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N E W S

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SURVEY: OHIO TEENS MAKE STRIDES IN HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

COLUMBUS – More Ohio teenagers are engaging in healthy behaviors today, compared to 1999 and 2003, according to the 2007 Ohio Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). While the results of the survey are encouraging, there are still areas for improvement.

Not using a seat belt, physical fighting in schools, suicide attempts and alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug use have all decreased significantly since 1999, the YRBS shows. However, fruit consumption and daily milk drinking have also declined significantly since 2003, according to the survey.

“Ohio teenagers are on the right track,” said Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Alvin D. Jackson, M.D. “While the overall results are encouraging, we must continue our efforts to instill healthy habits in our young people.”

The 2007 YRBS follows similar surveys conducted in 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2003 and 2005 and measures behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disease and injury among youth. It focuses on 11 categories: youth development; injury; violence; mental health; tobacco; alcohol; illegal drugs and prescription drug abuse; sexual behaviors; nutrition; physical activity; and preventive health care.

In 2007, 2,527 students in 101 high schools were surveyed. Key findings of the 2007 YRBS include:

- Ninety percent of teens report they did not drink and drive in the past month.
- Seventy-eight percent report they did not smoke cigarettes in the past month.
- Sixty-eight percent report seeing a doctor for a checkup in the past year.
- Thirty-four percent report using marijuana at least once during their lives.
- Twenty-nine percent report binge drinking.
- Fifty-nine percent report spending at least one hour a month doing volunteer work.

“Healthy youth are likely to become healthy adults and unhealthy youth are likely to be unhealthy adults,” Jackson said. “ODH remains committed to work to protect and improve the health of all Ohioans – and that includes young Ohioans.”

ODH conducts the biennial survey under the direction of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. To view the entire report, go to the ODH Web site at: <http://www.odh.ohio.gov>.

