



# Strategic Plan

2024 - 2029





The Kent County Prevention Coalition (KCPC) was founded in 2006 and serves Kent County, Michigan. KCPC uses the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) to plan and implement initiatives that engage youth, families, and community stakeholders in working together to prevent youth substance misuse and promote youth wellness.

This framework requires a community to identify underlying issues and local conditions that increase the likelihood of substance misuse. This understanding allows for targeted action to address local needs.

The strategic plan that follows will be used to guide coalition efforts during the next five years to address community needs that have been identified.

**Our Mission:** Promote a healthier community by preventing and reducing harmful substance use behavior in Kent County, with a major focus on youth.

**Vision:** A healthier community for all served by a substance abuse prevention system that fills gaps in services, prioritizes resources and funds, and reduces overlap.


**Planning Process:** This Strategic Plan was created through a series of in person meetings, gathering of input through on-line surveys and focus groups between June and October of 2023 with support from KWB Strategies.


This process worked with coalition stakeholders to review data and provide input to inform prioritization of goals and objectives. Further data collection was then conducted to better understand local conditions contributing to each prioritized issues.

Following a review of findings, the coalition identified and prioritized strategies for inclusion.

# Goal 1: Youth Substance Misuse

Decrease the % of high school students reporting use of the following in the past 30 days:

 Marijuana by 10% (from 11.7% to 10.5%)

 Vaping by 20% (from 13.6% to 10.9%)

 Alcohol by 20% (from 14.3% to 11.4%)





# UNDERSTAND THE RISKS



## OBJECTIVE 1.1

By 2029, increase the percentage of high school students reporting the following to be moderate or great risk by 20%:

- Having 1 or 2 drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day (from 59.8% to 71.8%)
- Binge drinking once or twice each weekend (from 68.6% to 82.3%)
- Using marijuana once or twice per week (from 40.1% to 48.1%)
- Use of electronic vaping products (establish baseline).

## STRATEGIES

- Inform and educate families and trusted adults about the risks and consequences of youth substance misuse, including:
  - Impact on brain development
  - Potential transference of family use patterns
- Support parents who are concerned that their youth may be using substances by:
  - Create a 24/7 resource that families can access on demand.
  - Connect families and trusted adults with mentors to help them navigate available resources to support teens misusing substances.
- Provide opportunities for youth to learn about the risks of substance misuse through programming and events.
- Equip youth serving professionals with resources to proactively address emerging issues with youth.

# POSITIVE NORMS



## OBJECTIVE 1.2

By 2029, decrease the percentage of high school students who inaccurately report that more than half the students in their grade used the following recently by 20%:

- Alcohol (from 36.8% to 29.4%)
- Marijuana (from 29.7% to 23.8%)
- Vaping (Establish baseline)

## STRATEGIES

- Raise visibility of youth who choose not to misuse substances:
  - Use data to show that the majority of youth do not use substances.
  - Engage youth as positive social media influencers to share their reasons for not misusing substances.
- Elevate the voice of youth making positive choices
  - Publicly recognize youth through social media and other venues.
  - Enhance media literacy skills of youth to offset unhealthy social media messaging regarding substance misuse.
- Provide leadership opportunities for youth.
- Align and support organizations that offer positive, substance-free activities for youth.

# REDUCE ACCESS



## OBJECTIVE 1.3

By 2029, decrease the percentage of high school students reporting it would be sort of or very easy to get the following by 20% by 2029:

- Alcohol (from 61% to 48.6%)
- Marijuana (from 40.0% to 32.0%)
- Vaping products (est. baseline)

## STRATEGIES

- Provide education to encourage parents and older siblings to lock up and monitor any alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs, or vape products in the home.
- Raise adult's awareness of the potential consequences of providing alcohol to youth under the age of 21.
- Identify strategies that have been effective at reducing youth retail access to vaping and marijuana products and advocate to strengthen state and local efforts, as appropriate.
- Raise youth awareness of the potential risks for sharing substances with their peers, including school and legal consequences.
- Provide skill building opportunities to support youth refusal skills and the ability to resist peer pressure.

# MENTAL HEALTH



Research suggests that people with a mental disorder, such as anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder, may use drugs or alcohol as a form of self-medication. [1]

Locally, the majority of stakeholders surveyed who work with youth report that they have seen youth use substances to cope with anxiety and depression within the past year (Key Stakeholder Survey 2023)

Research has found that that youth with good coping, problem-solving, and social emotional regulation skills are less likely to develop addiction or mental illness. [2]

## OBJECTIVE 1.4

Decrease in high school students who misuse substances to cope with mental health challenges (establish baseline).

### STRATEGIES

- Gather youth input to inform development of educational materials to support youth use of healthy coping skills.
- Assess barriers to youth accessing mental health services within various communities and develop a plan to address identified issues.
- Educate parents and youth serving professionals on how to assist youth with developing healthy coping skills.

[1] National Institute of Mental Health, Substance Use and Co-Occurring Mental Disorders, March 2023, retrieved via <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/substance-use-and-mental-health>

[2] [Risk and Protective Factors for Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Across the Life Cycle \(csifdl.org\)](#).



# Goal 2: Enhance Coalition Capacity

## STRATEGIES

### **Clarify and formalize coalition procedures:**

- Establish transparent decision-making procedures and incorporate into the coalition's by-laws, which will be made readily available to all coalition members.
- Develop a coalition procedure to determine the role of executive committee members and their decision-making authority in relation to that of the entire coalition.
- Create onboarding processes and materials for both new members and leadership/committee roles.

### **Recruit the right partners:**

- Identify potential members and invite them to join.
  - Conduct recruitment events to introduce the coalition, outline its purpose, and explain why their involvement is essential.
  - Share information about the coalition's goals, where to find additional details, and how to get involved through email invitations.
- Consistently communicate with the community about the coalition's purpose and ways to get involved. Use brief and eye-catching messages disseminated through various channels, including email, social media, and the website.

### **Engage members and cultivate shared leadership:**

- Continuously cultivate emerging leaders and communicate the importance of various coalition roles.
- Identify and address any hindrances that may impede full participation within the coalition.
- Foster a meeting culture that encourages and appreciates input from all participants.
  - Provide agenda and meeting materials in advance to support topic discussions.
  - Include a standing agenda item to discuss any unresolved, or emerging, issues or concerns.
  - Offer an option to provide meeting feedback in the follow-up email communication.

KENT COUNTY  
**Prevention**  
COALITION



**For more information or to get involved**

visit [kcreventioncoalition.org](http://kcreventioncoalition.org)

or email [kcreventioncoalition@gmail.com](mailto:kcreventioncoalition@gmail.com)