

# 5 Ways

## Juvenile Probation Administrators Can Use Public Health Data and Resources to Address Substance Use Disorders

Juvenile probation administrators are responsible for ensuring that their probation department equitably offers evidence-based services to youth. It is important that these services meet the needs of youth, and that the services foster positive outcomes. This is especially true for substance use disorder (SUD) treatment because the juvenile justice system continues to be the largest referral source for this type of intervention. To understand the needs of youth in their communities, probation administrators can use their jurisdiction's data with national public health data to understand how their jurisdiction fits into the broader picture of substance misuse by adolescents. This added layer of analysis and comparison can be useful to probation administrators in their roles as leaders and educators for probation staff and case managers. Below are five ways probation administrators can use data and resources to improve policy and practice related to youth who are involved in the justice system and have a SUD. The list below is not exhaustive; instead, it serves as a starting point for probation administrators to better use the data and resources available.

### 01 Understanding the scope of the problem

We know that for youth ages 12-17 in 2018, 3.8% had a SUD, with 512,000 using marijuana, 401,000 using alcohol, 108,000 using opioids, and 61,000 using other illicit drugs.<sup>1</sup> Juvenile probation administrators should strategically review available public health data to train juvenile probation officers or case managers about the most commonly used substances by adolescents. This information can help probation administrators and treatment providers ensure that the treatment modalities used are matched to the need in their communities. The following public health data may be useful:

- Access the [National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#)<sup>2</sup> to learn about the prevalence of substance use for those aged 12 and older.
- Access the [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System](#)<sup>3</sup> to learn about the prevalence of six

categories of risk behaviors for youth grades 9-12, including substance use.

- Access [National Juvenile Court Statistics](#)<sup>4</sup> to perform unique analysis on different variables associated with juvenile court cases, including state-level analysis, to determine how many cases that involved drug offenses resulted in probation.
- Access the [Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program](#)<sup>5</sup> to understand what data are collected in your area that are related to opioid overdose. This data may help determine if youth are at risk of overdosing in your community.
- Access the [Treatment Episode Data Set \(TEDS\)](#)<sup>6</sup> to help identify the local burden on treatment agencies. TEDS includes records for annual substance use treatment admissions and contains a significant proportion of admissions that constitute a burden on public funds.

## 02

### Ensuring equitable access to services vs. more restrictions

It is likely that case plans, for youth with SUDs, include referrals for assessments, treatment interventions, drug testing, and peer-support. It is incumbent upon probation administrators to ensure that youth receive equitable responses for new or continued substance use. For example, probation administrators should use data to understand which youth:

- Get second chances for a positive drug screen versus detention for new or continued use.
- Have access to community-based treatment services versus residential treatment services.
- Fully complete treatment versus early termination from treatment interventions.

Probation administrators should collect, share, and report outcomes by demographics to determine if inequities exist and work with department staff and other stakeholders to decrease any inequities that are identified.

## 03

### Facilitating ongoing training for juvenile probation officers

Juvenile probation administrators should organize training for probation staff that make certain probation officers are knowledgeable about substance misuse in their jurisdiction. Training should include information regarding how to respond to new or continued drug / alcohol use equitably. Training should provide information about adolescent drug use and ways to decrease drug use through case planning and management. Use publicly available resources to provide current and reliable information at training events:

- Provide training about the risk of specific substance use – [Risks of Adolescent Alcohol Use](#),<sup>7</sup> [Risk of Adolescent Marijuana Use](#),<sup>8</sup> or [Who Influences Adolescent Marijuana Use](#).<sup>9</sup>
- Download SAMHSA's [Tips for Teens](#)<sup>10</sup> series to provide probation officers with talking points

to cover with youth during case management meetings.

- Disseminate strategies for reducing adolescent drug use – [Strategies for Reducing Adolescent Alcohol Use](#)<sup>11</sup> and [Resources and Strategies for Reducing \[Marijuana\] Use](#).<sup>12</sup>
- Access information about opioid use among adolescents. Although teens use opioids at a lower rate, it is important to learn about this type of use – [Opioids and Adolescents](#),<sup>13</sup> [Medication and Counseling Treatment](#),<sup>14</sup> and [safe and legal Access to MAT for Adolescents and Adults](#).<sup>15</sup>

## 04

### Encouraging accurate data collection

Administrators should implement a protocol that focuses on consistent data collection and train probation staff on these procedures. They should also consider collaborating with judges and other stakeholder agencies to ensure consistent data collection and reporting between agencies. Collect relevant data on substance-related offenses; youth characteristics, such as the risk of continued substance use; juvenile drug treatment court involvement, if applicable, and treatment provision data (i.e., treatment entry / completion, cost of services). Once this data is collected, convene stakeholders to review the data and outcomes, as well as to set benchmarks for improvement.

In addition, reporting consistent and accurate data to national systems can ensure that federal funders have the necessary information to make adequate funding decisions. Determine if your jurisdiction submits its data to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's [National Juvenile Court Data Archive \(NJCDA\)](#).<sup>16</sup> If your jurisdiction is not currently sending data to NJCDA, take steps to start sending this data.

Probation administrators should consider working in collaboration with judges and other stakeholder agencies to understand the SUD treatment options available to youth in the juvenile justice system.

Data show that a majority of youth who use substances use alcohol and marijuana. Therefore, administrators should develop and use local evidence-based programs (EBPs) proven effective

for treating adolescent alcohol and marijuana use. Probation administrators must ensure that treatment providers are using evidence-based practices. Some resources to identify appropriate programming include national clearinghouses that disseminate information about EBPs:

- [NIJ Drug and Substance Use EBP Abstracts](#).<sup>17</sup>
- [National Directory of Drug and Alcohol Abuse Treatment Facilities](#).<sup>18</sup>
- [Opioid Treatment Program Directory](#)<sup>19</sup>

### Endnotes

- 1 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2019). Critical substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. (HHS Publication No. PEP19-5068, NSDUH Series H-54). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. Retrieved from: <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/nsduhffr2018.pdf>.
- 2 The National Survey on Drug Use and Health provides up-to-date information on tobacco, alcohol, and drug use, mental health and other health-related issues in the United States – <https://nsduhweb.rti.org/respweb/homepage.cfm>.
- 3 The Centers of Disease Control and Preventions. Adolescent and School Health. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) – <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>.
- 4 Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics – <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezaics/>.
- 5 The Overdoses Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP) is a free online platform to support reporting of suspected fatal and nonfatal overdoses. Launched in 2017 by the Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area – <http://www.odmap.org/>.
- 6 SAMHSA. Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) – <https://www.dasis.samhsa.gov/webt/information.htm>.
- 7 Department of Health and Human Services. Office of Population Affairs – <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/substance-use/alcohol/risks/index.html>.
- 8 *Supra* note 7 – <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/substance-use/marijuana/risks/index.html>.
- 9 *Supra* note 7 – <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/substance-use/marijuana/influencers/index.html>.
- 10 SAMHSA. Publications and Digital Products (Tips for Teens Series) – <https://store.samhsa.gov/?f%5B0%5D=series%3A5567>.
- 11 *Supra* note 7 – <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/substance-use/alcohol/strategies/index.html>.
- 12 *Supra* note 7 – <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/substance-use/marijuana/resources/index.html>.
- 13 *Supra* note 7 – <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-development/substance-use/drugs/opioids/index.html>.

- 14 SAMHSA. Medication-Assisted Treatment – <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/treatment>.
- 15 NCJFCJ. Access to Medication-Assisted Treatment for Adolescents and Adults in the Juvenile and Family Justice System – <https://www.ncjfcj.org/publications/mat-resolution-infographic/>.
- 16 The National Juvenile Court Data Archive (Archive) houses the automated records of cases handled by courts with juvenile jurisdiction. The Archive was established by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to promote access to automated juvenile court data sets – <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/njcda/asp/about.asp>.
- 17 National Institute of Justice. [Crimesolutions.gov](https://crimesolutions.gov) – <https://crimesolutions.gov/TopicDetails.aspx?ID=4>.
- 18 The National Directory, housed on SAMHSA’s website, includes a “listing of federal, state, and local government facilities and private facilities that provide substance abuse treatment services” <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/national-directory-drug-and-alcohol-abuse-treatment-facilities-2019>.
- 19 The National Directory, housed on SAMHSA’s website can be filtered by state and includes contact information on opioid treatment programs – <https://dpt2.samhsa.gov/treatment/>.

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