



Prevention  
Resource Center  
REGION 6

2018

# Regional Needs Assessment 2018: Executive Summary

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL PROFILE, YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE AND  
MISUSE TRENDS, AND PREVENTION EFFORTS IN THE TEXAS GULF  
COAST REGION

PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER: REGION 6

# Executive Summary

The Regional Needs Assessment (RNA) is a document created by the Prevention Resource Center (PRC) in Region 6 along with Evaluators from PRCs across the state of Texas and supported by The Council on Recovery and the Texas Health and Human Resources Commission (HHSC). The PRC 6 serves 13 counties in the Texas Gulf Coast Region.

This RNA was designed to aid PRCs, HHSC, and community stakeholders in long-term strategic prevention planning based on most current information relative to the unique needs of the diverse communities in the state of Texas. This document will present demographics, summaries of statistics, and prevalence rates relevant to risk and protective factors associated with substance use and misuse, as well as consumption patterns and consequences data. This RNA will also provide insight related to gaps in services and data availability challenges.

A team of regional evaluators has procured national, state, regional, and local data through partnerships and collaboration with diverse agencies in sectors such as law enforcement, public health, and education, among others. The data obtained through these partnerships have been synthesized and compiled into this comprehensive reference source. PRC 6 staff members recognize those collaborators who contributed to the creation of this RNA.

## Key findings:

1. The counties that make up Region 6 range from large and densely populated (Harris County at 1,704.9 square miles with 2,601 estimated population per square mile) to smaller and less densely populated (Colorado County at 960.3 square miles of total land area with 21.7 estimated population per square mile). From a county rankings perspective, Matagorda County tended to rank highest on variables such as unemployment rates, percentages of children from single-parent households, and rates of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients per 100,000 population. Conversely, Fort Bend ranked highest out of the 13 Region 6 counties on per capita income and lowest on variables such as SNAP recipients per 100,000 population, percentage of children eligible for free or reduced cost lunch, and percentage of children without health insurance. Harris County law enforcement officials report the highest level of violent and property crime out of all counties in Region 6 and also has the highest alcohol sales permit density in Region 6 at 6.4 retailers per square mile.
2. Alcohol consumption remains the largest issue among youth, but multi-year statewide trends show slight decreases in consumption. The RNA 2018 included consumption trends from the latest round of data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS, 2017) and the resulting trends for Texas youth in grades 9-12 seem promising. However, one theme common to the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), perception of harm, and perception of parental approval is that all of these sources of data demonstrate increasingly lenient perceptions and consumption data patterns regarding marijuana, albeit minor at the present time. There is much still to be learned about the long-term consequences of the legalization of marijuana through future research. However, current research on the short-term consequences of recently-passed legislation legalizing marijuana in Alaska, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington, and has already demonstrated a plethora of issues that are particularly concerning from a substance abuse prevention perspective – many of the social and legal consequences that are

increasing with the legalization of marijuana are similar to the consequences seen with alcohol. For example, consequences occurring in Colorado since the legalization of marijuana in 2012 include a 65 percent increase in first-time use in youth, an eight percent increase in alcohol consumption, a 210 percent increase in four-year averages of calls to poison control, and a crime rate that has increased 11 times faster than the rest of the United States.<sup>1</sup> Also, 33.8 percent of persons who received treatment in Texas in 2017 for misuse of any substance of any kind were youth ages 12-17 who sought treatment for marijuana use disorder. This subcategory of youth make up the largest subcategory, according to Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality (2016), TEDS, substantially more so than that for alcohol or any other specific substance use disorder.<sup>2</sup>

3. Particularly regarding the national opioid crisis and how the state of Texas and Region 6 is addressing this crisis, there are a few points of significant progress that are definitely worth mentioning as a key finding, here. The first has to do with the American Medical Association's (AMA) tracking of the effectiveness of Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMP),<sup>3</sup> which found that Texas' physicians' PDMP system queries increased by 283 percent between 2016 (1,086,373) and 2017 (4,163,058). Also noteworthy of recognition is the increasing awareness and availability of Naloxone with a standing order at many pharmacies in Texas, particularly Walgreens, Walmart, and CVS Pharmacies, which have publicly committed at the corporate level to honor the Texas standing order and stock Naloxone rescue kits. Finally, Appendix F contains a list of all of the Buprenorphine treatment providers in Region 6. The increase in Buprenorphine Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) registered treatment providers and increased PDMP use by physicians demonstrates positive changes resulting from the implementation of protective factors, such as those efforts funded by recent Texas Targeted Opioid Response (TTOR) funding, a \$24.7 million grant to combat opioid addiction in Texas. Harris County, alone, has 190 Buprenorphine treatment providers and Region 6 has 283. Over the past few years, National Drug Take Back Day has become a permanent biannual and highly publicized event carried out by state-funded prevention coalitions in partnership with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. PRC 6 also partnered with The Council on Recovery, Texas' largest prevention, treatment, and recovery services provider, in hosting the The Council's inaugural 2018 Houston Opioid Summit.

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<sup>1</sup> Smart Approaches to Marijuana. Lessons learned from marijuana legalization in four U.S. states and D.C. March, 2018. <https://learnaboutsam.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SAM-Lessons-Learned-From-Marijuana-Legalization-Digital.pdf>. Accessed July 30, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Center for Behavioral Health Statistics. Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). 2016. <https://www.dasis.samhsa.gov/webt/quicklink/TX17.htm>. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Accessed July 25, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> American Medical Association Opioid Task Force. Physicians' progress to reverse the nation's opioid epidemic. *American Medical Association Opioid Task Force Progress Report 2018*. American Medical Association. 2018. <https://www.end-opioid-epidemic.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/AMA2018-OpioidReport-FINAL-updated.pdf>. Accessed July 25, 2018.