**COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT - *ACME COUNTY ACTION COALITION***

1. **Community Description**

Acme County, a rural/suburban county in the southeast part of the state. The population demographics include (2016 Census Data):

* 157,325 people, 50,243 households, and 39,389 families residing in the County (43.1% have children under the age of 18 living with them).
* It is expected the County will experience a 47% growth in population during the next 10 years. Acme County is comprised of a younger population, with the highest percentage of its residents in the 25-44 age group (30% of total population). Elderly residents, over the age of 65, make up only 10% of the total population. Acme County is a mix suburban and rural community with proximity to several large cities that contributes to increased exposure to the drug problems associated with large urban centers.
* The racial makeup of the county is 59% White, 24% Black or African American, 10.7% Native American, 2% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 2.2% from other races, and 2% from two or more races. 14.3% of the population is Hispanic or Latino of any race (US Census 2010).

There are several different cities within the County: Blue Cove Springs, Endburg, Green Park, and Capstone Heights. When identifying themselves as Acme County residents, individuals will quickly refer to their neighborhood, town or city as their community. In addition, there are 12 smaller unincorporated villages in the ACME County. Each of these villages represent “communities within communities”, and as a result, are often tight-knit, multi-generational communities that can sometimes be wary of outsiders.

1. **Community History**
2. Historical Origins of the Community. **Acme County** was named for statesman George Acme. Acme County is one of 67 counties in the State and the county seat is Blue Cove Springs given the name by the fact that the Acme River curves the banks of the town which is surrounded by evergreens. Acme county was originally settled as a “hub” for the logging and mining industries operating in the region. With the decline in these industries Acme has made significant efforts to diversify its industry and commercial base.
3. Historical origins of the substance use and misuse issue. Acme County Acme County has a history that celebrates excessive alcohol use. In the 1800’s when loggers and miners would arrive in town on the weekend after getting paid, they would “celebrate” their earning at the local bars and saloons. This surfaces today in ACME County where many of the community events such as Pioneer Days, Harvest Moon Event and Fourth of July celebrate and promote this history of “hearty drinking”. In 2000, after several incidents and injuries, the community tried to ban alcohol from community events. This effort was quickly “shot down” as bad for the economy and not in the “spirit” of ACME County.

With the decline of the logging and mining industries some residents left to find work, while others stayed and have sought work in the emerging economy. Unfortunately, there are small pockets of residents that have not prospered. These areas of the community also suffer from higher rates of prescription drugs misuse resulting from the poverty and isolation.

1. Historical origins of the coalition. In 2011, Acme Action Coalition was established as a collaborative community effort to address these emerging issues. Since then, various federal and state grants have been awarded to the coalition, which have contributed to its building momentum and increase capacity. This effort was led by several stakeholders that are still are represented in the current coalition membership such as: The School District, Sheriff’s Office, Department of Health, Faith Community, Youth Serving Organizations, Prevention and Service Providers, Business Community, etc.
2. **Needs Assessment**

**Data Collection Methods**

1. Quantitative data collection methods include reviewing data from the ACME County Prevention Needs Assessment (Youth Survey), Community Survey of Adults, Public Health Data from ACME County, ACME County Sheriff’s Department data, Alcohol Beverage Control, County Medical Examiner, Census Data and State Public Health Department Data and a Coalition Capacity Survey.
2. Qualitative data collection methods include focus groups in all school districts, key informant interviews with people in the law enforcement, health care, education, business and faith community sectors, a community forum, and listening sessions with parents and community members.
3. Coalition members and students from area schools conduct environmental scans of retailers and community within the county and specific cities and villages in the Spring and summer of 2018.

**Data Collection Results**

**Consequences**

On June 12, 2018, John Carter, Acme's assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, is quoted in the *Times Union* (Regional newspaper), as saying “the drug use problem in the schools is really no different than it has been for twenty years…we are just more aware of the consequences and impact on our students.”

**Alcohol**

* Of the 1,242 students taking the 2016 PNA Survey, 6.3% reported having been arrested, 18% reported being suspended from school and 13% reported being drunk or high at school. According to the 2016 Prevention Needs Assessment Survey, 54.3% of Acme students are students at high risk, meaning they have more than seven risk factors operating in their lives.

**Marijuana**

* The Acme Police Department reports that in the first two months of 2018, the number of marijuana-related drug violations totaled 12 in comparison to 8 violations for the same period last year. Marijuana Drug violations are defined as the possession and sale of a the controlled substance. Acme Police Department data shows that 8 juveniles (under 16 years old) arrested in 2018…75% of them (6) were cited on school days during school hours.

**Rx, Opioids and other controlled substances**

* **The Health Department & Medical Examiners reports d**eath by accidental overdose in 2018:
  + 13 cases of prescription drugs - multiple different drugs.
  + 8 cases of methamphetamine
  + 34 cases of multiple drugs used in combination including methadone, oxycodone, hydrocodone and morphine in combination with other drugs.

**Other Related Consequences**

* The graduation rate for both Acme High and Icicle High Schools is 69%. For part of the population, education is not viewed as important. According to the U.S. Census, 2008-2010 CS 3-Year estimates, 862 youth in Acme between ages 18 – 24 have not graduated from high school.
* For the 2015-16 school year, both districts were identified as "Schools in Need of Improvement" under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind).
* Teen pregnancy rates for Acme zip codes (53.42 and 47.64 per 1,000 females ages 15-19 are by far the highest in the County *(ND Department of Health)*

**Problem Behaviors**

The Prevention Needs Assessment Survey (PNA) has been conducted every two years since 2002 (via the Acme County Underage Drinking Coalition’s DFC Grant). The survey was given to all Acme County 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th graders which included 4,300 students countywide, of which 1242 were students in the City of Acme.

* State Data is from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).
* US Data is from the *Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF).*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **30 Day Use (%)** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Grade 6** | | | | | **Grade 8** | | | | |
| **2014** | **2016** | **2018** | **State 2018** | **US 2018** | **2014** | **2016** | **2018** | **State 2018** | **US 2018** |
| Alcohol | 8.3 | 7.2 | 2.7 | 2.8 | n/a | 27.3 | 17.3 | 21.2 | 12.5 | 12.7 |
| Tobacco | 4.7 | 4.6 | 1.9 | 1.2 | n/a | 9.8 | 5.4 | 10.0 | 6.1 | 9.6 |
| Marijuana | 0.6 | 2.3 | 1.9 | 0.9 | n/a | 6.6 | 10.2 | 12.7 | 6.2 | 7.2 |
| Rx | 0.7 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.2 | n/a | 0.6 | 0.8 | 1.7 | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| **30 Day Use (%)** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Grade 10** | | | | | **Grade 12** | | | | |
| **2014** | **2016** | **2018** | **State 2018** | **US 2018** | **2014** | **2016** | **2018** | **State 2018** | **US 2018** |
| Alcohol | 39.4 | 41.7 | 35.6 | 33.3 | 27.2 | 57.5 | 57.1 | 43.4 | 47.7 | 40.0 |
| Tobacco | 14.1 | 17.6 | 11.4 | 11.4 | 18.4 | 20.3 | 36.5 | 16.8 | 17.2 | 17.6 |
| Marijuana | 19.1 | 27.2 | 28.2 | 21.1 | 17.6 | 24.0 | 42.5 | 26.2 | 27.8 | 22.6 |
| Rx | 1.4 | 0.8 | 1.9 | 2.7 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 2.5 | 2.2 | 2.8 | 2.9 |

**Alcohol**

* Of the 1,242 students taking the 2018 PNA Survey, 6.3% reported having been arrested, 18% reported being suspended from school and 13% reported being drunk or high at school.

**Marijuana**

* The High School Resource Officer (SRO) reports (in 2018) that the youth are vaping marijuana in their cars in the school parking lot before and after school and in the bathrooms during class breaks.

**Rx, Opioids and other controlled substances**

* The Acme Police Department reports that in the first two months of 2016, the number of drug violations totaled 54 in comparison to 25 drug violations for the same period last year. Drug violations are d

**Root Causes and Local Conditions**

**Alcohol**

**Ease of Access**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question:** If you wanted to get some, how easy would it be for you to get some beer, wine, or hard liquor (for example: vodka, whiskey, or gin)?  **Responses:**  “Very easy” and “sort of easy” | | | | |
|  | 6th Grade | 8th Grade | 10th Grade | 12th Grade |
| 2014 PNA Survey | 20.4% | 48.9% | 62.1% | 68.9% |
| 2016 PNA Survey | 21.1% | 57.7% | 66.3% | 75.9% |
| 2018 PNA Survey | 27.8% | 53.1% | 66.5% | 88.1% |

**Favorable Attitudes - Youth**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question:** How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways when they have five or more drinks of an alcoholic beverage once or twice a week?  **Responses:** “No Risk” and “Slight Risk” | | | | |
|  | 6th Grade | 8th Grade | 10th Grade | 12th Grade |
| 2014 PNA Survey | 15.4% | 28.9% | 32.1% | 54.7% |
| 2016 PNA Survey | 17.1% | 27.5% | 33.8% | 61.3% |
| 2018 PNA Survey | 18.8% | 26.2% | 36.7% | 62.3% |

**Favorable Attitudes - Parents**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question:** How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to have one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day?  **Responses: “Wrong” and “Very Wrong”** | | | | |
|  | 6th Grade | 8th Grade | 10th Grade | 12th Grade |
| 2014 PNA Survey | 90.4% | 88.9% | 61.6% | 48.5% |
| 2016 PNA Survey | 91.3% | 87.4% | 59.7% | 45.4% |
| 2018 PNA Survey | 93.7% | 83.6% | 56.5% | 38.8% |

* There is a high density of alcohol retail establishments. The Alcohol Beverage Control reports in 2018 there wee 129 alcohol licenses in the eleven square miles of the city. Eighty-one (81) are on- premise licenses and 48 are off-premise.
* Youth report they obtain alcohol from friends who are 21 and over who buy for them (2018 Focus Group).
* A majority of the youth indicated that they also obtained alcohol at parties hosted by friends and strangers who host parties in their apartments (2018 Focus Group)
* The most recent compliance check done in the Icicle section of Acme yielded six out of ten establishments selling alcohol to minors (Alcohol Beverage Control 2018)
* Youth are drinking alcohol at a home or a friend’s house because it is accessible and acceptable (2018 Focus Group).
* At least 15 community events are conducted in locations throughout the county which feature alcohol promotion and excessive use by adults. Access to alcohol is only restricted at 4 of these events. (Community Environmental Scan)

**Root Causes and Local Conditions**

**Marijuana**

**Ease of Access**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question:** If you wanted to get some, how easy would it be for you to get marijuana?  **Responses:**  “Very easy” and “sort of easy” | | | | |
|  | 6th Grade | 8th Grade | 10th Grade | 12th Grade |
| 2014 PNA Survey | 19.4% | 28.9% | 42.1% | 61.9% |
| 2016 PNA Survey | 21.1% | 27.7% | 56.3% | 62.9% |
| 2018 PNA Survey | 22.8% | 33.1% | 58.5% | 66.1% |

**Favorable Attitudes - Youth**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question:** How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways when smoke marijuana once or twice a week?  **Responses:** “No Risk” and “Slight Risk” | | | | |
|  | 6th Grade | 8th Grade | 10th Grade | 12th Grade |
| 2014 PNA Survey | 10.4% | 21.6% | 48.1% | 68.9% |
| 2016 PNA Survey | 11.1% | 23.2% | 51.1 | 71.5% |
| 2018 PNA Survey | 13.8% | 23.1% | 54.8% | 73.7% |

**Favorable Attitudes - Parents**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question:** How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to smoke marijuana once or twice a week??  **Responses:** “Wrong” and “Very Wrong” | | | | |
|  | 6th Grade | 8th Grade | 10th Grade | 12th Grade |
| 2014 PNA Survey | 94.0% | 83.2% | 72.1% | 68.9% |
| 2016 PNA Survey | 92.1% | 81.7% | 66.3% | 65.4% |
| 2018 PNA Survey | 90.3% | 79.2% | 62.5% | 61.3% |

Youth and Parent Focus Group Reports (2018):

* Youth and young adults are buying marijuana online through social media sites
* Adults grow and sell marijuana to youth in city parks
* Parents and friends are storing marijuana unsafely at home
* Older siblings and friends with access to marijuana are sharing it with underage youth
* Youth leave school at lunch and return to school high or drunk
* Acme County parents perceive youth use marijuana to be lower than what youth report
* Youth are driving under influence of marijuana and they think it makes them safer drivers
* Friends and family are using Rx marijuana in the presence of youth
* Youth searching internet for info on marijuana find more positive messages than reports of the harm of marijuana

**Root Causes and Local Conditions**

**Rx, Opioids and other controlled substances**

**Ease of Access**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question:** If you wanted to get some, how easy would it be for you to get prescription drugs not prescribed to you?  **Responses:**  “Very easy” and “sort of easy” | | | | |
|  | 6th Grade | 8th Grade | 10th Grade | 12th Grade |
| 2014 PNA Survey | 7.4% | 18.9% | 32.1% | 46.9% |
| 2016 PNA Survey | 8.7% | 18.7% | 37.2% | 48.9% |
| 2018 PNA Survey | 8.8% | 18.1% | 38.8% | 52.5% |

**Favorable Attitudes - Youth**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question:** How much do you think people risk harming themselves physically or in other ways when they use prescription drugs not prescribed to them?  **Responses:** “No Risk” and “Slight Risk” | | | | |
|  | 6th Grade | 8th Grade | 10th Grade | 12th Grade |
| 2014 PNA Survey | 4.2% | 11.9% | 34.1% | 44.9% |
| 2016 PNA Survey | 5.3% | 12.6% | 36.5% | 49.1% |
| 2018 PNA Survey | 6.3% | 13.4% | 38.1% | 51.3% |

**Favorable Attitudes - Parents**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question:** How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to use prescription drugs not prescribed to you?  **Responses: “Wrong” and “Very Wrong”** | | | | |
|  | 6th Grade | 8th Grade | 10th Grade | 12th Grade |
| 2014 PNA Survey | 92.4% | 88.9% | 62.1% | 48.9% |
| 2016 PNA Survey | 91.2% | 77.7% | 56.3% | 45.4% |
| 2018 PNA Survey | 88.3% | 73.1% | 56.9% | 48.3% |

* One of the region's busiest roads, Hoosick Street carries 7,000 cars a day into and out of the city divides the city in half. Route 7 (Hoosick Street) is a main corridor for drug dealers connecting the cities of Icebox, Icicle and Acme. State Route 7 runs directly through the center of Acme providing dealers with an easy escape once they have completed their drug transactions (Law Enforcement Interview 2018)
* Youth report they bring their Rx drugs to school and share with their friends who need specific drugs (e.g., athletes use pain killers or ADHD drugs for studying) (Focus Groups 2018)
* A common source of Rx pain killers, and other opioids according to Scott Beatty, ACME Treatment Center Executive Director is from unemployed young adults (18 – 25 year olds) on disability or welfare. Many young adults are unemployed and are staying at home in the community leading to an increase in substances available to youths.
* Acme High School (AHS) Assistant Principal and Athletic Director, Doug Devault, said, "There is an increase in the number of kids who are willing to try anything to get high." He reported that in recent years 12 AHS athletes were referred for assessment related to misuse of Rx drugs

1. **Community Resources**

Acme Action Coalition has many capacity resource strengths on which to build including:

Key leaders and stakeholders from law enforcement, school district, public health, local medical center, business community, faith-based organizations, media, juvenile justice, government, service providers along with youth and parents are represented on our coalition. Local resources include:

* + Drug Free Communities (DFC) Grant funding for five years 2014 – 2019 includes funding for individual and environmental strategies to address alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among youth.
  + The Governor’s Office of Drug Control has also provided additional funding resources through grant block programs to address youth drug use problems related to underage alcohol usage.
  + Coalition members have been able to attend CADCA’s Leadership Forums, Mid-Year Institute, National Coalition Academy, Regional Conferences, and others.

The Acme County Care Coalition working hard to grow our list of partners/organizations. Each partner helps support or develop protective factors and location conditions that address risks and build protection. For instance, school departments are working closely with Project Alliance to implement an annual Marijuana Summit and to encourage their students to participate in Sticker Shock events in their communities. Law Enforcement, Juvenile Restorative Justice Board, and Rotary clubs are working to connect youth with adult mentors, invest youth in the community, and provide educational opportunities. Businesses are participating in RBS trainings and Sticker Shock events to promote prevention of underage drinking.

The biggest gaps are currently local government and parents taking a more active role with the Coalition. While government is supportive, it is a fully engaged sector. Parents, as a group, still tend to view prevention as “my kid is fine so it is not a concern for me” type issue. Recently the only intervention for youth that are not court-ordered to receive substance abuse intervention (other than individual counseling) was suspended. Youth perceptions of risk drop as youth enter high school and substance use increases. Other gaps are inherent to the community, such as transportation.

1. **Problem Statement**
2. Problem Statements

1. Underage Drinking in Acme County

2. Youth in Acme County are abusing prescription pain medications not prescribed to them.

3. Youth are using marijuana in Acme County

1. Describe why these each drug was prioritized.

* Alcohol is the most widely misused drug by youth in Acme County.
* County and State data reports an increase in opioid overdoses and deaths among the adult population. Currently in Acme County, there are enough prescription pain killers prescribed to supply each adult resident over two scripts, making prescription pain killers (including opioids) more available to the public than McDonalds.
* With the national landscape surrounding marijuana use changing the community is poised to create increased perception of harm surrounding youth marijuana use.