



# Behavioral Health Profile for Washington County



July 1, 2011

## About Washington County:

Located in Southeast Missouri, Washington County has a population of 25,195. Among Missouri's 114 counties plus the city of St. Louis, Washington County ranks 45th in terms of population. Washington County's unemployment rate in 2010 was 14.09%. This was higher than the statewide unemployment rate of 9.60%. In 2009, the poverty rate for Washington County was 24.8%. This was higher than the statewide poverty rate of 14.6%. Washington County is not considered a primary healthcare shortage area and is considered a mental health professional shortage area by the Health Resources and Services Administration. Other shortages may exist for low income populations.

## Substance Use and Abuse in Washington County:

The availability of county-level data on substance use and abuse is limited. The Missouri Student Survey can provide estimates for youth in most Missouri counties. This survey is administered in even-numbered years to 6th through 12th grade students in participating school districts.

In Washington County, 56.69% of youth believe that it would be easy to get cigarettes and 48.61% have friends who smoke. The Healthy People 2020 has established objectives to reduce tobacco initiation and use by adolescents and adults. An estimated 59.40% youth in Washington County believe that it would be easy to get alcohol and 63.40% have friends who drink alcohol. Youth who use alcohol are at greater risk of developing abuse problems later in life. In Washington County, 34.81% of youth believe that it would be easy to get marijuana and 18.71% of youth believe that it would be easy to get other drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine, and ecstasy. Missouri youth tend to perceive marijuana as being safer than other illegal drugs and safer than tobacco.

In Southeast Missouri, an estimated 7.08% of residents age 12 and over use illegal drugs and 8.6% are abusing alcohol. Public safety, health care, crime, and public assistance are among the areas impacted by substance abuse. In 2009, Washington County had 25 alcohol-related traffic crashes. This is lower than that for 2008 (35). Of the 2009 alcohol-related crashes, 7 crashes resulted in the loss of life. Another 16 resulted in injuries. Alcohol-related crashes are more likely to produce fatalities and injuries compared to non-alcohol-related crashes.

In 2009, Washington County had 56 DUI arrests, 51 liquor law violations, and 122 drug arrests. Washington County had 85 methamphetamine laboratory seizures in 2009. The manufacture of methamphetamine has been particularly problematic for rural Missouri.

## Current Substance Use for Grades 6 through 12\*

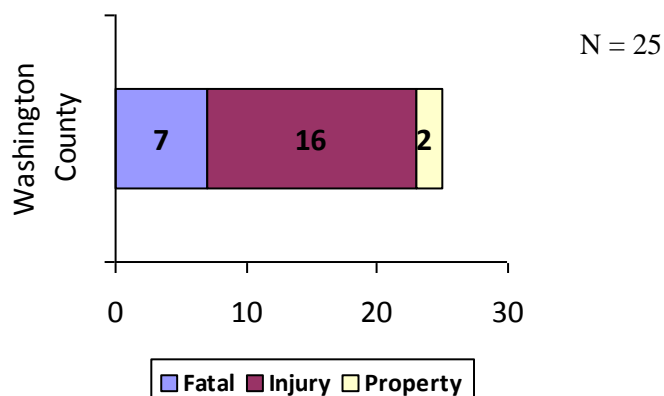
|  | Washington County | Missouri |
|--|-------------------|----------|
| Cigarettes                                       | <b>18.64 %</b>    | 13.70 %  |
| Chewing tobacco                                  | <b>13.03 %</b>    | 6.10 %   |
| Alcohol  | <b>26.46 %</b>    | 19.80 %  |
| Binge drinking*                                  | <b>17.37 %</b>    | 11.40 %  |
| Marijuana  | <b>10.12 %</b>    | 9.40 %   |
| Inhalants  | <b>3.30 %</b>     | 3.00 %   |
| Prescription drugs not prescribed for student    | <b>7.79 %</b>     | 6.70 %   |
| Over-the-counter medications for non-medical use | 6.12 %            | 4.80 %   |

\*Used in the past 30 days

**Red:** Higher than Missouri rate

\*\*Five or more drinks on one occasion

## 2009 Alcohol-related Crashes

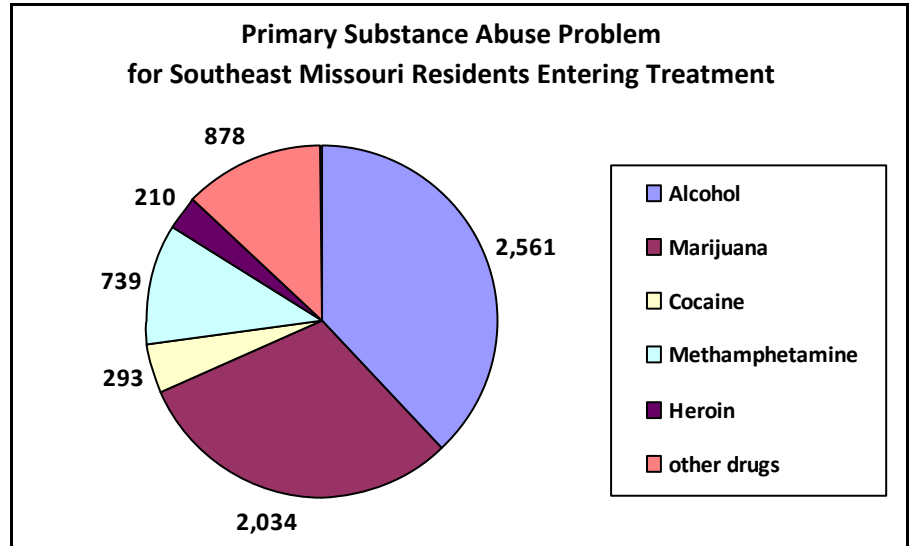


# Behavioral Health Profile for Washington County

## Substance Use and Abuse in Washington County: (cont.)

In 2008, Washington County residents had a total of 187 alcohol-related and 165 drug-related hospitalizations and emergency room visits. Statewide, average expenses for an alcohol or drug-related visit to the emergency room was \$4,180.

In state fiscal year 2010, 209 Washington County residents were admitted to substance abuse treatment at publicly-funded facilities. In Southeast Missouri and statewide, alcohol and marijuana were the most common substance abuse problems presenting for treatment. In Southeast Missouri, the next most common drug problem was methamphetamine. Statewide, it was methamphetamine.



## Mental Health in Washington County:

In Southeast Missouri, an estimated 14.66% of residents age 12 and over have had serious psychological distress in the past year. Young adults and females tend to have higher rates of serious psychological distress. Nationwide, about 45 percent of those with serious psychological distress receive mental health services. Approximately 9.04% of Southeast Missouri residents have had at least one major depressive episode in the past year. A major depressive episode is characterized by an extended period of depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, and impaired functioning. Females are more likely to report having had a major depressive episode. Mental illness can result from a combination of genetic vulnerabilities and life stressors such as loss of employment or relationships and financial difficulties. Symptoms can include feeling sad, confused thinking, excessive fears, withdrawal from family and friends, problems sleeping, detachment from reality, substance abuse, significant changes in eating habits, excessive anger or violence, and suicidal thinking. Treatment for mental illness can include a combination of counseling and medication. In 2009, 0 Washington County residents committed suicide. The suicide rate for Southeast Missouri was 14.6 per 100,000 persons, which is higher than the state rate (14.3 per 100,000 persons.) Males are about four times more likely to commit suicide than females. Older males have higher rates of suicide than younger males.

In state fiscal year 2010, 313 Washington County residents received treatment for serious mental illness at publicly-funded facilities. In Southeast Missouri and statewide, mood disorders were the most common diagnosis category. Mood disorders include mania, major depression, and bipolar disorder. Anxiety and psychotic disorders were the next most common diagnosis categories. Anxiety disorders include panic, obsessive-compulsive, and post-traumatic stress disorders as well as phobias. Psychotic disorders include schizophrenia and delusional disorders. Individuals struggling with serious mental illness are at higher risk for homicide, suicide, and accidents as well as chronic conditions including cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and substance abuse disorders.

|   | Washington County | Missouri |
|---|-------------------|----------|
| <b>Current Mental Health for Grades 6 through 12*</b> |                   |          |
| Were very sad   | <b>22.69 %</b>    | 18.90 %  |
| Were grouchy, irritable, or in a bad mood             | <b>32.14 %</b>    | 24.80 %  |
| Felt hopeless about the future                        | <b>14.97 %</b>    | 11.80 %  |
| Felt like not eating or eating more than usual        | <b>22.49 %</b>    | 18.10 %  |
| Slept a lot more or a lot less than usual             | <b>30.44 %</b>    | 25.60 %  |
| Had difficulty concentrating on school work           | <b>30.68 %</b>    | 24.60 %  |
| Seriously considered attempting suicide               | <b>15.74 %</b>    | 11.60 %  |
| Have been bullied on school property                  | <b>30.66 %</b>    | 25.00 %  |

\*In the past 30 days

**Red:** Higher than Missouri rate