

# **Dukes County Health Council Youth Task Force**

## ***Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2006/2007***

Report I: Background

**Report Prepared by  
Southeast Center for Healthy Communities  
A Program of Health Care of Southeastern Massachusetts, Inc.**

# *Table of Contents*

<i>Introduction.....</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>Methods.....</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>Survey.....</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>Core Measures.....</i>	<b>4</b>
<i>Parental Consent.....</i>	<b>4</b>
<i>Administration.....</i>	<b>4</b>
<i>Validity.....</i>	<b>4</b>
<i>Sample.....</i>	<b>5</b>

## Introduction

In February 19, 2007 Martha's Vineyard Public Schools administered a version of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) national Youth Risk Behavior Survey<sup>1</sup>. The intent of the survey was to measure risk behaviors of Martha's Vineyard Public School students, placing an emphasis on substance use and abuse. This report is the first of three that provide the background and results of the survey. This report outlines survey methods (including the survey tool and administration) and discusses the sample of students surveyed. Report II includes the Martha's Vineyard High School results, while Report III contains Martha's Vineyard middle school (grades 7 and 8) results.

## Methods

### *Survey*

The basis for the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools survey was the Centers for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Survey.<sup>2</sup> To provide further information on topics of importance to Martha's Vineyard, questions were added to the instrument from the Communities that Care Youth Survey<sup>3</sup>.

The use of existing tools to obtain survey questions serves two key purposes. First, this method assures that question items have been tested for reliability (similar results are obtained every time the question is asked) and validity (the item measures what it is intended to measure), providing Martha's Vineyard with a scientifically rigorous survey instrument. Second, the use of existing surveys provides state and national comparison data for some question items.

### *“Core Measures”*

Included in the Martha's Vineyard youth survey are questions designed to gather information on the “four core measures” of the Drug Free Communities grant, a grant which the Martha's Vineyard Youth Task Force applied for in 2007. Grantees are required to report on student current substance use, age of first use of substances, perception of risk of harm of substance use, and perception of parental disapproval.

---

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control, 2005

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control, 2005

<sup>3</sup> Also known as the SAHMSA Risk and Protective Factor Survey

## ***Parental Consent***

Prior to conducting the survey, parental consent for student participation was obtained through a letter sent home to all parents/guardians of Martha's Vineyard Public School students in grades 7 through 12. The letter described the survey and its purpose, and offered parents a chance to opt their child/children out of the survey.

## ***Administering the Survey***

Teachers were provided a set of instructions describing the methods for administering the survey to students. On the day of the survey, each teacher read instructions aloud to his/her students, assuring students that the survey was voluntary (a student was free to choose to skip questions or refrain from taking the survey entirely) and anonymous (a student could not be identified from his/her answer sheet).

Student answer sheets were collected in a manila envelope at the front of each classroom. Each student placed his or her own answer sheet in the envelope, which ensured teachers could not see a student's answers. This collection method reinforced that the survey was anonymous, and encouraged participants to be as truthful as possible.

## ***Who was surveyed?***

To obtain the most thorough possible results, the survey was given to every Martha's Vineyard Public Schools student in grades 7 through 12 in attendance on the day of administration, February 19, 2007. The final number and demographic profile of students surveyed will be discussed later in this report.

## ***Assuring Valid Survey Results***

Survey response forms were delivered to the Southeast Center for Healthy Communities for analysis. Several steps were taken to ensure that the data gathered accurately reflected the behaviors of Martha's Vineyard Public Schools students, a process known as "data cleaning."

First, a visual check was made of the completed Scantron "bubble" answer sheets for clearly discernable patterns ("doodling"). Five (5) surveys were removed as a result of this check.

Second, the survey instrument also featured an internal check- two false questions imbedded in the survey. All cases (37) identified using this method showed evidence of either exaggeration (for example, selecting the highest possible use rate for all drugs) or inconsistent answering (such as reporting high use of a substance during the past 30 days, but no lifetime usage of the same substance). These students were removed from the sample before the results were compiled.

Third, the data was examined for students who provided illogical answers; for instance, a student might select a high current (past 30 day) use of a substance, but report no lifetime use of the same substance. Eight (8) students answered questions in an inconsistent manner. These students were also removed from the final sample.

Finally, the data was examined for cases of obvious exaggeration. An example of obvious exaggeration might be a student selecting the highest possible use rate for all substances on the survey. Five (5) additional cases were removed for this reason.

Following the data cleaning procedure, the final sample size for the Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools 2006/2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey is 855 students.

**Sample**

As noted above, the survey sample size was 855 students. 1101 students were enrolled in Martha’s Vineyard Public Schools, grades 7 through 12, on the day of the survey, while 855 took the survey. The “return rate” (the percent of enrolled students surveyed) is 78%.

<i>Enrolled in Martha’s Vineyard public schools, grades 7 to 12</i>	1101
<i>Absent on day of survey or opted out</i>	191
<i>Removed as a result of validity checks</i>	55
<b><i>Final Sample</i></b>	<b>855</b>
<b><i>Return Rate</i></b> <i>(percent of student body surveyed)</i>	<b>78%</b>

The return rate specific to the high and middle schools will be discussed in the relevant reports.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Please note that nineteen (19) students did not identify their grade, and therefore could not be classified as either high or middle school students