

**Key Findings on the 2012 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, sponsored by
MetLife Foundation: Hispanic Teen Drug Use
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The Partnership at Drugfree.org today released new research from the latest Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS), a nationally projectable survey that tracks teen drug and alcohol use and parent attitudes toward substance abuse among teens. The new research, sponsored by MetLife Foundation, shows that Hispanic teens are using drugs at alarmingly higher levels when compared to teens from other ethnic groups. It confirms that substance abuse has become a normalized behavior among Latino youth.

Key Findings:

According to the new PATS research data, Hispanic teens are more likely to engage in substance abuse when compared to teens from other ethnic groups and are more likely to have abused the following substances within the past year:

- More than half of Hispanic teens (54 percent) reported having used an illicit drug, versus 45 percent for African-American teens and 43 percent for Caucasian teens.
- Almost half of Hispanic teens (47 percent) used marijuana, compared to 39 percent for African-American teens and 36 percent for Caucasian teens.
- One in eight (13 percent) Hispanic teens used Ecstasy, compared to 6 percent for Caucasian teens and 8 percent for African-American teens.
- One in eight (13 percent) Hispanic teens reported cocaine use, compared to 8 percent for African-American teens and 3 percent for Caucasian teens.
- Hispanic teens reported they consumed alcohol (62 percent) at a similar rate to Caucasian teens (59 percent) and significantly higher than African-American teens (50 percent).

The PATS data underscore that Hispanic teens are more likely than Caucasian and African-American teens to see drugs as part of their environment: to have friends who use drugs and to feel they have easy access to Ecstasy, crack/cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine. Hispanic teens are more likely to be offered drugs, even within their own schools, and too many are exposed to substance abuse within their own communities:

- Almost two-thirds (62 percent) of Hispanic teens have been offered drugs at least once in their lifetime, compared to 53 percent for Caucasian teens and 46 percent for African-American teens.
- More than four in ten (42 percent) Hispanic teens have been offered drugs at their own school, compared to 30 percent for Caucasian teens and 28 percent for African-American teens.
- Approximately one-quarter (24 percent) of Hispanic teens report seeing frequent drug use in their communities, compared to 15 percent for Caucasian teens and 24 percent for African-American teens.

Hispanic teens are now almost twice as likely as they were two years ago to have misused or abused a prescription (Rx) medicine at least once in their lifetime (30 percent in 2012 compared to 17 percent in 2010). This reflects a noteworthy 76 percent increase over two years. In 2012:

- More than one-quarter of Hispanic teens (26 percent) reported having abused or misused a prescription drug in the past year, compared to 15 percent for both Caucasian and African-American teens.
- One in seven Hispanic teens (16 percent) has engaged in the risky behavior of mixing alcohol with abusing prescription drugs (without a prescription), compared to 11 percent for Caucasian teens and 6 percent for African-American teens.
- One in ten (10 percent) Hispanic teens abused over-the-counter (OTC) cough medicine in the past year, compared to 5 percent for both Caucasian and African-American teens.

Teen substance abuse is only one of many challenges Hispanic parents face when it comes to protecting their children. The new survey data show that Hispanic parents recognize that they have the main responsibility for educating their teens about the risks of drug and alcohol abuse.

- Most Hispanic parents (85 percent) understand that teens who start using drugs and alcohol at a younger age are more susceptible to substance abuse problems as they get older, compared to 74 percent for Caucasian parents and 73 percent for African-American parents.
- Also, along with African-American parents (93 percent), a majority of Hispanic parents (94 percent) are more likely to report they have taken action once they learned about drug or alcohol use at home, when compared to 86 percent of Caucasian parents.

However the PATS data also found that Hispanic parents are more likely to be permissive toward their teen's substance abuse and share misconceptions regarding the relative safety of prescription drug abuse:

- One in five (21 percent) Hispanic parents think "it's okay if my teen smokes marijuana sometimes," compared to 6 percent for Caucasian parents and 11 percent for African-American parents.
- More than one in four (28 percent) Hispanic parents believe using Rx drugs to get high is much safer than using street drugs, compared to 9 percent for Caucasian parents and 20 percent for African-American parents.

Compared to Caucasian parents, Hispanic parents also acknowledge having more difficulty in protecting their teens from substance abuse:

- More than one in four (28 percent) Hispanic parents have difficulty enforcing rules against substance abuse, compared to 16 percent for Caucasian parents and 29 percent for African-American parents.
- And more than one-third (35 percent) of Hispanic parents feel there is little they can do to help their teens abstain from substance use, compared to 21 percent for Caucasian parents and 32 percent for African-American parents.