

Epi-Workgroup Charter

What is an epi-workgroup?

It is a multi-agency workgroup with a public health orientation that studies outbreaks of drug and alcohol abuse and related community problems. The group pools data and assesses emerging problems to provide a foundation of information for public health response.¹ We follow the model of NIDA's Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG), which monitors drug trends across the U.S.

What are our goals and purpose?

Our purpose is to reduce the incidence of youth drug and alcohol abuse and their related consequences in Region 6 communities. Our goals are to build a shared regional data repository, and use the data to inform prevention planning and educate the public.

What are our objectives?

The group uses the data repository to --

1. Provide early warning: identify new trends in substance use and alert our communities.
2. Inform evidence-based decision making: use data to demonstrate a need for prevention/intervention services or to plan service changes.
3. Educate the public: create public service ads on underage drinking, marijuana and prescription drug abuse.

What kind of data goes in the repository?

We pool key indicators of youth substance abuse across four categories: consumption, consequences, risk factors and protective factors. The data can be quantitative or qualitative (numeric data or expert perspective). The repository functions as a library; group members put data into it and pull data from it.

Who can join?

Ideally, members are people who can access key information in specific geographic areas. They may have some responsibility for addressing drug and alcohol problems in their communities or may benefit directly from having information about youth drug and alcohol abuse.¹ People are invited from coalitions, prevention/treatment, law enforcement, government, public health/safety, and research.

What is the "work" in workgroup?

We **access** information, within the boundaries of our various roles and organizations. We **identify** emerging trends in substance use, availability, and consequences in our communities. We **educate** the public by disseminating information and providing input on public service ads. The time investment is minimal, and we meet once every two months.

What does this group NOT do?

This group is not a place to compare program outcomes nor develop research publications.

For more information contact the PRC Evaluator Emily Breeding at ebreeding@councilonrecovery.org.

¹ National Institute on Drug Abuse. *Assessing Drug Abuse Within and Across Communities: Community Epidemiology Surveillance Networks on Drug Abuse, Second Ed.* NIH Publication No. 06-3614. Bethesda, MD: Department of Health and Human Services, 2006.