Substance Use Prevention Services:

WORKING TOGETHER IN PREVENTION

2020 Annual Report
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All photos by Shay Ayres unless otherwise noted.
ABOUT US

The **Maine Substance Use Prevention Services** program administered by the University of New England is part of Maine Prevention Services, an initiative funded by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. UNE works with 20 local agencies to implement activities reducing young people’s substance use and misuse, which impact the health, safety, and success of Maine individuals, families, and communities.

Selected activities are informed by data usage trends, as well as prevention best practices. They address individual, family, peer group, organizational, and community factors that influence people’s substance use choices.

Substance use prevention is a community matter. Research has shown collaborative prevention to be more effective than simply individual efforts. These efforts impact people’s perceptions about how acceptable, normal, and easy it is to use substances.

**UNE Substance Use Prevention Team:**

- **Toho Soma**  
  *Principal Investigator*
- **Doreen Fournier**  
  *Program Manager*
- **Becky Ireland**  
  *Senior Program Coordinator*
- **Nick Beverage**  
  *Program Coordinator*
- **Laurie Jevons**  
  *Program Coordinator*
- **Ashley Duffee**  
  *Research Associate*
- **Lu’Ann Thibeau**  
  *Finance Manager*
- **Shay Ayres**  
  *Contract Coordinator*
MANAGER’S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

What a year 2020 was for our nation and our state. The SUPS team at UNE extends its gratitude to local prevention partners working across the state during such an unprecedented year. The challenges of engaging in effective primary prevention during COVID-19 were plentiful, including remote work, managing school closures, and changing how we work with communities. Other factors impacting prevention work included home delivery of alcohol, the opening of retail adult use marijuana stores, and an increase in opioid overdoses. SUPS partners handled these challenges with grace and courage, and adapted work in a variety of creative ways to meet the needs of their communities. Check out the infographics on page 7, most of which were made in response to COVID-19.

The coming year brings with it new funding that focuses on stimulants (a first for Maine) and opiate prevention. SUPS looks forward to continuing its work with the Maine CDC, its Maine Prevention Services colleagues, and other prevention partners who provide support and helpful resources for substance use prevention efforts.

We are happy to introduce you to our newest team member, Research Associate Ashley Duffee, MA. She works on data and evaluation making sure our numbers are correct and our training is making the mark.

SUPS is committed to another year of working together across Maine to provide evidence-based resources, training, and guidance to create safer and healthier lives for all.

Warmest regards,
Doreen Fournier, MSW
Program Manager
THE SITUATION AND THE RESPONSE

Best prevention practices use data from sources like the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey to help community partners choose activities that best fit the prevention of youth substance use.

1 in 2 Maine high school students do not think it is wrong for someone their age to use marijuana.*

3 in 5 Maine high school students say it is easy for them to get alcohol.*

1 in 20 Maine high school students has taken a prescription drug not prescribed to them.*

2 in 5 Maine middle school students have not seen a substance use prevention ad in the past year.*

Adult use retail marijuana sales in Maine began October 9, 2020.

TAUGHT 65 CLASSES, including Prime for Life Universal, which is designed for people considering making high-risk choices regarding substance use.

TAUGHT 128 STUDENTS in the Student Intervention Reintegration Program (SIRP), which helps youth engaging in at-risk behavior to make healthier choices.

TRAINED 71 BUSINESSES on how to avoid underage selling of alcohol, impacting 22,000 youth.

DISPLAYED 282 Parents Who Host, Lose the Most materials to educate parents about the risks of serving alcohol at teen house parties, impacting 108,000 youth.

COLLECTED 18,100 POUNDS of medication at the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day and in permanent medication drop boxes.

DELIVERED 1,819 substance use prevention messages that were viewed more than 416,000 times.

27 POLICIES were enacted to address marijuana use in settings such as schools and workplaces.

*First four ‘situation’ statistics from the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, 2019.

COMMUNITY PREVENTION PARTNERS

Bangor Public Health and Community Services
Casco Bay CAN (Create Awareness Now)
Choose to Be Healthy at York Hospital
City of Portland Public Health Division
Coastal Healthy Communities Coalition at the University of New England
Healthy Acadia
Healthy Androscoggin at Central Maine Health Care
Healthy Communities of the Capital Area
Healthy Community Coalition of Greater Franklin County at Franklin Community Health Network: MaineHealth
Healthy Lincoln County
Healthy Oxford Hills at MaineHealth
Kennebec Behavioral Health
Knox County Community Health Coalition at PenBay YMCA
Northern Light Mayo Hospital
Partners for Healthier Communities at Southern Maine Health Care: MaineHealth
Power of Prevention at Cary Medical Center
Somerset Public Health at Redington-Fairview General Hospital
Southern Midcoast Communities for Prevention at Mid Coast Hospital
The Opportunity Alliance
Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness
NEW PREVENTION MESSAGES

SUPS created prevention messaging to meet emerging issues in 2020. Messages were created to address challenges unique to COVID-19, including alcohol and smoking limits when dining outside, as well as how to cope with stress in healthy ways. With so much time at home, it is important to know how to safely store and dispose of medications to prevent misuse and an additional resource was created to support this messaging. These messages were shared with our community partners to use in their areas.

TAKE OUT • DINE OUT • HOST AT HOME DURING COVID-19

TIMES HAVE CHANGED... MOST LAWS HAVE NOT!
Happy hours, dining out, and hosting gatherings have all changed because of the pandemic – to keep people safe. Here are a few reminders about Maine state laws that remain in effect. Please respect these laws in order to protect yourself and our community.

TAKE OUT & DRINKS-TO-GO
• It’s illegal to consume alcohol in any public places.
• Adults over 21 can transport alcohol in a motor vehicle, but the seal cannot be broken.

 DINING OUTSIDE
• Smoking tobacco or marijuana is not permitted in outdoor dining spaces.
• Use of electronic nicotine or vaping devices is not allowed.
• It’s illegal to take alcohol outside the allowed areas of the restaurant or bar.

HOSTING A GATHERING
• You cannot allow someone under 21 to consume alcohol in a place under your control, including your home, yard, or vehicle (unless it is at a private home and their parent is present).
• It’s illegal to serve alcohol to someone who is visibly intoxicated – even in a private home.
• You could be held liable if someone is hurt or property damage occurs due to serving a guest too much alcohol, even if they don’t drive.
• Follow public health guidelines around COVID-19 for size of gatherings, social distancing, etc. This may be much harder if people drink too much.

Servers and sellers of alcohol are required by law to determine whether someone is over 21. Please be prepared to show your ID and remove your mask if they ask to confirm your identity.

CHOOSE HEALTHY HABITS IN CHALLENGING TIMES

When faced with stressful situations or challenges, there are many healthy ways to cope instead of using alcohol or other substances.

GET ACTIVE
Walk, run, play, lift weights, dance... just get moving! You will release body chemicals that help your mood and mental well-being.

LEARN SOMETHING NEW
Learn how to do something you have always wanted to try or enjoy a hobby you haven’t done for a while.

REACH OUT
If you’re feeling lonely, pick up your phone, tablet, or computer and talk to a friend or family member.

LIMIT NEWS & SOCIAL MEDIA
Too much negative news or social media can increase your anxiety, so set time limits to help reduce stress.

LAUGH
Find funny things in your daily life to reduce stress. Watch a comedy, tell jokes, or share funny stories with friends and family.
SUCCESS STORIES

Communities across Maine have engaged in creative and effective prevention projects. These Success Stories reflect the dedication and progress communities have made in substance use prevention efforts.

Full stories may be found at www.substanceuseprevention.org/#successstories.

Casco Bay CAN
CREATE AWARENESS NOW

Casco Bay CAN partnered with The Telling Room, a nonprofit that empowers youth to tell their stories about navigating high school. Nineteen youth from across Casco Bay’s service area shared their personal narratives ranging from balancing academics, bullying, and substance use. The stories narrated by the student writers demonstrated that young people can positively change and that obstacles can be overcome the moment the bell rings. The book has been distributed in print over 1,000 times, and was developed into a virtual version for the fall of 2020.

Choose to Be Healthy worked for several years to establish and sustain a series of Parent Check-Ins in York County. These check-ins were hosted by local clinicians and addressed a variety of topics to build the knowledge and capacity of parents to raise healthy adolescents. Partnerships with the larger community made the check-ins a success, supporting the effort with free spaces, donated food, and free childcare services. In a year and a half, the Parent Check-In Series has reached 225 parents and caring adults across two communities in York county.
When Healthy Acadia reached out to establishments in Washington County to address tobacco and marijuana use and exposure in the workplace, they had no idea it would result in new and updated policies that would impact more than 400 employees in Machias and surrounding towns. Engaging area establishments in tobacco and marijuana policy development is in line with Healthy Acadia’s mission to empower people and organizations toward building healthy communities together. With help from relationships built over the years, Healthy Acadia helped pass 11 tobacco and marijuana-free policies in Washington County establishments.

Partners for Healthier Communities partnered with the Sanford school department to examine their numbers of suspensions/expulsions, youth substance use data, and best practices to create a customizable restorative plan for Sanford students in need of interventions. The Student Intervention Reintegration Program (SIRP) provides positive, tailored options for Sanford students at risk of substance misuse. This change in policy has reduced the amount of school suspensions for students in Sanford as part of the conduct process. The program has been in place since 2014, and has seen an increase in both self-referrals, as well as parent referrals.

The Opportunity Alliance (TOA) partnered with the Food and Hospitality Industry to establish the Youth Employment Assistance Program (YEAP). YEAP worked to create healthy workplace cultures, teach managers how to communicate effectively with staff, and react to employee conduct matters with restorative responses. TOA created workplace specific resources, including an employer packet outlining substance use concerns and ways to address them. The professional development work was able to continue during COVID-19 through a partnership with HospitalityMaine, who offered YEAP related webinars to their attendees.
INNOVATION PROJECTS

Innovation funded projects were short-term initiatives that were awarded to selected partners through an application process. Activities addressed health disparities among youth and young adults at high-risk for using or misusing substances.

Choose to be Healthy (CTBH) used geo-targeted advertising to engage parents and teens in marijuana education resources hosted on CTBH’s new website, informME, squarespace.com. The local campaign garnered nearly 6,000 page views from over 4,000 visitors within the first eight months of launching. Director Sally Manninen pointed out the need to slice through marijuana misinformation and directly reach teens and parents:

“We have found that marijuana—more than any other drug, is one of those topics that people may know a lot about, but what they know may not be accurate.”

Hundreds of youth, along with parents, teachers, coalition, and community members, helped shape the themes used in CTBH’s eight ads targeting teens and parents. Complementary online and social media content was developed with new videos curated and produced for CTBH’s marijuana education website.
Thanks to essential support from community partners, Healthy Androscoggin was able to use online surveys to assess the landscape around cannabis use while pregnant or breastfeeding in response to concerns over the increasing rate of cannabis use among this group of women. The surveys asked 18–25 year-old women about their attitudes and beliefs around cannabis use while pregnant or breastfeeding and assessed health care and social service providers' needs, screening, and treatment practices.

Among other vital information, the survey found that women identified their health care professional as their most trusted source for information about cannabis use while breastfeeding or pregnant and that nearly 90% of healthcare providers both need and want training relating to this topic. Corrie Brown, Healthy Androscoggin’s Prevention Manager, explained:

“It is our hope that the information we collected will be helpful to healthcare providers and other members of the community in ensuring children begin their lives in the healthiest way possible.”

Healthy Communities of the Capital Area (HCCA) and students of the Gay Straight Trans Alliance (GSTA) at the Maine Arts Academy partnered to create a social norms project centered on positive messaging and grounded in the arts. The campaign was created in response to the most recent Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) data, which revealed that LGBTQ+ youth experienced health and mental health risks, wellness, and safety disparities in 2019. In alignment with research-based social norming strategies, HCCA and GSTA focused on integrating believable and positive statistics with information of interest to the GSTA to create a more upbeat and celebratory picture of the LGBTQ+ community.

“We just wanted the students at our school to feel as though they can also be a positive statistic”, said a member of the Maine Arts Academy GSTA.

The new statistics provided the inspiration for artwork that was displayed at various businesses in and around Hallowell. An overview of the campaign and data collected throughout it was shared during HCCA’s Annual Meeting and an OUT Maine presentation with nearly 30 young people.
In the fall of 2019, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention Marijuana Workgroup identified a need for a marijuana prevention and education toolkit. Community partners from the Maine CDC, the University of New England, the Office of Marijuana Policy, Healthy Androscoggin, Healthy Communities of the Capital Area, The Opportunity Alliance, and Partners for Healthy Communities contributed to both a toolkit, as well as individual fact sheets. The toolkit provides education and resources on a variety of topics, including how to talk with youth about marijuana, the differences between CBD, THC, and hemp, and what municipalities can and cannot regulate.

The toolkit was disseminated across the state in September 2020, both digitally and in print, in advance of retail stores opening in October. The toolkit is available for download through the Maine CDC here: preventionforme.org/wp-content/uploads/MaineCDC_Marijuana_Toolkit_Final.pdf.
Starting in October, 2020, SUPS community partners began working on the prevention of stimulant and opioid misuse. The goals of the grant are to reduce the illegal use or misuse of these drugs as well as negative consequences use brings.

UNE is guiding SUPS partners as they conduct needs assessments to learn about problem use. SUPS partners will talk with those in their community to hear about their experience working with people who use.

Research indicates that approaches to the successful prevention of stimulant and opioid misuse are similar to other substances. Safely store and dispose of any unused prescriptions, use prescriptions as written, and do not share prescriptions. Updating workplace and school policies and providing training are also in the works for communities across Maine.
THANK YOU

Program Partners Around the State

The Maine Substance Use Prevention Services Program would like to extend our thanks to the many statewide partners who collaborate with us to help address and minimize youth substance use.

AdCare Educational Institute of Maine
Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages and Lottery Operations
Lunder Dineen: Time to Ask
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Maine Drug Enforcement Agency
Maine Office of Marijuana Policy
Maine Resilience Building Network
Maine Statewide Epidemiology Outcomes Workgroup
Maine Youth Action Network
MaineHealth 5-2-1-0 Let’s Go!
MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence
New England Prevention Training Technology Center
Partnerships for Health
Public Consulting Group
Rinck Advertising
Maine Substance Use Prevention Services

An initiative of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control and Prevention

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