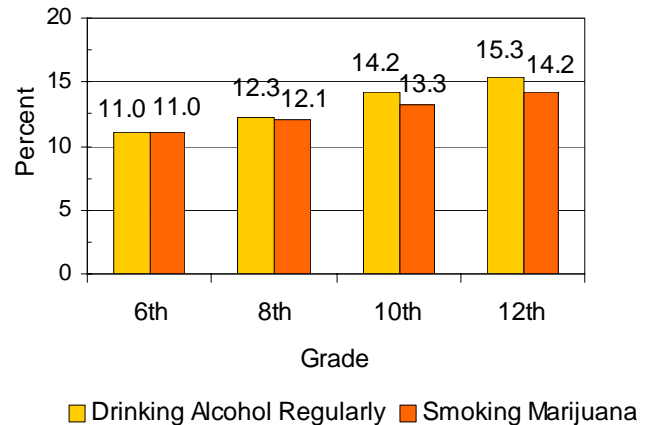


# Substance Abuse Facts

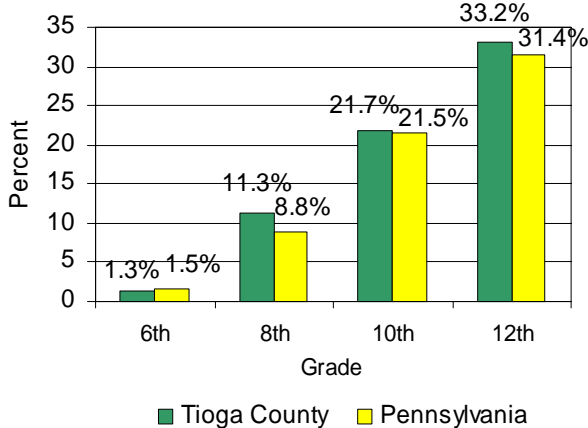
## Age of Onset

The earlier youth experiment with drugs and alcohol, the more likely they are to develop abuse problems over the course of a life span. In 2003, the average age of onset for Tioga County youth to drink alcohol regularly was 13.2 years while the average age of smoking marijuana was 13.5 years. Early use of drugs and alcohol often leads to other forms of unhealthy, unproductive behavior. This includes premature sexual activity (with additional risks of unwanted pregnancy and exposure to sexually-transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS), delinquency, and involvement in the criminal justice system.

Average Age of Onset for Tioga County Youth



Past 30-Day Binge Drinking by Tioga County Youth



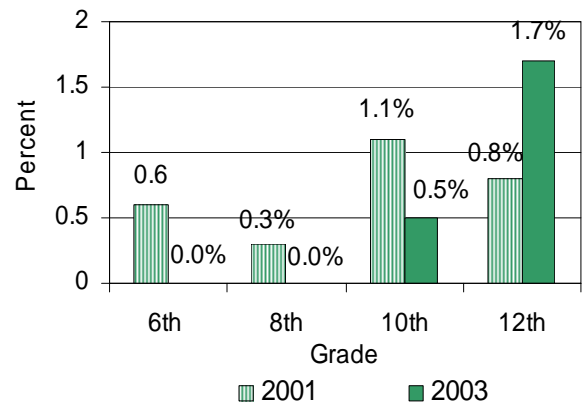
## Binge Drinking

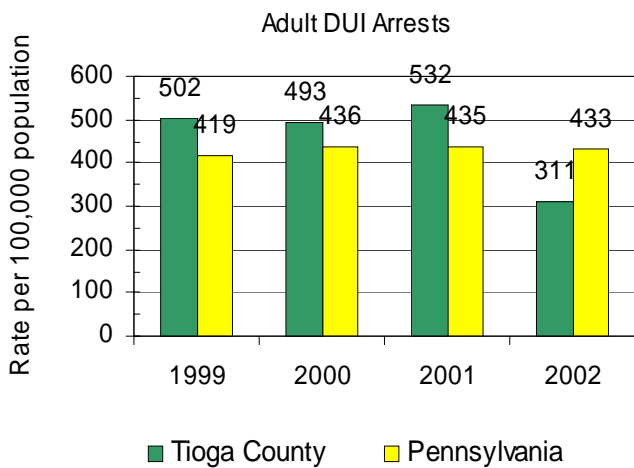
Binge drinking is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as having 5 or more drinks on one occasion, meaning in a row or within a short period of time. However, among women, binge drinking is often defined as having 4 or more drinks on one occasion. In 2003, 18% of Pennsylvania adults admitted to binge drinking in the previous month. When divided into subgroups the following groups were more likely to binge drink: younger adults (ages 18-29), males (26%), those with some college education and those with higher incomes.

## Use of Methamphetamine (Meth)

Methamphetamine is a major concern for cities and rural areas of Pennsylvania, particularly in the north-west and eastern parts of the state. In addition to damaging brain cells and nerve endings, the health consequences of using methamphetamine can include damaged blood vessels, stroke, respiratory problems and anorexia. Children living near illegal meth labs are more likely to experience short-term or permanent brain damage, developmental problems, family violence and maltreatment. Past 30-day use by Tioga County twelfth graders has increased from 0.8% in 2001 to 1.7% in 2003.

Past 30-Day Use of Methamphetamine by Tioga County Youth





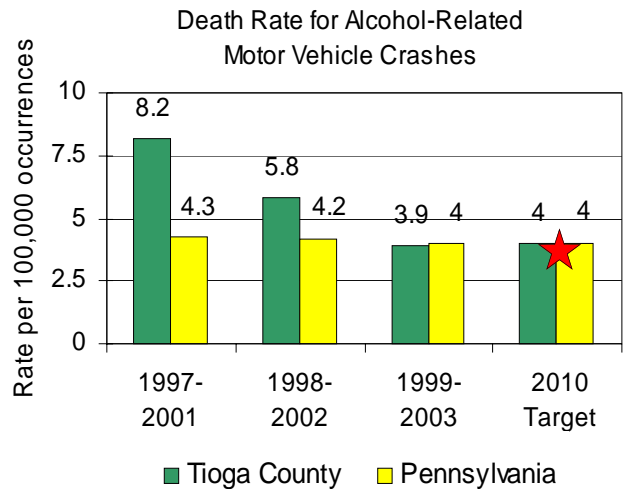
## Driving Under the Influence (DUI)

Because alcohol depresses the central nervous system, some of the adverse effects include impaired judgment and reduced reaction time, making driving under the influence extremely hazardous and potentially deadly. The gender comparison among Tioga County individuals arrested for DUI is significantly higher for males than females. For example in 2004, 84% of DUI arrests were males.

Compared to state data, Tioga County had more DUI arrests until 2002, when for the first time in several years, county rates were lower.

## DUI Deaths

According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Pennsylvania is the fourth worst state in the nation for alcohol-related fatalities. State data for 2001 indicate that 529 people died in alcohol-related crashes and 12,694 were injured. The majority of these crashes (78%) occurred during the night time or early hours when it is dark and involved male drivers (80%). The alcohol related motor vehicle crash death rate for Tioga County has been much higher than the state rate but has declined dramatically in past years, helping Tioga County reach the Healthy People 2010 target of no more than 4 alcohol-related motor vehicle crash deaths per 100,000 occurrences.



For readers concerned that they or someone they know may be misusing, abusing or are addicted to drugs or alcohol, the following is a list of possible warning signs:

- Abrupt changes in work or school attendance, quality of work, work output, grades, discipline.
- Unusual flare-ups or outbreaks of temper.
- Withdrawal from responsibility.
- General changes in overall attitude.
- Deterioration of physical appearance and grooming.
- Secretive behavior regarding actions and possessions; poorly concealed attempts to avoid attention and suspicion such as frequent trips to storage rooms, restroom, basement, etc.
- Association with known substance abusers.
- Continual wearing of long-sleeved garments particularly in hot weather or reluctance to wear short sleeved attire when appropriate.
- Unusual borrowing of money from friends, co-workers or parents.
- Stealing small items from employer, home or school.
- Wearing of sunglasses at inappropriate times.

Those seeking assistance in any of these areas should talk with their primary health care provider. In Tioga County, contact Guideline at 1-800-332-6718 for referral to the appropriate service.



Data for this fact sheet were taken from a report entitled *Substance Abuse in Tioga County*.

For more information regarding this fact sheet or the full report, please call (570) 662 – 4767 or email [ishelham@mansfield.edu](mailto:ishelham@mansfield.edu).