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News Release

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2010 Arizona Youth Survey reveals troubling levels of violence among youth

Phoenix, Ariz. (November 08, 2010)— According to a statewide survey that included more than 60,000 students, Arizona students are experiencing and/or participating in frequent incidences of violence and bullying as self-reported in the *2010 Arizona Youth Survey*.

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC), with support from the Governor's Office for Children, Youth and Families, Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS), the Department of Gaming's Office of Problem Gambling and with technical assistance from Bach Harrison LLC., conducted the *2010 Arizona Youth Survey* to assess health risk behavior and measure the prevalence of substance abuse—including alcohol, tobacco and other dangerous drugs—behavior among Arizona 8th, 10th and 12th graders. The survey also includes questions concerning other risky behavior such as bullying, violence and gambling. The 2010 survey was administered in Arizona's 15 counties representing 372 schools for a total sample of 63,784 valid survey respondents statewide. State and county profile reports are available at www.azcjc.gov. The full state report will be available in late December.

Teen dating violence and bullying

In 2010 questions were added concerning teen dating violence. Youth also reported incidents of bullying; these questions were asked in previous surveys.

- Nearly one in five youth (17.3 percent) reported being physically assaulted by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the 12 months prior to completing the survey.
- More than one of every four youth (29.1) youth report being bullied at school in the past 12 months
- Nearly 15 percent (14.9) of youth reported attacking someone with the intent to seriously hurt them in the 12 months prior to taking the survey.
- More than one out of every ten youth (11.9 percent) reported having seen someone shot or shot at in the past 12 months.

Our mission is to sustain and enhance the coordination, cohesiveness, productivity and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System in Arizona

“The AYS data also suggests that our children are being exposed to extremely violent incidents,” said Stevenson. “Approximately two-thirds of our youth have seen someone punched, kicked, choked, or beaten up, nearly 18 percent witnessed someone being attacked with a weapon, and more than one of every ten youth reported having seen someone shot or shot at in the 12 months prior to completing the survey.”

“We must do more to address bullying behavior in our schools and create an environment where youth feel safe to learn,” said Stevenson.

Brief Overview of Significant Arizona Drug Use Findings

The *2010 Arizona Youth Survey* indicates decreases in drug use in both lifetime and past 30-day use in more than half of the substances measured. There were increases in the reported use of marijuana, hallucinogens, heroin, ecstasy, sedatives, over-the-counter drugs and chewing tobacco. The overall results indicate a slight increase in some substance use and a slight decrease in other areas of substance use since the *2006 Arizona Youth Survey*.

“The Arizona Youth Survey is the best source of data in this state on youth behavior and the circumstance under which they live,” said Phillip Stevenson, director of ACJC’s Statistical Analysis Center. “These data should be reviewed and discussed by prevention and service organizations across the state to inform their policies and practices.”

This type of detailed, quantitative research is preferable for decisions in public policy. Various state and local prevention coordinators will be able to analyze the AYS report results to tailor prevention programs to the needs as reported in the AYS.

“As we continue to face serious fiscal challenges and budget cuts, this level of detailed data that the AYS provides allows policy makers to determine the most effective ways to use limited funding. AYS data allows for this type of informed decision-making,” said ACJC Executive Director John Blackburn Jr.

For the purpose of the briefings below, past-month use indicates the 30 days prior to the student’s response on the survey.

30-Day and Lifetime Alcohol Use

Alcohol (31.9 percent) continues to be the substance used by the largest percentage of youth in the 30 days prior to completing the survey, although that total has decreased slightly from 2006 (34.4). The percentage of students in all three grades who admit to

having consumed alcohol at least once in their lifetime was 58.2 percent, a decrease from 61.7 percent in 2006. The numbers are higher for high school seniors only. Nearly three out of four 12th graders (72.8 percent) reported drinking alcohol at least once in their lifetime.

30-Day and Lifetime Cigarette Use

Cigarette use increases with increased grade level. In the month prior to taking the survey, 14.7 percent of Arizona students have used cigarettes, and 34 percent have used cigarettes at least once in their lifetime. The lifetime use dropped from 39.6 percent in 2006. While there has been no significant decrease in 30-day use of cigarettes, there have been meaningful decreases in lifetime cigarette use between 2006 and 2010, which represents a downward trend for nearly a decade.

30-Day and Lifetime Chewing Tobacco Use

The percentage of youth who report using chewing tobacco has increased slightly over the past few years. A total of 5.1 percent of students report using chewing tobacco within the 30 days prior to taking the survey and 11.7 percent reported using chewing tobacco at least once in their lifetime. That is an increase over the 3.8 percent 30-day use and the 11 percent life-time use reported in 2006.

30-Day and Lifetime Marijuana Use

After modest decreases for several years, reported marijuana use increased among 8th, 10th and 12th grade students between 2006 and 2010. In the past 30 days, 14.8 percent of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders have used marijuana at least one time, a modest increase from 13.1 percent reported in 2006. For lifetime use, a total of 29.9 percent of Arizona students reported using marijuana, compared to 29.2 percent in 2006. Marijuana use had been trending downward for several years until 2010.

30-Day and Lifetime Inhalant Use

While use of other drugs tends to increase with increased grade level, a common pattern for inhalant use is to peak in middle school and decline significantly after the 8th grade. In 2010, 1.5 percent of 12th graders used inhalants in the past month and 5.6 percent of 8th graders reported using inhalants in the past month. The difference in inhalant use trends may be related to the fact that younger students have more access to inhalants than they do other drugs.

30-Day and Lifetime Methamphetamine Use

The 2006 AYS administration was the first in which survey respondents were explicitly asked about their lifetime use of methamphetamine. Compared to the 2006 results, the 2010 results indicate a decline in meth use among all grades. In 2006, 1.3 percent reported having used in the last 30 days and 4.3 percent of survey respondents reported ever using methamphetamine. In 2010, .4 percent of students reported using methamphetamine in the previous 30-day period, and 1.5 percent reported ever using methamphetamine. Past-month use rates by grade indicate that in 2006, 1 percent of 8th graders had used methamphetamine; 1.7 percent of 10th graders had used methamphetamine and 1.4 percent of 12th graders had used methamphetamine. In 2010, 30-day use declined among all grades: .2 percent of 8th graders have used methamphetamine; .5 percent of 10th graders have used methamphetamine and .6 percent of 12th graders have used methamphetamine. In 2006, lifetime use rates by grade indicate that 2.6 percent of 8th graders had used methamphetamine; 5 percent of 10th graders had used methamphetamine and 6.6 percent of 12th graders had used methamphetamine. In 2010, lifetime use rates by grade indicate that .7 percent of 8th graders have used methamphetamine; 1.6 percent of 10th graders have used methamphetamine and 2.5 percent of 12th graders have used methamphetamine. These are significant reductions.

30-Day and Lifetime Use of Other Illicit Drugs

Most students never try illicit drugs such as hallucinogens, stimulants, cocaine, heroin, sedatives, and ecstasy. An even lower percentage of students regularly use these illicit drugs. Total past month use was 1.6 percent for hallucinogens, 1.4 percent for cocaine, .8 percent for heroin, and 2.5 percent for ecstasy. Lifetime use of each illicit drug was less similar when looked at by grade. For 8th grade students, lifetime use was 2.2 percent for hallucinogens, 2.3 percent for cocaine, .9 percent for heroin, and 3.9 percent for ecstasy. For 10th grade students, lifetime use was 5.9 percent for hallucinogens, 5.3 percent for cocaine, 2.6 percent for heroin, and 8.2 percent for ecstasy. For 12th grade students, lifetime use was 9 percent for hallucinogens, 8.8 percent for cocaine, 3.4 percent for heroin, and 10.6 percent for ecstasy. Among these drugs, there was an increase in the reported use of ecstasy. In 2010, the overall reported 30-day use among Arizona students was 2.5 percent, up from .9 percent in 2006. Lifetime use in 2010 was 7.0 percent, up from 3.0 percent in 2006.

In 2008, the question regarding prescription drug use was changed to capture better and more precise data. This could be an explanation for part of the increase in reported use of prescription drugs, but the researchers do not believe this is the only explanation for the increase in usage. The survey asked about three types of prescription drugs: prescription stimulants, prescription sedatives, and prescription pain relievers. Of the prescription drug categories, prescription pain relievers had the highest rate of use with 16.8 percent of youth reporting use in their lifetime and 7.7 percent of youth reporting use in the 30-days prior to taking the survey.

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About the ACJC

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission is a statutorily authorized entity mandated to carry out various coordinating, monitoring and reporting functions regarding the administration and management of criminal justice programs in Arizona. In accordance with statutory guidelines, the Commission is comprised of 19 Commissioners who represent various elements of the criminal justice system in Arizona. Five of the 19 Commission members are agency heads, while the other 14 are appointed by the Governor to serve for two-year terms. ACJC was created in 1982 to serve as a resource and service organization for Arizona's 480 criminal justice agencies on a myriad of issues ranging from drugs, gangs, victim compensation and assistance to criminal record improvement initiatives. The ACJC works on behalf of the criminal justice agencies in Arizona to facilitate information and data exchange among statewide agencies by: establishing and maintaining criminal justice information archives; monitoring new and continuing legislation relating to criminal justice issues; and gathering information and research on existing criminal justice programs.