

# 2009 South Carolina Youth Risk Behavior Survey

## Key Findings from Middle School Survey

The South Carolina Middle School Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) distributed in the spring of 2009 was completed by 1,325 middle school students (grades six through eight). A comparison of the 2009 results with data from 2005\* reveals improvements in a couple of the middle school measures; however, a significant percentage of the state's adolescents continue to engage in behaviors that place them at risk for serious health problems—a situation warranting broad-based and strategically targeted interventions. South Carolina has identified and implemented proven effective curricula that address many of these problem behaviors. Schools alone, however, cannot address all the personal, emotional, social, and physical needs of students. The public education system must work in collaboration with parents, community agencies, health agencies, and public policy makers to promote healthy behaviors that will help ensure our students' safety and well-being.

### ***Cause for celebration—improvements since 2005***

8.2% of middle school students never or rarely wore a seatbelt when riding in a car (vs. 12.9% in 2005)

50.6% met the recommended levels of physical activity<sup>1</sup> (vs. 34.2% in 2005)

### ***Areas of concern—high rates of violent behavior***

65.9% had ever been in a physical fight (no significant change since 2005)

41.6% had ever been bullied on school property (new measure)

### ***Holding steady—no significant change since 2005***

35.1% of middle school students had ever ridden in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol

42.4% had ever carried a weapon (e.g., a gun, knife, or club)

22.4% had ever seriously considered attempting suicide

35.5% had ever tried smoking cigarettes, even one or two puffs

14.1% had, in the previous 30 days, used any tobacco product<sup>2</sup>

42.1% had ever consumed a drink of alcohol, other than a few sips

14.6% had ever used marijuana

24.0% had ever engaged in sexual intercourse

40.0% attended daily physical education classes (5 days in an average week when they were in school)

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\* 2005 was the first year South Carolina conducted the YRBS in middle schools.

<sup>1</sup> were physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day on 5 or more days in the 7 days before the survey

<sup>2</sup> smoked cigarettes; smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars; or used chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip

The 2009 SC YRBS was conducted by South Carolina Healthy Schools with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of Adolescent and School Health through cooperative agreement 1U87/DP001244. For more information, contact Delores Pluto, SC YRBS Coordinator, at 803-734-7829 or e-mail [dpluto@ed.sc.gov](mailto:dpluto@ed.sc.gov). Reports and fact sheets can be found at <http://www.ed.sc.gov/HealthySchools> under "data sources." Information about other states can be found at [www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs).



# 2009 South Carolina Youth Risk Behavior Survey

## Key Findings from High School Survey

The South Carolina High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) distributed in the spring of 2009 was completed by 1,108 high school students (grades nine through twelve). A comparison of the 2009 results with data from 1999 reveals improvements in several of the high school measures; however, a significant percentage of the state's adolescents continue to engage in behaviors that place them at risk for serious health problems. This situation warrants broad-based and strategically targeted interventions. South Carolina has identified and implemented proven effective curricula that address many of these problem behaviors. Schools alone, however, cannot address all the personal, emotional, social, and physical needs of students. The public education system must work in collaboration with parents, community agencies, health agencies, and public policy makers to promote healthy behaviors that will help ensure our students' safety and well-being.

### ***Cause for celebration—improvements since 1999:***

- 27.4% of high school students had, in the previous 30 days, ridden in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol (vs. 35.6 in 1999)
- 12.7% had, in the previous 12 months, seriously considered attempting suicide (vs. 17.1% in 1999)
- 27.3% had, in the previous 30 days, use any tobacco product<sup>1</sup> (vs. 41.5% in 1999)
- 69.1% had ever consumed a drink of alcohol, other than a few sips (vs. 77.8% in 1999)
- 35.2% had, in the previous 30 days, consumed at least one drink of alcohol (vs. 45.4% in 1999)

### ***Areas of concern—trends for the worse since 1999:***

- 16.1% had, in the previous 12 months, been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend (increased from 12.4% 1999)
- 15.1% had, in the previous 12 months, been bullied on school property (new measure)
- 15.0% were overweight<sup>2</sup> (increased from 12.9% in 1999)
- 16.7% were obese<sup>3</sup> (increased from 11.7 in 1999)

### ***Holding steady—no significant change since 1999:***

- 36.4% of high school students had, in the previous 12 months, been in a physical fight (increased from 29.1% in 2007)
- 20.4% had, in the previous 30 days, carried a weapon, e.g., a gun, knife, or club
- 39.0% had ever used marijuana
- 20.4% had, in the previous 30 days, used marijuana one or more times
- 53.4% had ever engaged in sexual intercourse
- 38.6% had, in the previous 3 months, engaged in sexual intercourse (60.0% of these sexually active students had used a condom during their last sexual intercourse)
- 33.3% met recommended levels of physical activity<sup>4</sup>
- 16.1% attended daily physical education classes (5 days in an average week when they were in school)
- 14.7% had, in the previous 7 days, eaten fruits and vegetables<sup>5</sup> five or more times per day

<sup>1</sup> smoked cigarettes; smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars; or used chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip

<sup>2</sup> had a body mass index  $\geq$  85th percentile but below the 95th percentile for age and sex

<sup>3</sup> had a body mass index  $\geq$  95th percentile for age and sex

<sup>4</sup> were physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day on 5 or more days in the 7 days before the survey

<sup>5</sup> 100% fruit juices, fruit, green salad, potatoes (excluding french fries, fried potatoes, or potato chips), carrots, or other vegetables

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