

Evidence Base for Prevention:

Data supporting the effectiveness of substance misuse prevention coalitions in Vermont comes largely from the evaluation of two federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) grants awarded to the Vermont Department of Health (VDH), Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs (ADAP) from 2012 through 2020. Note that funding from SAMSHA was reduced in 2020 and, consequently, the number of regional RPP grants decreased from 12 to 5.

The Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) completed a formal evaluation of both funding initiatives over these years, with the final report submitted in January of 2021 (report summary [here](#)). The process and outcome data examined provided **ample evidence to support the success of a regional prevention coalition structure**. The intentional development and support of this structure over the combined years of federal SAMSHA funding resulted in a strong network of community partners working collaboratively in twelve regions across the state to reduce the rates of substance misuse among youth and young adults.

Specific enhancements achieved through this regional structure included:

- increased collaboration among stakeholders within each region;
- greater prominence of prevention in regional and local planning and policies;
- more efficient and effective dissemination of prevention messages through media outreach;
- development of strong youth leadership and empowerment opportunities;

In addition:

- Disparities (i.e., higher rates of substance misuse) among LGBTQ adolescents and young adults were identified for almost all outcome measures examined and these disparities decreased during the years of RPP implementation.
- prescription medication disposal options expanded around the state.

I am attaching a few slides (“Prevention Coalitions” document) that demonstrate the real impact of investment in prevention on substance use rates. The first slide depicts binge drinking rates among high school students overlaid with federal grants supporting prevention coalitions in Vermont (SIG, SPF-SIG, PFS). As you can see, when the federal investments went away, rates ticked up. The final four slides illustrate one example of the impact of a regional coalition, which formed in 1997 and is active to this day. The slides demonstrate substance use rates among high school students when the coalition was first formed and over the years since the coalition has been active.

There is much more information regarding the effectiveness of substance use prevention activities here (particularly chapter 2, starting on page 19):

<https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/pep19-pl-guide-1.pdf>

Difference between the Collaboratives and the coalitions?

No difference. There is a coalition in VT called “The Collaborative.”

How do we ensure that the coalitions that exist now are using evidenced-based practices?

This is a requirement of their grants from VDH and they must report on the evidence based practices they are using.

Plan for proposed \$3.5 million

Our plan for utilizing the proposed \$3.5 million is attached.

Where are existing coalitions?

A map of the areas we currently fund is attached.