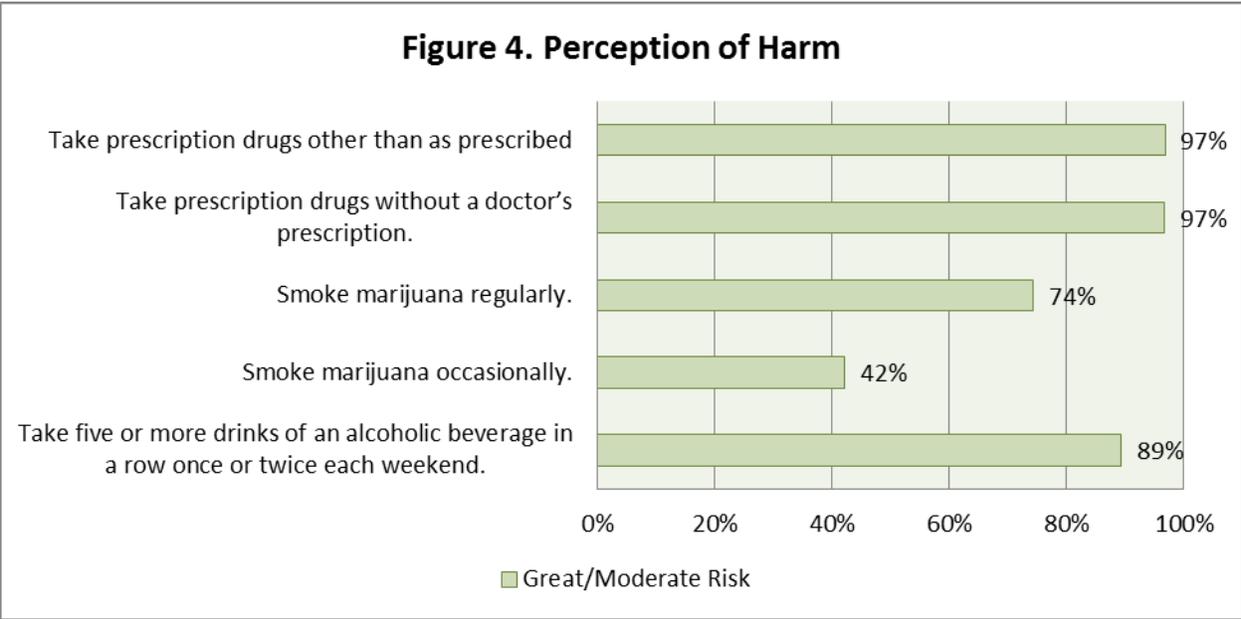
Table 7. Perception of Risk

The percentage of respondents that indicated there was moderate or great risk of harming themselves physically or in other ways if they do the following.

**Upper Valley Region*
% (n)**

Take five or more drinks of an alcoholic beverage in a row once or twice each weekend.	89.3% (510)
Smoke marijuana occasionally.	42.1% (239)
Smoke marijuana regularly.	74.3% (423)
Take prescription drugs without a doctor’s prescription.	96.7% (552)
Take prescription drugs other than as prescribed.	96.8% (553)

* The percent and number of those who reported Great Risk or Moderate Risk.



Risk and Protective Factors

Just about half of respondents indicated that they recalled hearing, reading, or watching an advertisement or message about the prevention or harm of underage drinking or binge drinking at least once in the past three months. However, only 34.2% of those that recalled an advertisement had a subsequent conversation with their child or other youth about the harms and risks of underage or binge drinking.

Table 8: Communication	Upper Valley Region* % (n)
During the past 3 months, how many times do you recall hearing, reading, or watching an advertisement or messages about the prevention or harm of underage drinking or binge drinking?	
None/ Don't recall advertisements	42.6% (240)
1-3 times	38.3% (216)
4 or more times	19.1% (108)
Did any of the advertisements or messages about the prevention or harm of underage drinking or binge drinking lead you to have a conversation with your child or other youth about the harm and risks of underage or binge drinking?	
Yes	34.2% (100)
No	65.8% (192)

Almost all of the respondents reported that their family has clear rules around alcohol use (83.1%) and marijuana use (83.0%); yet a lower percentage indicated that adults had made clear what the consequences would be for violating the alcohol, marijuana, or other drug rules.

Table 9: Perceptions of Youth Access & Monitoring of Use	Upper Valley Region* % (n)
During the past 12 months, have you talked with your kids about the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, or other drug use?	67.6% (353)
Does your household have clear rules around alcohol use?	83.1% (423)
Does your household have clear rules around marijuana use?	83.0% (420)
Do adults in your household make clear to youth the kind of consequences that will happen if youth violate household alcohol, marijuana, and other drug rules?	76.8% (378)
* <i>The percent and number of those who reported yes.</i>	

Respondents were asked about different strategies to monitor alcohol if it is kept in the home. Just over one-third of respondents (34.7%) indicated that they *keep track of their alcohol to make sure no one has taken any* and 31.3% reported that they *instruct children not to take any*.

Table 10: If alcohol is kept in the home, the respondent...	Upper Valley Region* % (n)
Does not keep alcohol in the home	20.4% (108)
Keeps alcohol locked or in a place where others cannot get it	9.8% (52)
Keeps track of it to make sure no one has taken any	34.7% (184)
Instructs children not to take any	31.3% (166)
Doesn't do anything special	27.2% (144)
* <i>The percent and number of those who reported yes.</i>	

There were a few written comments regarding practices related to alcohol in the home which included, among others:

“I trust my children.”

“Talk frequently with my children about the dangers.”

“We emphasize a high level of trust and mutual respect.”

“I dye it green. We do not have anything green in the house except vodka.”

Respondents were also asked about what they do with prescription drugs in the home. The most common strategies identified were that they *keep track of them to make sure no one has taken any* (48.3%) and they *dispose of them when they are no longer needed* (39.5%).

Table 11: If prescription drugs are kept in the home, the respondent...	Upper Valley Region* % (n)
Does not keep prescription drugs in the home	20.9% (111)
Keeps track of them to make sure no one has taken any	48.3% (257)
Keeps them locked in a safe place	16.5% (88)
Disposes of them when they are no longer needed	39.5% (210)
Instructs children not to take any	27.4% (146)
Doesn't do anything special	13.2% (70)
<i>* The percent and number of those who reported yes.</i>	

Written comments from respondents included:

"I educate the family on facts that doctors prescribe prescription drugs with a purpose."

"I trust my children."

"I hide them very well."

"I keep them with me at all times. They are not left unsupervised."

"On the occasions when I needed prescription drugs I took no precautions. Abuse was not an issue."

Table 12: How much do you think typical parents of youth under the age of 18 in your community limit underage drinking?	Upper Valley Region* % (n)
No drinking except for a few sips at family or religious gatherings	37.4% (185)
Some drinking with parents if only family is present	27.5% (136)
Some drinking with friends if parent is present	18.0% (89)
Drinking without parent if not driving or getting drunk	10.9% (54)
No limits on drinking	6.3% (31)
<i>* The percent and number of those who reported yes.</i>	

Table 13. Community Action	
The percentage of respondents that indicated that it was likely or very likely that people in your community take certain actions.	Upper Valley Region* % (n)
If someone in your community gave alcohol to a person under the age of 18, how likely is it that he or she would be arrested by the police?	38.5% (198)
If someone under the age of 18 drank some beer, wine, or hard liquor in your community, how likely is it that he or she would be arrested by the police?	29.0% (148)
<i>* The percent and number of those who reported very likely or likely.</i>	

Table 14: State Laws	Upper Valley Region* % (n)
Do you know parents or other adults in your community who host parties where alcohol is available or served to young people under the age of 18?	24.2% (129)
Were you aware before today that it is against the law in New Hampshire and Vermont to host a party where alcohol is being consumed by minors even if you do not provide the alcohol?	90.1% (483)
* The percent and number of those who reported yes.	

CONCLUSION

This survey provides a unique opportunity to hear from community members in the Upper Valley Region about their perceptions of alcohol and drug use as well as their knowledge and actions related a number of risk and protective factors. This information can be used to guide community-based strategic planning, activities, and collaborations that address the specific needs of the community members. It also provides the Coalition with a platform for assessing the community’s awareness of its activities, as well as the perceived impact of certain initiatives. It is suggested that the survey be repeated annually or bi-annually in order to monitor and track trends in the community’s perceptions and beliefs and how they relate to youth perceptions and use.