

Ventura County Community Health Survey

Selected Findings - Rx/OTC Drugs | FY 14-15

In order to obtain current, generalizable, community-level data on issues related to alcohol and other drug use, Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) Alcohol and Drug Programs commissioned a random digit dial telephone survey. A total of 769 adult Ventura County residents were interviewed to obtain local information regarding their concerns, behaviors, and perceptions related to substance abuse and availability of County services. The following findings are specific to prescription drug and over-the-counter (Rx/OTC) abuse.

Use of Ventura County's Prescription Drug Disposal Program



Ventura County is actively engaged and committed to preventing Rx/OTC drug misuse and abuse. One of the ways the County works to address the issue locally is by reducing access, especially to teens. VCBH Alcohol and Drug Programs, in collaboration with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, established a countywide Rx disposal program that allows residents to safely dispose of unused, unwanted, or expired Rx medication via secure, confidential disposal bins. To measure the public's use of these disposal bins, respondents were asked if they have ever dropped off their unused or expired Rx drugs at a County drop box. **Across respondents, 18% indicated using the County's disposal bins.** Use of the County's bins was consistent across residents in East and West county. Of note, 73% of Ventura County residents indicated Rx drugs, for uses not as prescribed and/or intended, are "fairly easy" or "very easy" for teenagers to obtain, further supporting the need for an ongoing disposal program to address access concerns.

Almost 1 in 5 Ventura County residents have dropped off unused or expired Rx drugs at a County disposal bin.



Reported Rx/OTC Drug Misuse and Perceptions of Harm

Lifetime

- A total of 5% of respondents reported using Rx/OTC drugs to get high at least once in their lives.
- Rx/OTC drug misuse among 18 to 25 year olds was double that of any other adult age group.
- Men were 4 times more likely than women to report Rx/OTC drug abuse.

Past 30 Days

- Of the respondents who reported ever having used Rx/OTC drugs for the purpose of getting high, 6% indicated "yes" they had used Rx/OTC drugs in the past 30 days to get high.

Perception of Harm

- 96% of respondents believe people "moderately" or "greatly" risk harming themselves when they use prescriptions drugs not as intended.
- Women reported greater perceived risk of harm compared to men.



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