Substance abuse prevention:
Identifying risk factors is first step

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The Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care is working with the state Division of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS) to identify the risks associated with substance abuse and to deploy resources to providers that beneficiaries can use to prevent and treat substance abuse. Clearly there are many problems associated with substance abuse, including expenses for treatment, lost productivity, and costs to the state government for treatment, rehabilitation, and in some cases incarceration.

Where possible, the best cure is prevention. To that end, AFMC has produced a comprehensive report about the risk factors associated with substance abuse. The *Risk Factors for Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Abuse in Arkansas — 2011* report demonstrates the DBHS' continued commitment to help Arkansans live productive lives, free from the abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. *Risk Factors* has provided information for more than 10 years and has progressed as a meaningful source for behavioral health data and information for community and government leaders. Data is used to plan prevention programs.

Risk Factors is designed to be a tool for Arkansas' 13 prevention resource centers and other prevention leaders to increase the effectiveness of regional, county and community efforts to prevent the abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

The organization and content of *Risk Factors* is based on the work of J. David Hawkins and Richard F. Catalano of the Social Development Research Group at the University of Washington. Through their research, certain conditions in children's community, school, family and peer environments, as well as individual characteristics, were identified as common risk factors for social problems such as drug abuse, delinquency, adolescent pregnancy and failure in school. The data in this report have been selected as indicators of the risk factors identified by their research to be precursors to adolescent drug and alcohol abuse.

Risk Factors for Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Abuse in Arkansas was developed in cooperation with DBHS with federal funds from the Substance Abuse and Treatment Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The 2011 report indicates that there is wide variation in certain risks for drug and alcohol abuse. For example, rates per 100,000 population for lung cancer deaths in Franklin, Lafayette, Poinsett and Sharp counties were more than double those in St. Francis, Washington, Pike and Van Buren counties.

Also, the report contains data related to traffic crashes involving underage drunk drivers during 2010 (see map). There is wide variation among counties that report this data: county prevalence in Sebastian, Garland and Drew counties is approximately twice the prevalence rates in Union, White and Benton counties.

When applying the information presented in this report at the county level, it is important to have knowledge about local conditions, risks, and resources, as well as local prevention services already in place. Risk factors exist in different environments, namely community, family, school, and peer/individual, and are grouped into domains accordingly.

Demographic data includes economic data, population by age, school enrollment and vital statistics. The community domain includes information related to availability of beer and tobacco, community disorganization, extreme economic

deprivation and transitions and mobility of the population. The school domain includes information about academic failure, lack of commitment to school, family conflict and family history of high-risk behavior. The peer/individual domain contains information related to alienation, rebelliousness, early initiation of problem behavior, and peers who engage in problem behavior. Finally, the consequences domain includes public health and safety outcomes from exposure to risk factors including HIV cases, alcohol or drug related traffic injuries and fatalities, lung cancer deaths, and deaths from alcoholic liver disease.

Data within the report is trended for the past 10 years for reference and includes demographic data for the population being profiled, such as the statewide population, the regional population and the county population. Ninety-two indicators are compiled and formatted to generate county and regional summaries. Data sources include:
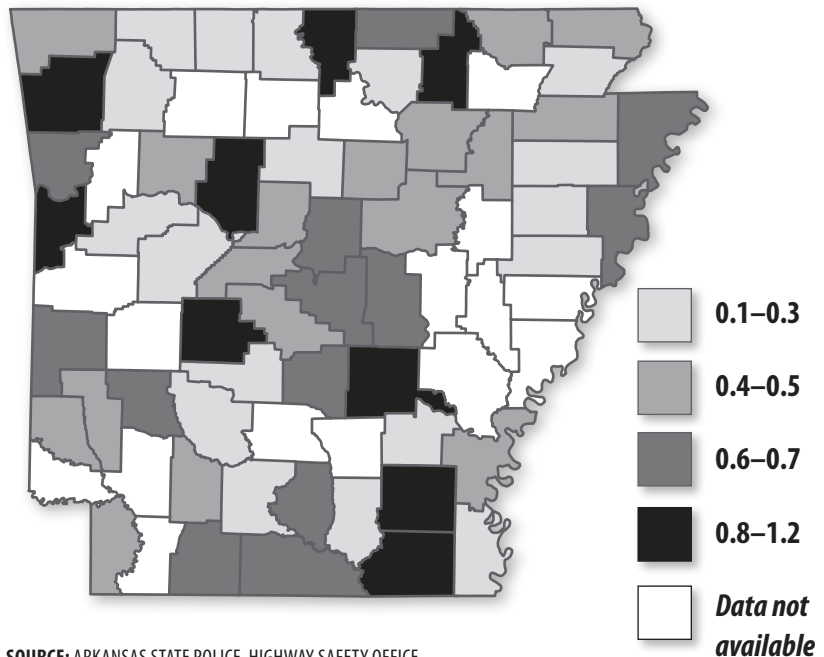
- Arkansas Crime Information Center
- Arkansas Department of Human Services
- Arkansas Department of Correction
- Arkansas State Police
- Arkansas Department of Education
- Arkansas Tobacco Control Board
- Arkansas Department
- U.S. Bureau of the Census of Finance and Administration
- U.S. Department of Labor
- Arkansas Department of Health

Through providing the most recent data available and working with community and prevention leaders, we hope to decrease the

Traffic crashes involving underage drunk drivers, 2010

DEFINITION: The number of traffic accidents in which any of the involved drivers was under 21 and under the influence of alcohol, per 1,000 population.

STATE RATE: 0.6

▨	0.1–0.3
▨	0.4–0.5
▨	0.6–0.7
■	0.8–1.2
□	*Data not available*

SOURCE: ARKANSAS STATE POLICE, HIGHWAY SAFETY OFFICE

incidence of substance abuse, depression, violence, and other problem behaviors in children.

Providers may view and download a copy of the report at **preventionworksar.org**. Interactive and query-able county specific maps are also available to provide data targeted to a specific geographic region. We believe this information may be particularly useful to providers who are interested in knowing more about the environmental factors associated with beneficiaries in their geographic area of practice.

At AFMC our mission is to promote excellence in health and health care through education and evaluation. In keeping with that

mission, we are pleased to provide this data to assist providers in having the most information possible related to the overall environmental factors that are frequently associated with risks for substance abuse within the population.

We encourage providers to visit preventionworksar.org to review risk factor information within their service area or to contact their provider representative with any questions related to this program. ▲

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