

C. Miller 1-21-26

Exhibit 15

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November 21, 2024 - [Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey - Information](#)

SANTA FE – New data reveals promising results on youth mental health and substance use. The New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (NM-YRRS) shows from 2021 to 2023, adolescent mental health improved after eight years of worsening.

Also in 2023, adolescent alcohol, nicotine and other substance use decreased following years of decline.

Similar encouraging news is found on other fronts in the survey, taken in 2023 by some 18,000 students statewide. In 2023, high school students were 17% less likely to experience persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness than in 2021. While this was the lowest prevalence since 2017, mental health remains a major youth health issue, as more than one in three students (37%) experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in 2023.

“The New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey conducted bi-annually with robust methodology, reveals positive trends in youth mental health and substance use across public schools,” said Dr. José A. Acosta, director of the New Mexico Department of Health’s (NMDOH) Public Health Division. “This comprehensive survey reflects collaboration among state and federal agencies and diverse communities in its data-collection efforts.”

Acosta will present a report on the survey to lawmakers on the interim Legislative Health and Human Services Committee at 12:45 p.m. Friday, November 22 in room 307 of the New Mexico Capitol Building. Members of the public and media are encouraged to attend the session.

Additional key findings indicate that New Mexico high school students in 2023 were:

Defendant's Exhibit

DX2950

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- 25% less likely to have experienced frequent mental distress than in 2021.
- 26% less likely to have considered a suicide attempt than in 2021.
- 19% less likely to have attempted suicide than in 2021.
- 37% less likely to have used cannabis than in 2019.
- 40% less likely to have consumed any alcohol than in 2019.
- 44% less likely to have used electronic vape products than in 2019.

Data also indicate continued disparities in health outcomes among some high school students in New Mexico:

- Girls were almost twice as likely to experience frequent mental distress or persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness as boys.
- Lesbian, gay, or bisexual students were more than three times as likely to have attempted suicide than other students.
- Transgender students were more than three times as likely to have experienced sexual assault than cisgender students.
- Students experiencing homelessness were nearly five times as likely to have misused prescription opioids than students with stable housing.

The overall improvements in youth mental health as well as decreases in substance use are good news. Continued work is needed to eliminate health disparities and further decrease health concerns among youth. Effective statewide approaches at reducing youth mental health concerns and substance use currently include:

- The Office of School and Adolescent Health (OSAH) supported access to behavioral health through school-based health centers to 17,578 youth in the 2023-24 school year. OSAH also coordinates statewide suicide prevention and behavioral health supports.
- The New Mexico Suicide Prevention Coalition supports statewide conversations including a workgroup on youth suicide prevention.
- UNM and the Title V program support training for pediatricians and other health providers in identifying and treating youth mental health concerns through the New Mexico Access to Behavioral Health for Children (NM-ABC) program.
- The New Mexico Public Education Department supports evidence-based social emotional learning opportunities for New Mexico students statewide.
- Parents can have a big role in decreasing the risk of their children drinking. The [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#) and the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) have information helpful for any parent or guardian.

The NM-YRRS is a tool to assess the health risk behaviors and resiliency (protective) factors of New Mexico high school and middle school students. The NM-YRRS is part of the national [CDC Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System \(YRBSS\)](#). The survey results have widespread benefits for New Mexico at the state, county, and school district levels.

NMDOH and the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center help schools administer the Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey in odd-numbered years. In 2023, 17,905 students from 132 school districts participated in the survey. Information about the survey can be found at youthrisk.org.

Full survey results are expected to be posted online in December.

Media Contact

We would be happy to provide additional information about this press release. Simply contact [Robert Nott](#) at (Office) with your questions.

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[Encuesta de la juventud indica una mejora de la salud mental y un menor consumo de sustancias](#)