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Alliance for Substance Addiction Prevention

Needs and Coalition Capacity Assessment

Pasco County, Florida

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As one of the 40 fastest growing counties in the United States, Pasco County's needs are constantly evolving. To address population growth and its impact on rates of poverty, cost of living, and community health disparities, the Alliance for Substance Addiction Prevention (ASAP) regularly assesses the community to ensure that data-driven programming and investments are informed by the emerging needs of the community. 2020 was anything but a typical year for Pasco County. The COVID-19 pandemic forced government mandated "Stay at Home" orders and as of December 29, 2020, the reported COVID-19 positivity rate in Pasco County was 22.75%¹.

The pandemic has created a host of new challenges and barriers for Pasco County residents. These include virtual schooling for youth and parents; a lack of in person groups for those seeking support during recovery; the reliance on telehealth appointments by treatment providers; lack of accountability for those in drug court or those requiring drug testing; and the multitude of stressors added to everyday life. Opioid related overdoses for adults soared in 2020, up 71% from 2019.² Community partners mobilized to address this dramatic rise in overdoses by handing out the opioid overdose reversal drug Narcan to those geographic areas most affected. According to the Journal of Adolescent Health, the pandemic's enforced social isolation, lack of athletics and typical social outlets for teens will have an impact, however, it will depend on the family environment, level of stress, economic struggles and illness. Protective factors increase for those spending more time in a healthy

¹ Pasco County Government (2020). Community Overview. 2020. Retrieved from <http://www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2020/12/12292020-1955-covid19.pr.html>

² Pasco County Sheriff's Office (2020). *Intelligence Lead Policing Yearly Report, Overdoses 2020*



home environment; more time with family for meals and activities, less social and retail access to alcohol and other drugs, and fewer possibilities for impulsive behavior can delay or impede the use of alcohol and other drugs.³ On the other hand, more time with family can become a risk factor for students experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in the home. According to Pasco County's 2020 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) data, rates of mental health and substance use disorder in the household are higher than state averages and at least 70% of youth are reporting at least one ACE factor.⁴ This gives reason to believe risk factors will increase for youth who turn to unhealthy coping skills, self-medicating, or having easy access to parents' alcohol and drugs. Future data will be monitored to address long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth.

Conducting a broad-scale community health needs assessment is an important step in determining how to address the key health and welfare issues facing our community. In 2020/2021, due to the impact of the pandemic, this assessment, and data within is ever changing. This needs assessment specifically focuses on Pasco County's capacity, opportunities, and barriers to reduce the risk for substance use, misuse, and disorder across the lifespan, and challenges the coalition faces related to the pandemic. Similar to the way doctors review vital signs and symptoms to make diagnoses, public health practitioners and professionals within prevention science gather various aggregate data to identify the

³ Journal of Adolescent Health (2020), Richter, Laura: The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Risk of Youth Substance Use, Retrieved from:
[https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(20\)30412-2/fulltext](https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(20)30412-2/fulltext)

⁴ Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS 2020) 2020; Retrieved from:
<https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/samh/prevention/fysas/2020/docs/county-tables/Pasco.pdf>



vitals and symptoms of a community. It is the first step in the development of a community treatment plan.

This report serves as that first step for improving the behavioral health of Pasco County residents. It utilizes local, state, and national data sources to generate a depiction of key behavioral health issues and their potential causes in the region. The report begins with a description of various geographic and socioeconomic components of the community, followed by top behavioral health concerns, protective and risk factors, and concludes with information about ASAP and its role in addressing the behavioral health needs identified in this assessment, as well as challenges due to the pandemic and challenges moving forward.

While great progress has been made in the County to address behavioral health indicators, more work needs to be done. Specifically, rates of youth marijuana use, babies born with neonatal abstinence syndrome, Hepatitis A, B and C infections due to IV drug use, HIV infections, suicide, and the long-term impacts of isolation due to COVID-19 are all issues that require ongoing attention. ASAP will use the results from this assessment to inform the continued use of evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery strategies to leverage resources and partnerships to realize the goal of preventing and decreasing substance misuse in a comprehensive and long-term manner for our community.



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COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Pasco County is in the state of Florida, located approximately 35 miles from Tampa Bay. Less than an hour's drive northwest of downtown Tampa, Pasco County is a transitioning community with no tribal areas or targeted populations. Geographic features historically define human habitation processes as well as economic progress. The divide between states, counties, municipalities and even neighborhoods can be broad, encompassing varying levels of education, diversity, economic and health prosperity, crime, etc. Such is the case with Pasco County, which is home to many cities and towns with varying socioeconomic status including but not limited to New Port Richey, Port Richey, San Antonio, Dade City, Zephyrhills, and St. Leo. Within the county, there are also several unincorporated and census-designated places including Wesley Chapel, Land O’ Lakes, Hudson, and Trinity. With many areas to live, the population estimate continues to increase with a current estimated population of 553,947⁵.

The environment plays an important role in Pasco County’s identity. The county is part of a nine-county region referred to as the "Nature Coast", due to its 24 miles of coastline, more than 100 square miles of managed recreational facilities, parks, four artificial reefs, more than 25 golf courses, and three state-designated canoe trails.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2018. Retrieved at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/pascocountyflorida>



DEMOGRAPHICS AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes. These conditions are known as social

determinants of health (SDOH) (Figure 1). When considered with genetic and biological factors, SDOH are key indicators of an individual's future health status and catalog of risk factors. Understanding the interconnectedness between key demographics and SDOH also provide for identification of opportunities for interventions and both environmental and

targeted strategies. The following section reviews key demographics and SDOH within Pasco County as they relate to substance misuse and related behaviors.

Figure 1. Social Determinants of Health



Race and Ethnicity

According to the most recent U.S. Census estimates, the largest Pasco County ethnic groups are White (87.5%) followed by Black or African American (6.7%) and Asian (2.8%). 72.7% of Pasco County residents are White alone (not Hispanic or Latino), meaning that roughly one in 4 residents are a racial or ethnic minority. Although 16.5% of county residents are Hispanic or Latino, this population is more represented in certain areas of Pasco County, like Dade City, where the Hispanic and Latino population was 24% in 2019. Approximately 18% of Pasco residents older than 5 spoke another language other than English at home and 9.7% of all residents were foreign-born in between 2014 and 2018.⁶

⁶ US Census Bureau. Retrieved 2018 at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/pascocountyflorida>

Age

Pasco County's youth population is on par with the state average, with approximately 20.2% of the population being under the age of 18.⁷ The county is comprised of 11 charter schools, 49 elementary schools, 16 middle schools and 14 high schools as well as Pasco e-school for K-12.⁸ The county's senior population is higher than the state average, with about 22.6% of the population being 65 years or older. Pasco County has 115,304 veterans, at least 75,057 of whom are age 65 and older.⁹

Economics- Poverty

In 2019, Census data estimated that 12.6% of the population in Pasco County was living below the poverty level.¹⁰ According to County Health Rankings, 20% of all children in Pasco County were living below the poverty level in 2019. The percentage of children living below poverty level in Pasco County (17%) is better than the current state average (20%). Since 2014, there has been a decline in the percentage of overall children in poverty in Pasco County (Figure 2). While this is a positive change, there are significant disparities between Black children in poverty (22%) and White children in poverty (16%) in the county, leaving substantial room for improvement in bridging the gap in racial disparities.

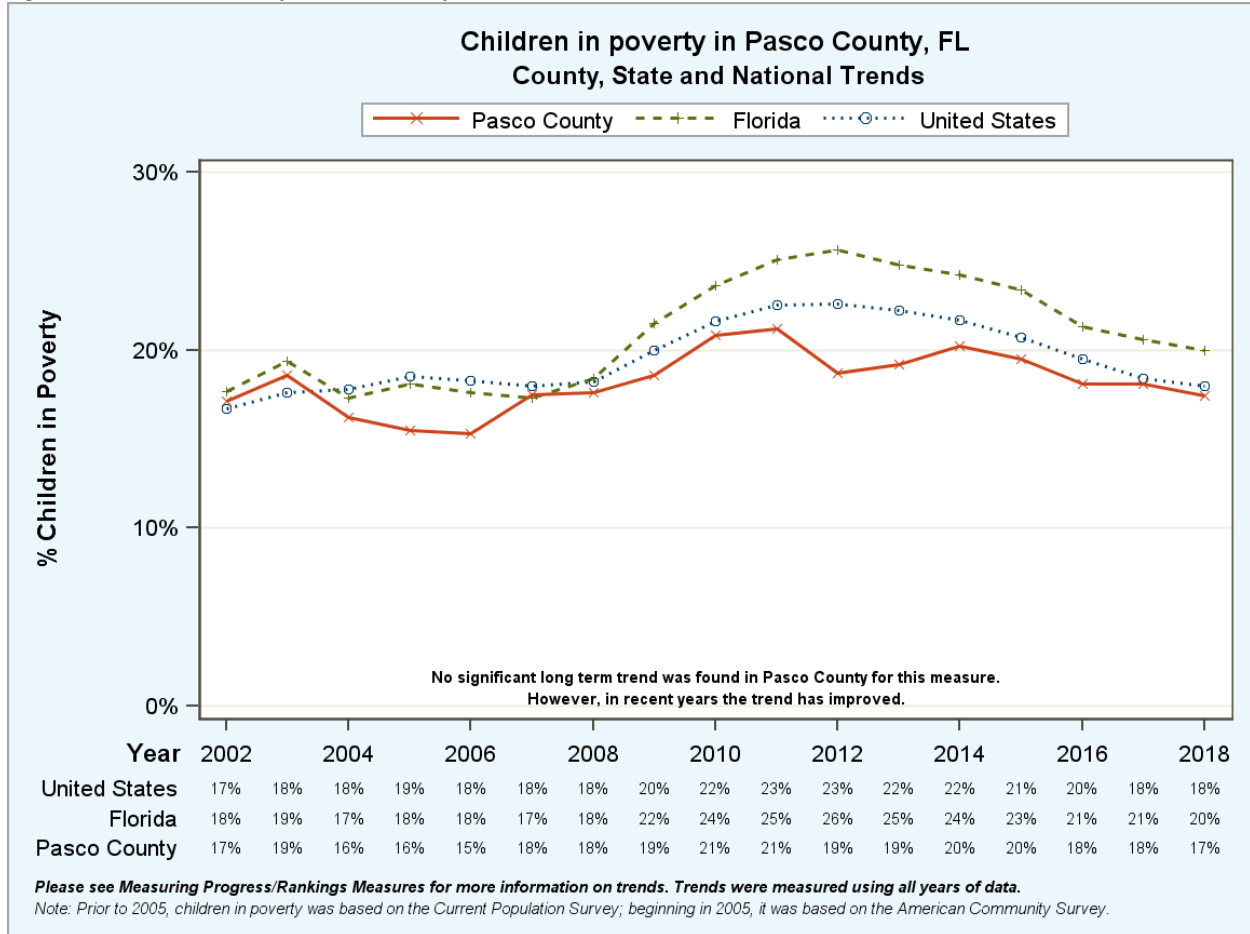
⁷ US Census Bureau. Retrieved 2018 at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/pascocountyflorida>

⁸ Pasco County Schools, 2019. Retrieved at <http://www.pasco.k12.fl.us/>

⁹ United States Department of Elder Affairs, Florida (2020). Profile of Older Floridians, Pasco County, (2018). http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/pubs/stats/County_2018/Counties/PSA5.pdf

¹⁰ US Census Bureau. Retrieved 2018 at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/pascocountyflorida>

Figure 2. Children in Poverty in Pasco County, FL



Additionally, 74,878 senior citizens are below 125% of the federal poverty line, accounting for approximately 15% of all seniors in Pasco.¹¹

Economics- Employment

Even though the 2019 Pasco County unemployment rate of 3.3% is higher than the state average of 2.9%, the overall rate has steadily decreased from 6.7% in 2014 to 2019.¹² After the COVID-19 pandemic

¹¹ United States Department of Elder Affairs, Florida (2020). Profile of Older Floridians, Pasco County, (2018). http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/pubs/stats/County_2018/Counties/PSA5.pdf

¹² United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020). Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://www.bls.gov/lau/laucnty17.txt>



forced many businesses to shut down, the unemployment rate spiked to 13.8% in April of 2020 but rebounded to end the year at 5.2% in December of 2020. Government and healthcare organizations remain the top employers in the county (Table 1).¹³

Table 1. Top Pasco County Employers

Rank	Employer Name	# of Employees
1.	Pasco County School District	10,075
2.	HCA Healthcare	2,952
3.	Pasco County Government	2,644
4.	State of Florida	1,916
5.	AdventHealth Dade City & Zephyrhills	1,413
6.	Pasco County Sheriff	1,351
7.	AdventHealth Wesley Chapel	1,325
8.	Medical Center of Trinity	1,296
9.	Morton Plant North Bay Hosp./Recovery Ctr	1,260
10.	Florida Medical Clinic	1,176
11.	Saint Leo University	879
12.	Federal Government	866
13.	Saddlebrook Resort	458
14.	Pasco-Hernando State College	409
15.	Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative	382
16.	Gulfside Healthcare Services	371
17.	SouthEast Personnel Leasing	320
18.	AdventHealth Connerton	300
19.	Pasco Clerk of the Circuit Court	296
20.	Bayonet Plumbing Heating and A/C	280

¹³ Pasco Economic Development Council (EDC), (2020). *Pasco EDC Survey & AtoZ Database (03/2020)*. Retrieved from: <http://pascoedc.com/top-employers>

Homelessness and Housing

Homelessness—both sheltered and unsheltered—remains a top concern for this continuously growing county. To understand homelessness and ways to better serve the community, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development developed a two-part annual homeless assessment for the 50 most populous counties/cities in the United States. In 2017, Pasco County was classified as a smaller city/county. This changed in 2018 when Pasco County was moved to the Largely Suburban category. This shift is reflective of the county's rapid growth and changing demographics.

According to the most updated Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR) in 2018, Pasco County has 2,668 people who are considered homeless, an increase from 2,593 in 2017.¹⁴ Of the 2,668 homeless people currently living in Pasco, approximately 20% are under the age of 18. Two hundred fourteen homeless individuals are veterans, and 392 individuals are considered chronically homeless. Finally, almost all (90.5%) of the homeless in Pasco are unsheltered. While high, this figure does signal an improvement from the 2017 AHAR in which 93% of people experiencing homelessness in Pasco County were reported to be living in unsheltered locations.¹⁵

The 2018 AHAR report reviewed cities/counties in every state to compare homelessness categories to the rest of the country. Pasco County was ranked 1st in the category of Continuums of Care (COCs) with the highest percentages of individuals who experienced unsheltered homelessness. In comparison to the other cities/counties listed under the largely suburban category, Pasco County

¹⁴ The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), (2018). The 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. Retrieved from: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2018-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

¹⁵ United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), (2017). The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. Retrieved from: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

experienced the highest reported total number of people who were homeless. This indicates a need to explore housing first initiatives that prevent continued homelessness for individuals in Pasco County.

TRANSPORTATION

Given the high poverty and uninsured rates in Pasco County, it is critical that residents are able to easily travel throughout the county to reach the federally qualified health centers, health department locations, and other social service providers. Pasco County Public Transportation provides bus services in East Pasco which services cities such as Dade City (pop. 7,134) and Zephyrhills (pop. 15,247). Pasco County Public Transportation also services West Pasco which includes Hudson (pop. 19,944) and Holiday (pop. 22,403) and serves as a connection to Pinellas County. Although public transportation does exist, it is not sufficient to cover the more than 700 square miles of land within Pasco County's borders.

Transportation has consistently been a concern among residents, especially those traveling from east to west.¹⁶

RECREATION

Living up to its title as part of Florida's "Nature Coast", Pasco County has over 64,000 acres of parks, trails, and recreational activities. Popular parks include Hudson Beach, Green Key Beach, SunWest Park, and Jay Starkey Wilderness Park, which covers over 12,000 acres and has a variety of nature trails and camping options. Starkey Park also has a 7.3-mile trail that connects to the Suncoast Trail, which is a 42-mile trail that stretches through Pasco and neighboring counties. There are three state-designated canoe trails. The Parks and Recreation Department and the city government host a variety of events and festivals throughout the year. Events and festivals such as Scream Acres, Chasco Fiesta, and the Kumquat Festival, draw thousands of people from within and outside of Florida to Pasco every year.

¹⁶ Pasco County Public Transportation (2018). Routes and Schedules. Retrieved from: <https://www.pascocountyfl.net/246/Routes-Schedules>



In addition to publicly sponsored activities, there are several industries investing in local culture and recreational opportunities. In the last 3 years, Pasco county opened an ice-skating rink on the east side of the county, a wakeboarding beach opened on the west side of the county, a high ropes course in the north central part of the county, trampoline parks have opened throughout, and 2020 welcomed Florida's first and only Alpine Snow Park, Snowcat Ridge, in the north east section of the county. There is a strong biking, walking, and kayaking culture being promoted by local small businesses and public agencies alike. Both sides of the county have shopping malls and plazas. These attractions are expected to attract many visitors and offer attractions that appeal to younger demographics.

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND INSURANCE COVERAGE

Regarding overall health, Pasco County ranks 36th out of 67 counties in Florida.¹⁷ Although the county has made strides over the last decade to improve the health of residents, there is still much work to be done. According to County Health Rankings, Pasco County residents report slightly higher than state average numbers in poor physical health days (4.2 vs. 3.7) and poor mental health days (4.7 vs 4.0). Additionally, Pasco County is higher than the state on preventable hospital stays (5,246 vs. 5,086) and premature death (8,700 vs. 7,300). Pasco also has an injury death rate of 101, as opposed to the state average of 79.

Approximately 5% children and 18% of adults in Pasco are uninsured.¹⁸ Although these rates are nearly equal to uninsured rates for the state, it is important to note that Pasco County's health care

¹⁷ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, County Health Rankings, 2020. Retrieved at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/florida/2020/rankings/pasco/county/factors/overall/snapshot>

¹⁸ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, County Health Rankings, 2020. Retrieved at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/florida/2020/rankings/pasco/county/factors/overall/snapshot>



costs are higher than the state rate per enrollee. The cost of medical care to uninsured individuals in Pasco County could be devastating to their income, likely contributing to the county's rates of poverty. Additionally there were 14,025 seniors who were medically underserved in 2018.¹⁹

Pasco County residents seeking healthcare also have limited options of affordable providers to select from. The county's ratio of patients to primary care physicians is 1,160:1 compared to the state average of 906:1. For those seeking mental health services the ratio is 1,260 patients for every 1 provider compared to the state average of 620:1.

Of particular interest to Pasco County community leaders and ASAP, are the indicators of substance misuse, substance use disorders, and the impacts of other behavioral health conditions on Pasco County communities. These topics will be referenced in subsequent sections.

CURRENT SUBSTANCE RELATED CONDITIONS

SUBSTANCE USE, MISUSE AND RISK BEHAVIORS

Substance misuse is a serious public health challenge. It includes the use of illegal drugs and the inappropriate use of legal substances, such as alcohol and tobacco. Substance misuse is linked to increased risk of injury, premature death, involvement with the criminal justice system, and exacerbated mental health conditions. Untreated misuse can lead to substance use disorders and have cross cutting impacts on individuals, families, and entire communities. Though complex, substance use disorder and substance misuse can be prevented with education, early intervention, and access to treatment and other supports when use becomes a problem. The following sections provide a summary of needs based on substance and risk factor, followed by recommended areas of improvement identified by ASAP.

¹⁹ United States Department of Elder Affairs, Florida (2018). Profile of Older Floridians, Pasco County, (2018). Retrieved at [2018 Profile of Older Floridians for Pasco County \(elderaffairs.org\)](https://elderaffairs.org)

UNDERAGE ALCOHOL USE

Prevention efforts to reduce underage alcohol use in Pasco County have been successful over the last decade. Middle school students report a 36% decrease in lifetime alcohol use with rates dropping from 34.3% in 2010 to 22.1% in 2020. Lifetime is defined as youth who have tried alcohol at least once in their lifetime (more than a sip). That same age group also reported a 50% decrease in past 30-day use of alcohol from 16.2% to 8.1% during that same period. Similarly, high school youth report a 22% decrease in lifetime use of alcohol and a 30% decrease in last 30 day use of alcohol over the last ten years. (Table 2).

Research shows that perception of harm is an important determinant of whether an adolescent engages in use. The correlating decreases in past 30-day alcohol use over the last decade is valuable information that points to successful intervention educating prevalence of youth use, and the risks of underage alcohol use. Both middle and high school youth continue to increasingly disapprove of regular alcohol use and report a 3% increase in perception of friends' disapproval of use from 2018 to 2020. (Table 2)

Table 2. 2010-2020 FYSAS Alcohol Use Pasco County's Middle and High School

Measure**	Middle School						High School					
	'10	'12	'14	'16	'18	'20	'10	'12	'14	'16	'18	'20
Alcohol - lifetime use	34.3	24.5	27.3	21.0	22.5	22.1	67.9	62.5	55.5	52.5	49.8	52.4
Alcohol – past 30-day use	16.2	13.8	11.8	9.2	7.4	8.1	39.3	32.6	28.8	28.5	23.6	25.4
Binge drinking – past 30-day use	7.2	5.6	4.5	2.3	3.0	2.5	18.5	13.5	12.2	11.0	8.6	10.1
Think it wrong to drink on a regular basis	80.0	87.2	87.0	90.5	86.5	89.0	50.8	60.8	64.6	61.3	65.1	66.6
Perception of parents' disapproval*			96.0	97.9	97.6	97.4			92.6	93.7	94.2	94.2
Perception of friends' disapproval*	--	--	89.7	92.8	90.9	93.5	--	--	75.5	74.9	79.2	81.8

Perception of friends' disapproval of daily alcohol use

Measures are in percent

While progress can be partially attributed to efforts that aim to increase the perception of harm, underage alcohol use continues to be a concern. For the first time in the last decade there is an upward trend in use over the last two years. Middle school students report a 9% increase in past 30 day use from 7.4 in 2018 to 8.1 in 2020 and high school students past 30-day use increased 8%. Additionally, high school students reporting lifetime alcohol use increased 5% from 49.8% in 2018 to 52.4% in 2020.

Table 3 reveals that most high school student alcohol use rates in Pasco County are significantly above the state average. Pasco County high school students' lifetime use of alcohol is 7.5% higher than the state average and past 30-day use is 5.5% higher than the state average while middle school rates hover around or below the state average. This indicator emphasizes a continued need to address the risk of underage alcohol use among youth in Pasco County as they transition from middle to high school.

Table 3: 2020 FYSAS Alcohol Use Pasco County’s Vs. State Rates

Measure	Pasco County		Florida	
	Middle School	High School	Middle School	High School
Alcohol - lifetime use	22.1%	52.4%	23%	44.9%
Alcohol – past 30-day use	8.1%	25.4%	8.2%	19.9%
Binge drinking – past 30-day use	2.5%	10.1%	3.4%	9.2%
Think it wrong to drink on a regular basis	89%	66.6%	88.7%	70.3%
Perception of <u>parents’</u> disapproval of daily alcohol use	94.90%	96.3%	81.1%	78.6%
Perception of <u>friends’</u> disapproval of daily alcohol use	93.5%	81.8%	91.3%	82.8%

In addition to tracking rates of use and perceived risk or disapproval of various drugs, Table 4 shows how youth access alcohol. According to the 2020 results, most high school drinkers accessed alcohol in a social way (i.e., not purchasing it directly). 75.2% of Pasco County high school students reported their usual source of alcohol within the past 30-days was via having someone else buy it, someone giving it to them, or by taking it from a family member. This percentage is higher than the state average of 69.8%. Pasco County high school drinkers also reported their top two usual drinking locations in the last 30 days as: drinking at their own home 48.6% and drinking at another person’s home 29.6% (FYSAS, 2020). This indicates that many people may not feel the provision of alcohol to minors to be a risk activity and do not have formal plans to secure and monitor alcohol use in the home. There is a need to consider enhanced



social host policies and alcohol monitoring education initiatives, especially as the COVID 19 pandemic continues to impose social distancing guidelines, forcing many youth to remain at home unsupervised and exacerbating isolation that may prompt use as a method of coping.

Table 4: How high school drinkers access alcohol, 2020

Measure	Pasco County	Florida
Bought in a store	4.6%	6.5%
Bought in a restaurant, bar or club	1.8%	1.9%
Bought at a public event	0.6%	1.2%
Someone bought it for me	13%	13.5%
Someone gave it to me	43.1%	40.2%
Took it from a store	0.0%	1.6%
Took it from a family member	19.1%	15.8%
Some other way	17.8%	19%

Perhaps of greatest concern is the 15.3% of Pasco students between 15 and 17 years of age who reported riding in a car with a driver who drank alcohol and the 5.3% who reported driving a vehicle after drinking alcohol. Both indicators are above the state average and demonstrate high school youth's low perceived risk of impaired driving. Additionally, 5.9% of high school students reported drinking before or during school (FYSAS, 2020).

KEY FINDINGS:

- ❖ Upward trend in the last two years of past 30-day and lifetime alcohol use in high school students.
- ❖ Concerning rates of youth reporting driving or riding with impaired drivers.

- ❖ Low perceived risks of providing alcohol to underage persons and allowing alcohol use in the home.

ADULT HEAVY DRINKING

Alcohol usage as it relates to adult heavy drinking is an important measure to assess given the health risks that are associated with such behavior. The behavior ‘alcohol use’ is an indicator of concern in Pasco County as it pertains to morbidity. In Pasco County, 18% of adults drink excessively, compared to 17% of excessive drinkers statewide. Increased health risks such as chronic liver disease and cirrhosis as well as unintentional death caused by injury are often associated with excessive drinking.²⁰

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, alcohol ranked as the second most reported primary drug of choice for Pasco County residents admitted to BayCare Behavioral Health, a provider within Pasco County’s borders. Four hundred and ninety-three (493) patients reported alcohol as their primary drug of choice during this time, totaling 37% of the patients admitted in that year. Pasco County’s rate for chronic liver disease and cirrhosis is 2.6 times more than the state average rate of 11.3.²¹

KEY FINDINGS

- ❖ Nearly 1/5 of Pasco County adults are considered excessive drinkers.
- ❖ High rates of chronic liver disease and cirrhosis related to overconsumption of alcohol.
- ❖ Alcohol persists as a common drug of choice for adults.

MARIJUANA USE

YOUTH

²⁰ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, County Health Rankings, 2020. Retrieved at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/florida/2020/rankings/pasco/county/factors/overall/snapshot>

²¹ FL Health Charts, Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis Deaths, Florida Department of Health, 2019. Retrieved at <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/charts/DataViewer/DeathViewer/DeathViewer.aspx?indNumber=0091>

Across the country marijuana use continues to be normalized as laws are passed that decriminalize and legalize it in various forms. After the passing of Amendment 2 in 2016, which legalized the use of marijuana for medical purposes, Pasco County saw a spike in youth use in 2018. However, overall the rates of youth marijuana use have continued to decrease over the last decade. Overall High School students in Pasco County report a 20% decrease in the lifetime marijuana use and an 18% decrease past 30-day use of marijuana. Similarly, middle school students in the county report a 55% decrease in lifetime use and a 57% decrease in past 30 day use of marijuana since 2010. It is likely that these rates are correlated with the increase in perception of harm that is reflected from 2018 to 2020, where 91.5% of middle school students reported thinking it is wrong to smoke marijuana on a regular basis compared to 85.7% in 2018. A new survey question was added in 2020 to track trends in vaping marijuana. According to 2019 focus groups with STAND youth, most students use a vape and rates of smoking marijuana to avoid detection and mask the smell. This is supported by the similar rates of marijuana use and vaping marijuana for middle and high school youth. This will be of particular interest as more studies are done on the consequences of vaping and strategies are implemented to detect vapes on school campuses. (Table 5)

Table 5: 2010-2020 FYSAS Marijuana Use Pasco County's Middle and High School

Measure	Middle School						High School					
	'10	'12	'14	'16	'18	'20	'10	'12	'14	'16	'18	'20
Marijuana - lifetime use	11.2	9.3	8.8	6.7	9.3	5.0	40.2	32.8	34.5	34.4	34.8	32.2
Vaping Marijuana - lifetime use	--	--	--	--	--	5.0	--	--	--	--	--	25.7
Marijuana – past 30-day use	6.7	5.0	5.1	3.2	5.1	2.9	21.1	16.9	20.1	19.7	17.4	17.2
Vaping Marijuana – past 30-day use	--	--	--	--	--	2.6	--	--	--	--	--	13.6
Think it wrong to smoke marijuana on a regular basis	87.1	91.2	88.2	91.4	85.7	91.5	64.8	67.7	62.6	55.7	54.3	58.1
Perception of <u>parents'</u> disapproval*	96.1	97.4	96.5	96.8	94.7	98.3	89.2	90.5	89.0	81.6	83.2	85.2
Perception of <u>friends'</u> disapproval*	--	--	87.4	90.5	86.8	89.5	--	--	59.1	56.3	55.6	60.4

** Perception of parents' and friends' disapproval of smoking marijuana**

Although the 2020 FYSAS data reflects that there has been a decrease in overall student use for Pasco County since 2010, the rate of lifetime use and past 30 day use for high school students in 2020 is higher than the state rate. In contrast, the rate of use for these same measures for middle schools students in 2020 was lower than the state rate. This data suggests that increased prevention efforts around marijuana use need to target high school students. (Table 6)

Table 6: 2020 FYSAS Marijuana Use (Pasco County vs. Florida Statewide)

Measure	Pasco County		Florida	
	Middle School	High School	Middle School	High School
Marijuana - lifetime use	5.0	32.2	8.2	29.2
Vaping Marijuana - lifetime use	5.0	25.7	6.8	22.2
Marijuana – past 30-day use	2.9	17.2	3.8	15.9
Vaping Marijuana – past 30-day use	2.6	13.6	3.0	10.6
Think it wrong to smoke marijuana on a regular basis	91.5	58.1	89.4	63.2
Perception of <u>parents'</u> disapproval of smoking marijuana	98.3	85.2	70.6	45.2
Perception of <u>friends'</u> disapproval of smoking marijuana	89.5	60.4	87.9	67.8

Additional 2020 FYSAS data revealed that approximately 13.4% of Pasco County high school students reported smoking marijuana before or during school in the last 12 months which is significantly higher than the 5.9% who report drinking alcohol before or during school. Also, high school students reported they were more likely to drive a vehicle after smoking marijuana (8.3%) than after drinking alcohol (5.3%). They were also more likely to ride in a vehicle with a driver who smoked marijuana (21.2%) than someone who drank alcohol (15.3%). Based on these numbers, students are about 1.4 times more likely to drive in a car with a driver who is high as opposed to a driver who is drunk. Additionally, students are 1.5 times more likely to drive high as drunk in 2020, a slight decrease from 2.5 in 2018. Fortunately, rates of risky driving as measured through FYSAS have declined since 2014, possibly a result of investing time in educating and campaigning on the topics. These rates are still alarming given what is known

about the lack of public transportation in the county. Minimal public transportation options may increase the likelihood that individuals will use their own means of transportation to get around, even while under the influence. Key Informant interviews revealed that marijuana is often seen as safer, especially if vaped versus smoked. Vaping also helps to conceal use as vapes are not always identifiable, especially by parents, and the smell is often not as pungent. Vaping devices are also very accessible according to these interviews.

KEY FINDINGS

- ❖ High school marijuana use in Pasco County is higher than state average.
- ❖ Increased likelihood of driving under the influence of marijuana vs. alcohol.
- ❖ Increased likelihood of smoking marijuana before or during school vs. alcohol.
- ❖ Vapes are accessible and help conceal use.

ADULT

With medical marijuana recently becoming legal in the state of Florida, it is important to monitor the usage rates of marijuana in Pasco County through Florida charts data and local hospital reports. According to FL Charts 2016 data (more recent data is not currently available), rates among adults 18 + in Pasco County who used marijuana or hashish during the past 30 days were higher than the state rate.²² The percentage reported for Pasco County is 9.5% while the state average percentage is 7.4%. For past 30-day use of marijuana or hashish, adult males had a much higher percentage than adult females in Pasco County. Adult male use was twice the percentage of adult female usage, 13.5% for usage by adult women versus 6.3% for adult men. The highest percentage by age group was the 18-44-year-old age group. This age group reported that 14.8% adults had used marijuana or hashish in the past 30-days whereas the 45-64 age group reported a rate of 7.0%. These

²² FL Charts, BRFSS Indicators Data, *Adults who used marijuana or hashish during the past 30 days*, Florida Department of Health, 2016. Retrieved at <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/charts/Brfss/DataViewer.aspx>

percentages show that in Pasco County, males use marijuana or hashish significantly more than females, and use is more prevalent in younger adults aged 18 to 44 years of age.²³

According to BayCare Behavioral Health treatment admission data, Marijuana was the primary drug of choice during fiscal years (FY) 2012 to 2015. Its ranking dropped during FY2015-2017 to the second highest reported drug of choice. In FY 2019-2020, marijuana dropped to the fourth primary drug of choice for those admitted during this time. This data reflects a decline in the rates of persons who report marijuana as their primary/secondary drug of choice since data collection on this measure began in 2012.

NON-MEDICAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG USE

YOUTH

Due to the ongoing opioid crisis, youth trends in non-medical use of prescription drugs are of particular interest to community leaders. To address this concern, ASAP created an opioid related task force in 2011. The formation of this task force was prompted by parents in the community who were demanding that state legislators act to reduce access to opioids, particularly Oxycontin. In 2012, Pasco County was awarded special appropriation dollars by the state legislature to deploy innovative strategies to address prescription drug misuse. This funding was used to develop collaborative initiatives led by ASAP, BayCare Behavioral Health, and the Pasco Sheriff's Office. Strategies related to addressing medication safety via proper monitoring, storage and disposal of medications in the home and the implementation of the statewide Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) continue to evolve.

Over the last decade in Pasco County, lifetime use of prescription pain relievers in high school youth decreased by an astounding 77%, from 12.4% in 2010 to 2.8% in 2020. For middle school students,

²³ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin (2018). County Health Rankings: Pasco County, Florida. Retrieved at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/florida/2014/rankings/pasco/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>



rates decreased 46%, from 4.7% in 2010 to 2.5% in 2020. However, strategies are still needed to address use of all prescription medications, as an upward trend was observed in middle school student past 30 day use of all classifications of prescription drugs over the last two years. From 2018 to 2020, past 30-day use of prescription pain relievers by middle school youth increased 200%, from 0.4% to 1.2%. Additionally, Past 30-day use of prescription amphetamines by high school youth increased a dramatic 80% from 2018 to 2020. This is notably the highest rate of use for high school use of prescription amphetamines over the last decade and troublesome when research shows that youth who start using drugs before adulthood are most likely to become addicted and develop addiction related illnesses and consequences.

Table 7: 2010-2020 FYSAS Prescription Drug Use in Pasco County

Measure	Middle School						High School					
	'10	'12	'14	'16	'18	'20	'10	'12	'14	'16	'18	'20
Prescription pain relievers - lifetime use	4.7	4.9	2.5	4.4	2.1	2.5	12.4	8.5	9.3	7.8	6.0	2.8
Prescription amphetamine – lifetime use	1.7	1.4	1.6	0.9	0.8	1.4	3.4	3.8	4.2	5.9	4.1	5.6
Prescription Depressants – lifetime use	3.7	1.3	1.6	2.5	2.9	2.1	7.2	7.2	6.2	8.1	7.3	5.9
Prescription pain relievers – past 30-day use	1.5	1.9	1.1	2.5	0.4	1.2	4.1	2.8	3.1	2.0	1.6	0.7
Prescription amphetamine -- past 30-day use	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.7	1.2	0.5	2.1	1.5	2.7
Prescription Depressants – Past 30-day use	0.7	0.6	0.6	1.1	0.7	1.3	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.0	0.5
Perception of <u>parents'</u> disapproval*	--	--	98.6	98.1	97.9	98.4	--	--	98.5	97.3	96.4	98.0
Perception of <u>friends'</u> disapproval*	--	--	96.4	96.9	94.9	95.5	--	--	92.3	91.4	93.6	90.6

*** Perception of parents’ disapproval of using prescription drugs without a doctor’s orders;
Perception of friends’ disapproval of using prescription drugs without a doctor’s orders.**

Although Pasco County high school students report lower rates of lifetime use of prescription pain relievers than the state average, lifetime use of prescription amphetamine and depressants are above the state average in the same age group. Past 30-day youth of prescription amphetamines for both middle and high school youth are also above the state averages (Table 8).

Table 8: 2020 FYSAS Prescription Drug Use (Pasco County vs. Florida Statewide)

Measure	Pasco County-2020		Florida- 2020	
	Middle School	High School	Middle School	High School
Prescription pain relievers - lifetime use	2.5%	2.8%	2.9%	3.2%
Prescription amphetamine – lifetime use	1.4%	5.6%	2.1%	4.5%
Prescription depressant – lifetime use	2.1%	5.9%	2.2%	4.9%
Prescription pain relievers - past 30-day use	1.2%	0.7%	1.2%	1.0%
Prescription amphetamines - past 30-day use	0.4%	2.7%	0.8%	1.3%
Prescription depressant - past 30-day use	1.3%	0.5%	0.8%	1.2%
Think it wrong to take a prescription without a doctor’s orders	86.9%	84.2%	89.7%	87.3%
Perception of <u>parents</u> ’ disapproval of prescription drugs	98.4%	98.0%	97.9%	97.6%
Perception of <u>friends</u> ’ disapproval of prescription drugs	95.5%	90.6%	95.2%	91.5%

Perhaps the most concerning youth behavior indicator of prescription drug misuse is related to unintentional injury hospitalizations and deaths. According to the Florida Department of Health’s most recent data, drug poisonings were the leading cause of unintentional injury hospitalizations among



youth ages 15-19 and adults ages 25-54 in Pasco.²⁴ In addition, the rate of unintentional injury deaths by poisoning for 15-to-19-year olds in Pasco County was 6.8 in 2019, the 7th highest of all 67 counties in Florida (Florida Department of Health CHARTS, 2019).

In contrast to the ease of access for alcohol and marijuana, focus groups conducted in 2019 with youth under 21 years of age and with those involved in the youth advocacy initiative, STAND, continue to reveal that prescription drugs are more difficult to obtain. Many participants reported knowing an adult who had overdosed on prescription drugs and about half of the participants knew an adult who had died from prescription drug use. The perception of harm of prescription drug use was generally higher than the perception of harm of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana use because of the real-life experiences seen by the participants. Participants did discuss “skittles parties” where pills were dumped into a bowl for party goers to take at their own risk. Participants felt these parties were more prevalent in years past and not as frequent as parties where only alcohol or alcohol and marijuana were present.

KEY FINDINGS

- ❖ Rates of amphetamine prescription drug use among middle and high schoolers have increased.
- ❖ Drug poisonings are the leading cause of unintentional injury hospitalizations among youth ages 15-19.

ADULT

As with the rest of the country, Pasco County has been experiencing the cross-cutting impacts of the opioid crisis. Adult opioid use has many indicators, including overdose death rates, unintentional injury hospitalizations and deaths, infectious disease rates, and rates of substance exposed newborns. Metrics within these categories are elaborated in the sections below.

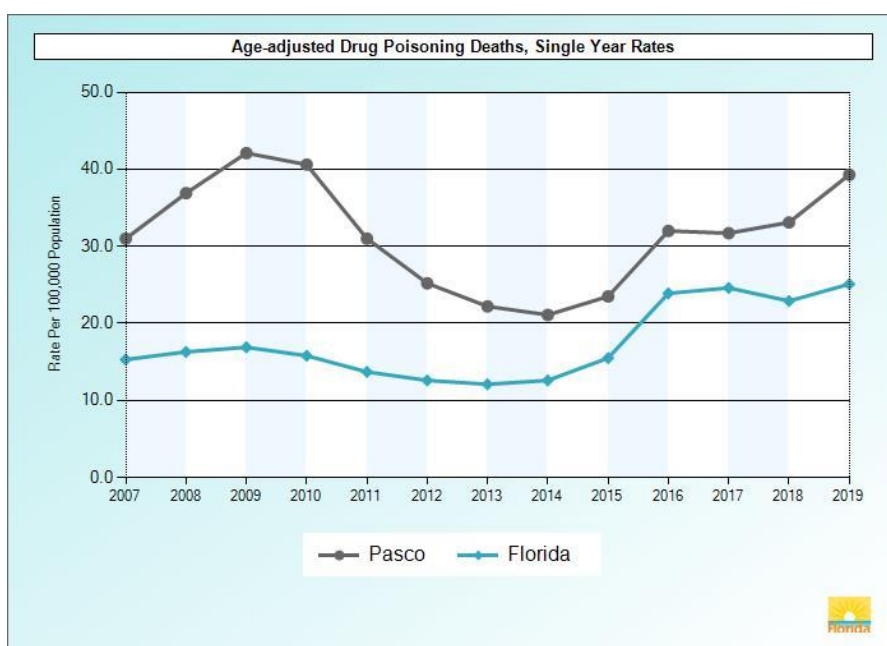
²⁴ Florida Department of Health, Violence and Injury Prevention. 2019. Retrieved at <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=ChartsProfiles.NonFatalInjuryHospitalizationsProfileDASHBOARD>



Overdose Rates.

Pasco County’s age adjusted drug poisoning death count was 194 per 100,000 people, the sixth highest drug overdose mortality rate of the 67 counties in the state of Florida.²⁵ As can be seen in Figure 3, Pasco County consistently has higher than state averages for overdose mortality rates with the measure steadily increasing since 2017.

Figure 3: Drug Poisoning Deaths, Single Year Rates (Pasco v. Florida)



Drug-related deaths have two categories: lethal-level of drug present at time of death and non-lethal level of drug present at time of death. Generally, drugs that are reported at non-lethal levels at time of death are those drugs that were present in the individual’s system but not necessarily attributed to the cause of death. Table 9 shows that in Circuit Six, which encompasses Pasco and Pinellas Counties, there

²⁵ Florida Dept of Health. Drug Poisoning Deaths, 2019. Retrieved at <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/charts/OtherIndicators/NonVitalIndDataViewer.aspx?cid=9869>



was a 127% increase in drugs listed as cause of death from 2017 to 2019. According to Florida Medical Examiner data included in the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's *2019 Report of Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons*, the most frequently reported drugs found at a lethal level were fentanyl (327), cocaine (171), morphine (135), and alprazolam (97). In 2019, the most frequently reported drugs found at a non-lethal level were hydrocodone, morphine, alprazolam, and oxycodone.²⁶ It is important to note, however, this data includes both Pasco and Pinellas Counties.

Additionally, medical examiner data shows concerning increases for the drugs found at lethal levels, specifically cocaine, heroin, and fentanyl analogs (alprazolam, nordiazepam, diazepam, morphine) which had the most significant percent increases found in lethal levels. Fentanyl-caused deaths in Circuit 6 have increased tenfold since 2014 and deaths caused by morphine, fentanyl, cocaine, and heroin are at their highest levels since 2014. While drug related deaths have seen dramatic increases in lethal levels, the non-lethal levels in deceased persons have stayed consistent. This data illustrates the need for additional overdose prevention efforts, especially the use of Narcan to reverse opioid related deaths.

Table 9. Circuit 6 Pasco and Pinellas Drug-Related Deaths by Lethal and Non-Lethal Levels

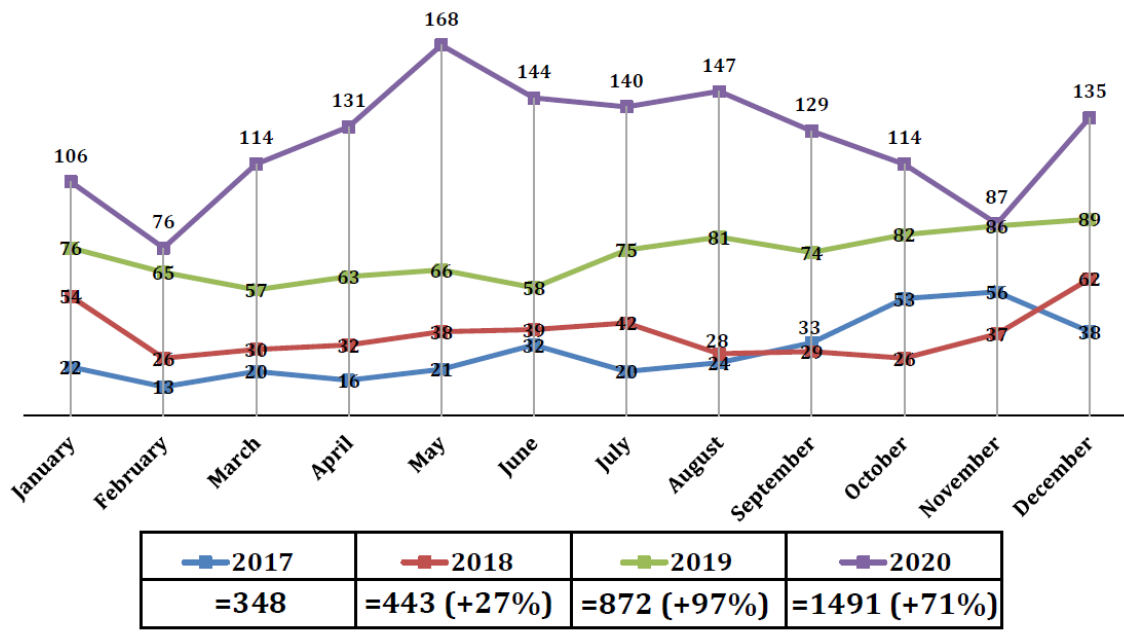
Drugs	Lethal levels: Drug Was Cause of Death						Non-Lethal Levels: Drug Present at Death					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Alprazolam	85	78	106	58	79	97	67	58	70	70	73	58
Diazepam	33	41	34	32	27	35	30	18	35	26	37	31
Oxycodone	71	60	91	71	76	95	55	46	51	51	58	46
Hydrocodone	40	37	21	25	19	28	48	28	35	38	27	33
Methadone	54	47	52	36	43	29	21	9	23	8	18	16
Morphine	58	60	84	71	123	135	32	58	61	52	52	49
Fentanyl	30	49	58	67	176	327	8	10	12	18	22	11
Fentanyl Analog	--	--	47	104	143	74	--	--	2	6	6	18

²⁶ Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons by Florida Medical Examiners. 2017 Annual Report. 2019, retrieved at <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MEC/Publications-and-Forms/Documents/Drugs-in-Deceased-Persons/2019-Annual-Drug-Report>

Cocaine	52	63	94	72	135	171	46	38	63	37	90	79
Heroin	7	13	16	20	53	69	0	1	2	2	3	4
Total	430	449	603	466	874	1,060	307	266	354	308	386	345

According to Pasco Sheriff’s Office data, overdoses occurred more often in 2020 than all years since 2017. From 2019 to 2020, there was a 71% increase in overdoses (Figure 4). Overdoses in 2020 reached a high in May with 168 overdoses. The rise in overdoses from February to May coincides with COVID-19 pandemic response including school shutdowns and stay at home orders. The pandemic halted 12 step support groups, drug testing, and face-to-face treatment for substance use disorders. March was also the month of the first stimulus check from the federal government.

Figure 4. All Pasco County Overdoses 2017-2020



Medical examiner data for 2020 is not available at this time to assess the trends in overdose deaths, however, Pasco Sheriff’s Office shows 23% of the overdoses in May were fatal as seen in Figure 5. Heroin and fentanyl are the most common cause of overdose (44%) in those overdoses where a substance was disclosed or found at the scene. (Figure 6)



Figure 5. Pasco County Overdoses by Outcome January 2020 -December 2020

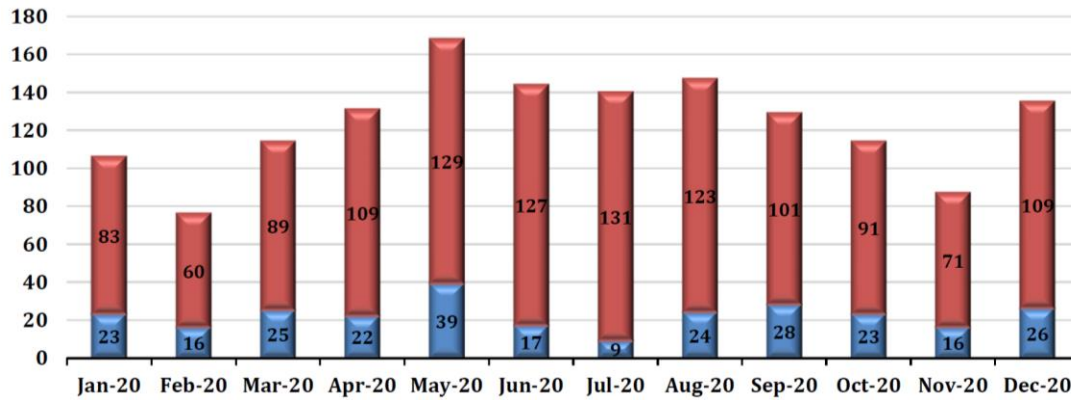
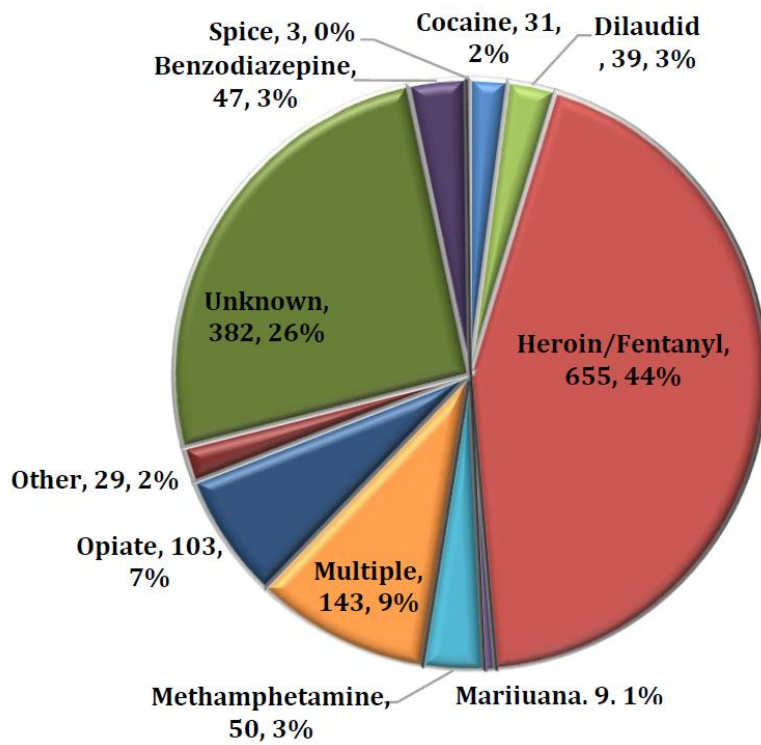


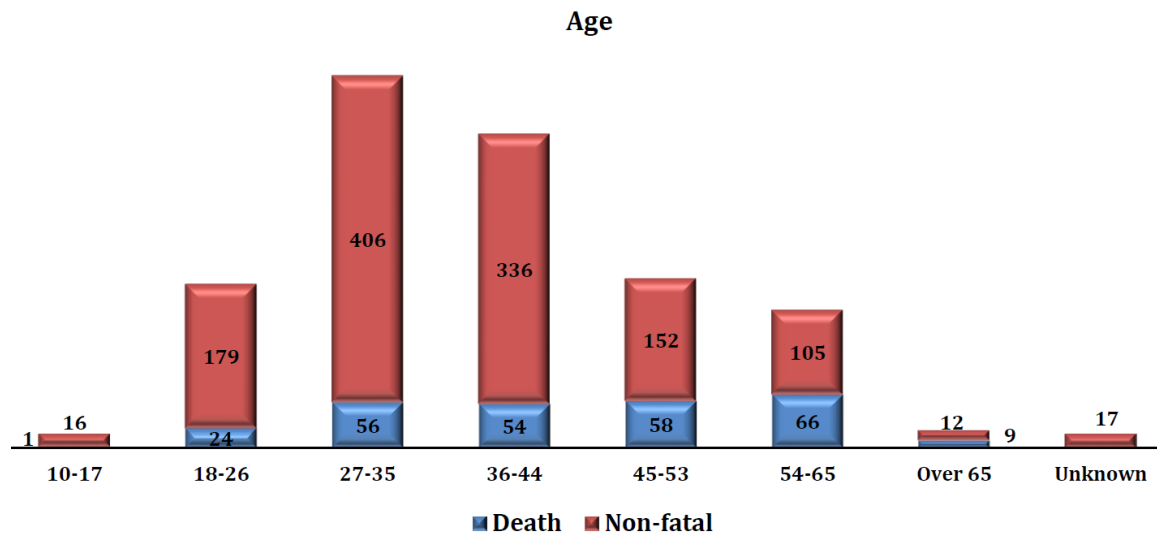
Figure 6. Pasco County Overdoses by Drug January 2020- December 2020



The most common age range for overdose victims in 2020 was 27-35 with those over the age of 40 more likely to incur a fatal overdose. Figure 7 shows that there were 17 overdoses by juveniles and one death. The substances reported in these instances included LSD, marijuana, and Xanax.

Figure 7. Pasco County Overdoses by Age and Outcome January 2020 – December 2020





KEY FINDINGS

- ❖ Rising rates of morphine, fentanyl, and cocaine related deaths
- ❖ From 2017 to 2019, there was 127% increase in drugs listed as cause of death by the medical examiner in Circuit 6 (Pasco and Pinellas Counties)
- ❖ From 2019 to 2020, Pasco Sheriff’s data shows a 71% increase in overdoses
- ❖ In 2020, there were 17 overdoses by juveniles and one death.

SUMMARY OF SUBSTANCE-RELATED PROBLEMS

Substance use does not simply begin and end with an individual choosing to use and misuse substances. The impacts of substance use, misuse, and substance use disorders are felt in all sectors, health care, law enforcement, businesses, education, and most importantly in families and communities. Communities grapple with the complex impacts of substance use in such areas as safety and public health. The following sections summarize the impact that substance-related problems have had in Pasco County.

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)



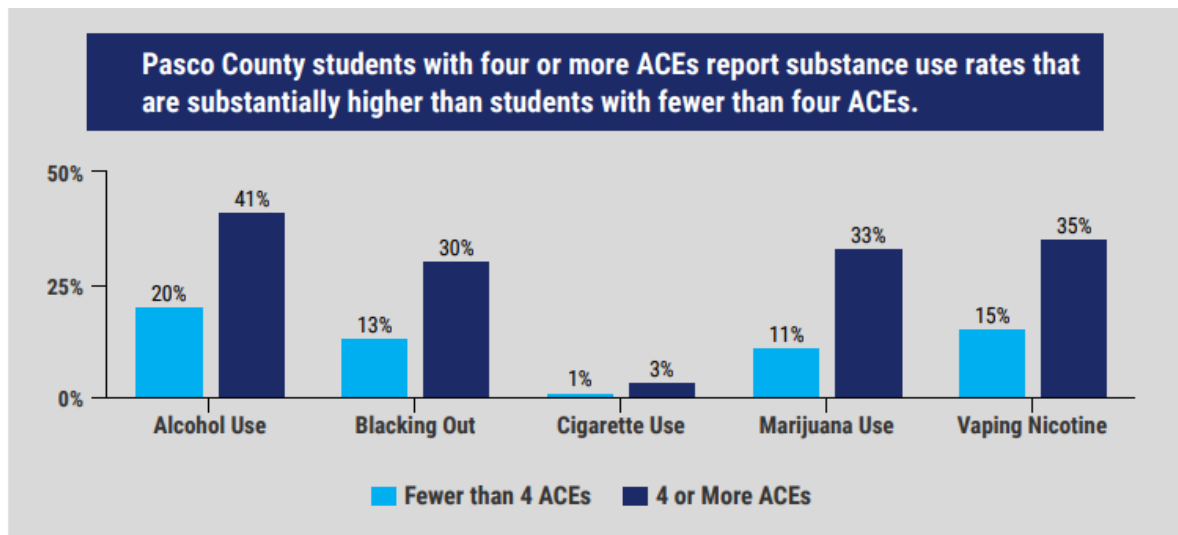
ACE's are a major social determinant of health and are strongly associated with the development and prevalence of a wide range of health problems throughout a person's lifespan, including those associated with substance misuse²⁷. Research has demonstrated a strong, graded relationship between ACEs and a variety of substance-related behaviors, including early initiation of alcohol use; higher risk of mental and substance use disorders as an older adult (50+ years); continued tobacco use during adulthood; prescription drug use; and lifetime illicit drug use, drug dependency, and self-reported addiction. Neurodevelopment can be disrupted when children are exposed to chronic stressful events, resulting in impairments in cognitive functioning and/or ability to cope with negative or disruptive emotions. During adolescence, the development of maladaptive coping skills, such as substance use, contributes to disease, disability, social problems, and premature mortality²⁸.

The 2020 FYSAS is one of the first large-scale youth data collection efforts to include a comprehensive set of ACE questions. Exposure to four or more ACEs is considered a high level of trauma. Data shows that 24.1% of Pasco County high school students have been exposed to at least four ACEs. The connection between trauma experiences and negative consequences of trauma is illustrated in Figure 8, which illustrates that Pasco County students with 4 or more ACEs are more than twice as likely to drink alcohol, black out, and vape nicotine. These same students are 3 times more likely to smoke cigarettes or marijuana.

²⁷ Douglas Et Al, 2010

²⁸ SAMHSA, 2019

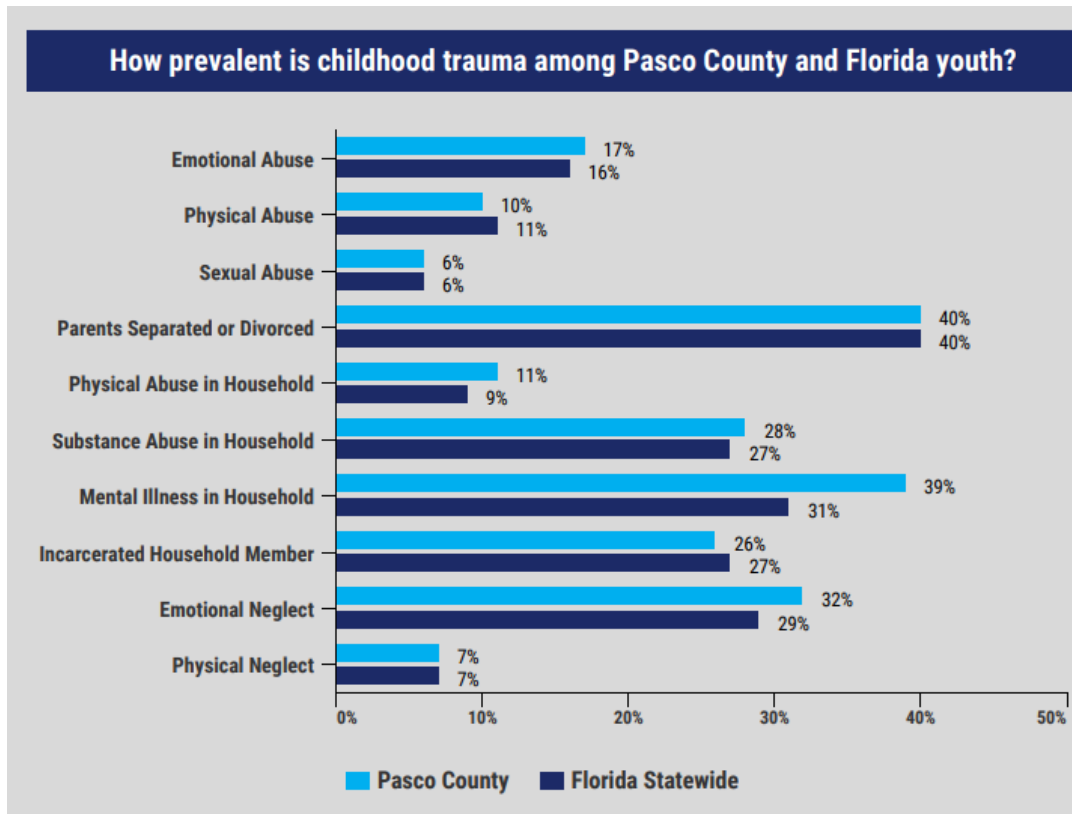
Figure 8 Pasco County Substance Use Rates for Students with Four or more ACEs



The prevalence of certain childhood traumas among youth in Pasco County and youth statewide are shown in Figure 9. This table reveals that Mental Illness in the home and Substance Abuse in the household are in the top 5 reported ACEs for the county and both measures are reported to be above the state average. With the COVID 19 Global Pandemic forcing virtual school and social distancing measures to be implemented, thus increasing isolation and stress for many families, there is great concern about these rates. Prevention planning must focus on teen resilience and support for youth, parents, and the community in the form of educational workshops and training for parents and school-based support for youth. To effectively provide this support, partnerships with community organizations that combat substance use disorders and mental health, such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Pasco County Recovery Community Organizations (RCO)’s, Baycare Behavioral Health, as well as other organizations that educate parents and offer support for mental illness and substance use disorders, have been developed. Additionally, the youth lead coalition, STAND, has created opportunities to focus on mental health support for youth.



Figure 9. Prevalence of Childhood Trauma in Pasco County and the state of Florida



KEY FINDINGS

- ❖ 24.1% of Pasco County high school students report being exposed to at least 4 ACEs.
- ❖ Students with 4 or more ACEs are more than twice as likely to drink alcohol, black out, and vape nicotine.
- ❖ These same students are 3 times more likely to smoke cigarettes or marijuana.
- ❖ Mental health and substance abuse in the household are among the top reported ACE’s.



SUICIDE

An important indicator of substance misuse is the rate of suicide. According to Florida Charts, the suicide by drug poisoning rate saw a 59% decrease from 2015 to 2019. In 2019, the suicide rate was 20.8 per 100,000, compared to the state rate of 14.5 per 100,000 and the national goal of 10 per 100,000.²⁹ Pasco County has consistently ranked in the top quartile for suicide death rates in the state of Florida since 2002, demonstrating the persistence and chronic nature of the problem.

Pasco County's suicide rate and trends are of particular concern to county leaders, especially with the COVID 19 pandemic. The mental health of youth requires particular attention as the pandemic has disrupted in-person learning and forced isolation upon students in the form of virtual/distance learning. Poison Control data for Pasco County shows that, of the 396 suicide attempts in 2020 involving poisons or medications, the age ranges with the most calls were 15-19 and 45-54, with 66 calls each (Table 10). Most alarming is the 84% increase in calls related to suspected suicide attempts using poisons or medications for 10-to-14-year-olds from 2019 to 2020. The 2020 figure represents a 5-year high of 46 calls. This data is cause for great concern and demonstrates the need for greater focus on youth mental health and suicide prevention initiatives.

²⁹ Florida Department of Health, Florida CHARTS, Suicide Deaths. 2020. Retrieved at <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/charts/DataViewer/DeathViewer/DeathViewer.aspx?indNumber=0116>

Table 10. Suicide Attempts Using Poisons or Medications in Pasco County

Age Group	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
10-14	27	39	28	44	25	46
15-19	72	74	71	86	84	66
20-24	37	40	33	51	36	45
25-34	67	69	63	84	60	59
35-44	75	64	73	76	65	61
45-54	79	72	64	70	84	66
55-64	44	59	61	77	35	46
65-74	15	20	23	28	24	7

Suicide continues to be a concern for Pasco County due to recent increases in youth attempted suicides by poisoning and medication by 10 – 14 year olds, substance use in home, and the county’s high rates of suicide overall.

KEY FINDINGS

- ❖ Age ranges 15-19 and 45-54 show highest number of calls for suicide by poisons or medications to the Poison Control Center
- ❖ 84% increase in calls related to suspected suicide attempts using poisons or medications for 10-to-14-year-olds from 2019 to 2020.
- ❖ The 2019 Pasco County suicide rate was 20.8 per 100,000 and above the state rate of 14.5 per 100,000. This is a consistent trend since 2002.
- ❖ Opportunities exist for youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Initiatives



SAFETY

According to the School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) System over 16% of incidents reported to law enforcement were drug related. This report tracks crime, violence, and disruptive behaviors that occur on school grounds, on school transportation, and during school-sponsored events.

In 2020, Pasco County's motor vehicle crash death rate is 18.3, which is above the state average rate of 14.7.³⁰ According to the Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicle Crash Dashboard, 57% of Pasco County's confirmed drug or alcohol involved crashes ended up with a fatality. In Pasco County, the presence of alcohol has contributed to 21% of motor vehicle driving deaths.³¹ Although not a direct indicator of alcohol use, common consequences of alcohol use are injury related deaths. Given that more than 1/3 of all motor vehicle accident deaths are attributable to alcohol,³² motor vehicle mortality data may be used in part to demonstrate potential impact of alcohol.

Since alcohol-related morbidity and mortality have been a consistent issue within Pasco County over the last several years, ASAP has been conducting a last drink survey in collaboration with Pride Integrated Services and Pasco County's DUI School since January 2011. This survey is a self-reporting measure completed by persons arrested for DUI who are participating in the DUI Offender Program in Pasco County. Almost 3,200 completed surveys have been submitted by impaired drivers. Results for

³⁰ Florida Dept of Health. CHARTS Motor Vehicle Crash Deaths, 2019. Retrieved at. Retrieved at [Death Data Viewer - Florida Health CHARTS - Florida Department of Health \(flhealthcharts.com\)](#)

³¹ School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) System. Retrieved at [Discipline Data \(fldoe.org\)](#)

³¹ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin (2020). County Health Rankings: Pasco County, Florida. Retrieved at [Pasco County, Florida | County Health Rankings & Roadmaps](#)

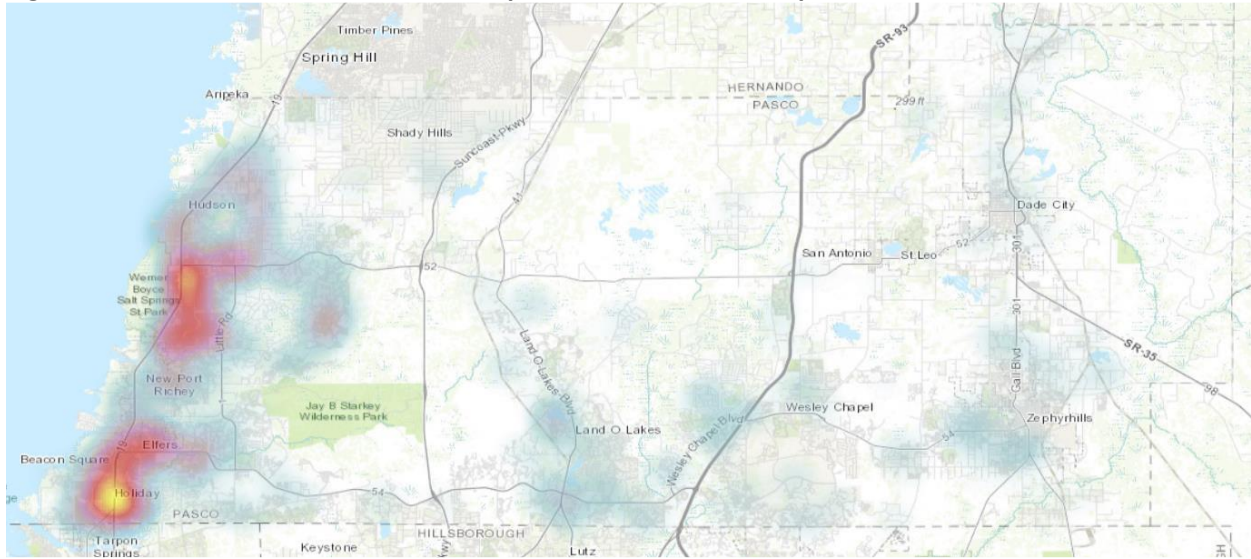
³² National Institutes of Health, Alcohol-Related Traffic Deaths. 2018. Retrieved at <https://report.nih.gov/nihfactsheets/viewfactsheet.aspx?csid=24>



2017 indicate that offenders are typically male (66.4%), White (81.3%), and between the ages of 30 to 59 years; only 1.8% were under 21. Most consumed alcohol only (78.4%), followed by drugs only (10.4%), and 5.3% consumed a combination of alcohol and drugs. Approximately 8% reported using drugs only on the day of their arrest and 40% reported they consumed 5 or more drinks that day. When asked their last place to drink, 46% were at a club or a bar, almost 35% were at home or a friend's house, and less than 2% were at a special event or festival. This information is used to generate data driven programs designed to reduce impaired driving in Pasco.

In addition to traffic safety indicators, arrest and Intelligence Lead Policing data can be used to provide insight into changes in drug of choice and the identification of hot spots within the community for targeted interventions. The Pasco Sheriffs Office's Behavioral Health Intervention Team (BHIT) tracks specific data related to overdoses in their Intelligence Lead Policing reports. Data from 2018 to 2020 identified hot spots within the county (Figure 10), which included the Port Richey, Hudson, Dade City, Holiday, and New Port Richey communities, with the majority taking place in the Holiday area. When overlaid with overdose fatalities, communities of concern include Holiday, New Port Richey, and Hudson.³³ The general areas of concern have remained the same since 2018, with more overdoses in the northwest portion of the county than previous years.

³³ Pasco Sheriff's Office, Intelligence Lead Policing, Overdoses 2020

Figure 10. Pasco Sheriff's Office, Heat Map 2020 Location of hot spots for overdoses, 2020

KEY FINDINGS

- ❖ Impaired driving from alcohol as an issue persists
- ❖ Opportunities exist to target initiatives for key population identified through the DUI School Survey
- ❖ Opportunities exist to target specific communities that have significant rates of opioid related arrests and overdoses

UNINTENTIONAL INJURY

The Pasco County rate of nonfatal unintentional injury hospitalizations in 2019 was 683.3 per 100,000. This is significantly higher than the state rate of 590.8. In 2019, drug poisonings were the 2nd leading cause of unintentional injury hospitalizations in the county overall and the leading cause of unintentional injury hospitalizations among youth ages 15-19 and adults ages 25-54.

Deaths caused by unintentional injury are deaths that occur in a short time where the extent of the injury was not sought out therefore, unintentional injury is a good metric to use to monitor opioid and alcohol misuse and overdose. According to the National Safety Council and Centers for Disease Control, the main cause of unintentional injury deaths is now overdose deaths³⁴ The FL CHARTS- Leading Causes of Death Report for 2019 shows that unintended injury- related deaths were the fourth leading cause of death in Pasco County in 2019.³⁵ Figure 11, generated from Florida Charts, demonstrates that in 2019,

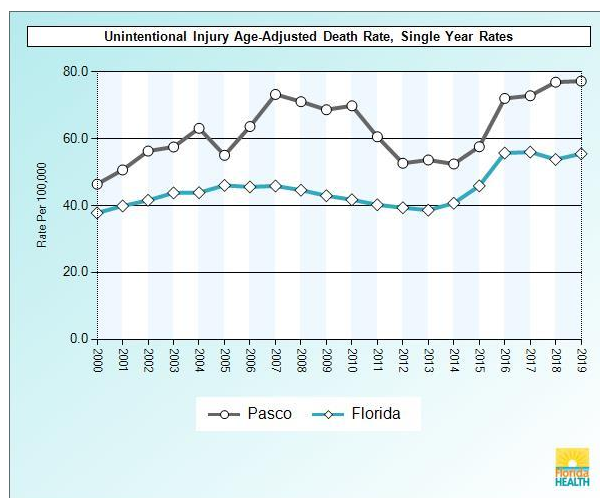


Figure 11: Unintentional Injury Deaths by Drug Poisoning, Single Year Rates

rates of unintentional injury deaths were 77.3 per 100,000. This rate is higher than any other year since 2000 and consistently above the state rate. Additionally, in 2019 Pasco County had a 10-year high 180 unintentional injury deaths by drug poisoning, a rate of 36.9 and the 6th highest rate in the state when compared to the other 67 counties in Florida.³⁶ For the 15- to 19-year-old age group, the rate of unintentional injury deaths by poisoning in Pasco County was 6.8, the 7th highest of all 67 counties in Florida.

³⁴ Florida Department of Health, Violence and Injury Prevention. 2019. Retrieved at http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=ChartsProfiles.NonFatalInjuryHospitalizationsProfileDAS_HBOARD

³⁵ Florida Department of Health, Leading Causes of Death Report. 2019. Retrieved at <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=ChartsProfiles.LeadingCausesOfDeathProfile>

³⁶ Florida Department of Health, Unintentional Injury Deaths by Drug Poisoning. 2019. Retrieved at [FLHealthCHARTS Data Viewer](http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=ChartsProfiles.UnintentionalInjuryDeathsByDrugPoisoning)



KEY FINDINGS

- ❖ Drug poisonings are the leading cause of unintentional injury hospitalizations among youth ages 15-19 and adults ages 25-54.
- ❖ Rates of death related to unintentional injury in Pasco County are consistently higher than the state average.
- ❖ Pasco County ranks 6th in the state for highest rate of unintentional deaths by drug poisoning.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Aside from acute drug toxicity related deaths, opioid drug use is related to other major causes of death and disease in Pasco County, like chronic liver disease, Hepatitis A, B, and C, and HIV. Chronic liver disease is often caused by untreated Hepatitis B and C and has been consistently listed in the top 10 causes of death in Pasco for the last several years.³⁷

According to Florida Health Charts, the count of persons with chronic Hepatitis C was 872 for 2018, a 10% decrease since 2017. However, the overall rate in the county, 168.1, is still significantly higher (more than 50%) than the state average rate of 106. Increasing prevalence of Hepatitis B and A are also a great concern within Pasco County. Between 2013-2018, rates of Hepatitis B have increased. For 2018, the current count for chronic Hepatitis B cases is 119. This is a 136% increase between 2013-2017.³⁸

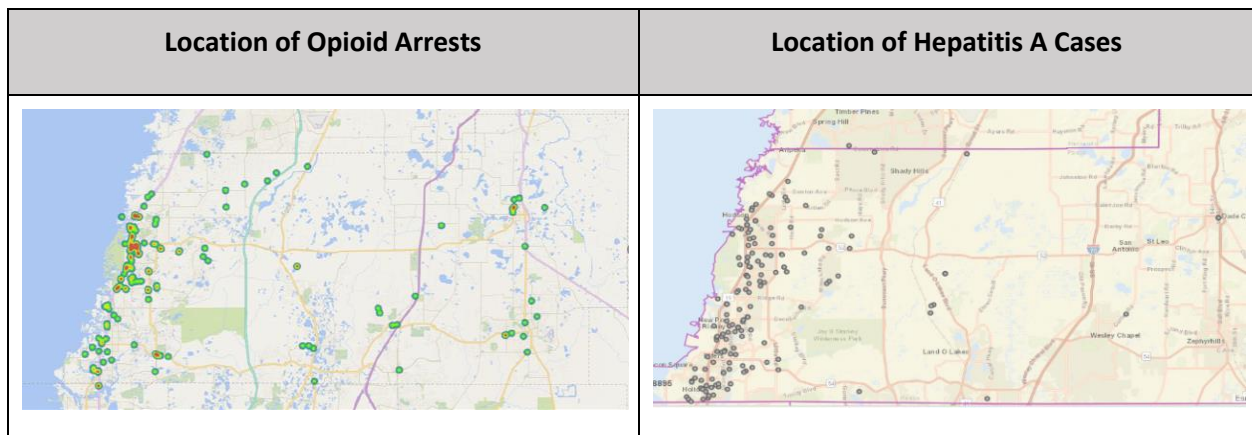
Based on interviews with patients, the Florida Department of Health in Pasco County has shared that the county's Hepatitis B increase is influenced by needle sharing among persons who inject drugs (PWID). In addition, the health departments in Central Florida have distributed several alerts regarding

³⁷ Florida Department of Health, Leading Causes of Death Report. 2017. Retrieved at <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/ChartsReports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=ChartsProfiles.LeadingCausesOfDeathProfile>

³⁸ Florida Department of Health, Hepatitis B, Chronic Report. 2017. Retrieved at <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/charts/OtherIndicators/NonVitalIndNoGrpDataViewer.aspx?cid=8659>

Hepatitis A, which according to their data, is showing outbreaks occurring primarily among persons who use injection and non-injection drugs and/or persons who are homeless and their direct contacts. In 2018, Pasco County was among the top five counties in Florida for cases of Hep A, coming in second over Pinellas County (310 vs. 254 cases).³⁹ Of note is the distribution of Hep A cases overlaid with the Pasco County Sheriff’s Office opioid arrest hotspots (Figure 12). This further emphasizes a need to target efforts to certain regions of the County that pose both public safety and public health risks related to opioid use and infectious diseases.

Figure 12. Comparison between locations of Pasco opioid arrests and Hepatitis A cases



Following the passage of syringe exchange legislation in 2018, harm reduction programs that address safe injection practices, distribute clean syringes, and provide educational opportunities about infection risks and proper wound care, are emerging as promising practices for addressing the County’s rising Hep A rates.

KEY FINDINGS

- ❖ There are alarming rates of Hep A/B/C within Pasco County
- ❖ Opportunities exist to expand and enhance harm reduction programming and policies

³⁹ Nicholson, Garik. Florida Department of Health, Pasco County. Hepatitis A Presentation, 2019.

- ❖ The need to target certain regions of the county which are hotspots for drug-related issues is evident

SUBSTANCE EXPOSED NEWBORNS

Another important indicator of opioid use prevalence is the rate of infants treated for opioid withdrawal symptoms, as such a measure demonstrates the persistent use of opioids among women of childbearing age. Rates of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) in Pasco decreased from 145.05 in 2014 to 127.25 in 2016. Pasco County has the fifth highest frequency of NAS within Florida according to the latest available statistics from the Florida Department of Health. This data has not been updated at the state level in many years.⁴⁰ Barriers to data related to cases of NAS can be attributed to inconsistent hospital reporting methods, lack of centralized repository for information, and varying tools associated with identification. As such, Pasco County specific data is minimal. In 2019, a single birthing facility in Pasco County identified 120 cases of substance exposed newborns alone⁴¹. Additionally, BayCare's substance use treatment services provided care to approximately 127 pregnant patients in 2017-2018, a 25% increase from the previous year's number of approximately 101⁴².

KEY FINDINGS

- ❖ Although NAS rates are decreasing, the county still ranks 5th highest in the state for NAS
- ❖ There is an opportunity to enhance programming that addressing the risk of opioid use among women of childbearing age, especially once they discover they are pregnant
- ❖ The number of pregnant women in need of substance use disorder treatment is increasing

⁴⁰ Pasco County Healthy Start Coalition, 2016

⁴¹ Healthy Start Coalition of Pasco County, Number of SEN babies born in birthing facilities in Pasco report. Retrieved 2019.

⁴² BayCare Behavioral Health. Pregnant Patient Report. FY16-17 and FY17-18



CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES TO ADDRESSING PROBLEMS

COMMUNITY RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS, GAPS IN DATA, RESOURCES, AND SERVICES

YOUTH RISK DATA

The Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) provides rich information on a vast array of community risk and protective factors. It is modeled after the "Communities That Care" survey for assessing risk and protective factors for substance use, in addition to substance abuse prevalence. This survey is Pasco County's most comprehensive source of information obtained from youth concerning community risk factors, community protective factors, and youth substance use.

Data from the 2020 FYSAS indicate the highest level of risk in the Domain. Lack of Commitment to School for middle school (66%) and high school (69%) followed by Poor Academic Performance reported by 51% of high school students indicate that students are not feeling connected and supported in school. Focus groups conducted in 2019 with STAND youth and other students supported this statement. Students stated that they do not get the social and emotional support they need from teachers who they feel are more focused on coursework. Youth serving organizations report that increased class sizes and the prevalence of ACEs in their family life force students to be more resilient and resourceful to stay engaged in school.

The perception of Favorable Attitudes Toward Antisocial Behavior in the Peer and Individual Domain of the 2020 FYSAS was reported as the second highest level of risk in middle school (50%) and third highest level of risk in high school (45%). A high score on these scales indicates that fewer students expressed disapproval for forms of antisocial behavior and drug use. This is in line with previously discussed measures of perceived peer disapproval for certain drug use. There is a noticeably steep decline



in perceived disapproval of drug use among peers between middle and high school, regardless of drug. Perceived parental disapproval of drug use, on the other hand, remains relatively constant between middle and high school. These attitudes are higher than state and national averages and underscore the need for more social norming campaigns amongst peer groups.

Family Conflict was the third highest level of risk in middle school (42%) and fourth highest level of risk in high school students (40%) in the Family Domain. As seen in the FYSAS ACEs data in Figure 5, prevalence of emotional abuse, physical abuse in the household, emotional neglect, substance abuse and mental illness in the household are higher in Pasco County than statewide. Key Information interviews with youth serving organizations, parents, law enforcement, youth, and child welfare providers, noted the prevalence of untreated mental health and substance use disorders as a key factor in family instability. As reported above in County Health Rankings, Pasco County residents report slightly higher than state average poor mental health days (4.7 vs 4.0) and approximately 5% children and 18% of adults in Pasco are uninsured.⁴³ When Pasco County residents seek behavioral healthcare, they are also limited in their options and often face high demand and overutilized resources. Access to care is also frequently mentioned as a barrier in focus groups.

In the Community Domain, the 2020 FYSAS indicates that middle school students reported the same risk for Laws Favorable to Drug Use (37%) and Perceived Availability of Drugs (37%) which is comparable to state averages of 41% and 34% respectively and lower than national norms of 42% and 45%. Perception of harm and availability have continued to be addressed through strategic plans from the coalition. High school students reported highest risk in Perceived Availability of Handguns (34%)

⁴³ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, County Health Rankings, 2020. Retrieved at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/florida/2020/rankings/pasco/county/factors/overall/snapshot>



followed by Laws and Norms Favorable to Drug Use. These rates are similar to state averages and lower than national norms.

ADULT RISK

Similar to the FYSAS scale of community disorganization is the social associations' measure provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings. This measure is the number of associations per 10,000 people; such associations include organizations that provide membership, such as civic organization, fitness centers, bowling leagues, sports clubs, religious organizations, professional organizations etc. Poor social capital, social involvement, and trust are well documented throughout public health literature as being risk factors for increased morbidity and mortality. A 2001 study found that the health risk of social isolation is similar to that of cigarette smoking (RWJF and UW, 2016). Additionally, social networks have been identified as strong predictors of positive health behaviors; similarly, poor social networks indicate poorer lifestyle choices. Lastly, research has shown that measures of social trust increased when levels of involvement in voluntary group or organizations is high (RWJF and UW, 2016). For all these reasons, the social associations' measure within the County Health Ranking system is of great importance. This measure is the number of membership associations per 10,000. In 2018, Pasco County ranked as having the 8th worst social association rate in the state of Florida. The rate is currently at 5.9% (RWJF and UW, 2018).

YOUTH PROTECTIVE FACTORS.

The FYSAS assesses protective factors in several domains, with several scales falling within each domain. In the Family Domain, both middle (62%) and high school students (56%) reported the highest level of protection on the Family Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement scale. In the School Domain, middle and high school students reported similar levels of protection on the School Opportunities for



Prosocial Involvement scale and high school students reported higher levels of School Rewards for Prosocial Involvement. In the Peer and Individual Domain, high school students (42%) reported similar levels of protection in comparison to middle school students (42%) on the Religiosity scale, a 3% increase from 2018. (FYSAS, 2020)

GAPS IN DATA, RESOURCES, AND SERVICES

Although substantial data is gathered throughout any given year, Pasco County has several gaps in accessing data, resources, and services.

DATA

The Florida Youth Risk Behavior Survey (FYRBS), administered in every county of Florida, only provides county-specific data to certain counties; Pasco County is not one of those counties. Therefore, county residents only have access to the state-wide data on risky behavior among youth. Having Pasco County specific data would be ideal to tailor programs according to the needs of the youth.

Regarding the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS), at the time of this report, not all the FYSAS data has been included on the FYSAS website. Specific data pertaining to the relationship between youth performance in school and alcohol use, is missing from the website and is therefore a gap in Pasco's data.

Population-specific data, for groups like substance exposed newborns limit Pasco County's ability to track trends locally and statewide. Discrepancies in how hospitals report this data also limit the quality of data that exists.

To gather direct youth and community feedback, in addition to assessing FYSAS data, ASAP conducted focus groups with youth to understand issues related to youth alcohol, marijuana, and substance use. Consistent with FYSAS data, focus group results indicated that marijuana was the most



commonly used drug other than alcohol and tobacco products, and marijuana is often the drug of choice over alcohol and tobacco and vaping is the method of choice for any smoked substances. Participants and STAND feedback were in agreement that marijuana is perceived as a cool drug to use. Students also reported ease of access in that marijuana could be obtained from peers in school bathrooms or just off school grounds in wooded areas. It was also the perception of participants that teachers, parents, and adults were not as concerned about marijuana compared to prescription drug misuse. Given the shifts in marijuana related legislation and the increasing focus on opioids, it would be beneficial to update these focus groups and conduct additional ones with key populations. Results for new focus groups would assist ASAP in developing relevant and community-informed strategies.

RESOURCES

Health Education. Most middle schools in Pasco County do not offer health classes. Only 5 middle schools offer a Health Occupations course, which exposes the students to the main health careers. Therefore, many students in Pasco County are not receiving consistent health education on drug use, risky behavior, and healthy living.

SERVICES

Transportation. Despite having a large population spread over the county, inter-city public transportation is poor and has been documented as a problem across agencies and coalitions. This infrastructure has been reported as a barrier for those seeking mental health care and treatment for substance use disorders.

Veteran's health. According to the U.S. Census, Pasco County had 50,239 veteran residents between 2009 and 2013. Based on a community roundtable hosted by Congressman Bilirakis in December of 2009, there are not enough veterans in the medical field to serve veterans in need. This



theme was repeated by numerous people during the roundtable. It was discussed that veterans will not feel comfortable discussing certain concerns with non-veteran medical providers. Also, according to the roundtable discussion, unlike males, there is no separate jail pod in Pasco for female veterans with mental health conditions.

Health coverage. Young men with low SES have very poor access to care. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of Medicaid expansion in Florida. Without proper insurance coverage, issues like substance use and mental health conditions likely to go untreated or are addressed only when at acute levels. Income alone does not qualify an individual for Medicaid, which puts a strain on grant funded organizations that lack the financial resources and capacity to serve people without insurance coverage. It is critical that the community supports efforts to enhance access to health insurance coverage. Medicaid expansion would allow for individuals with low income to qualify for coverage, which in turn would enhance access to substance use disorder treatment and critical mental health services that assist Pasco County in addressing disparities identified through this need's assessment.

COALITION ASSESSMENT

Founded in 2006 with BayCare Behavioral Health as the fiscal agent, the Alliance for Substance Addiction Prevention (ASAP) is the largest and most successful prevention coalition in Pasco County, enjoying strong representation from all sectors of the community. Before the coalition's inception, reports from local law enforcement, treatment providers and the school district indicated significant increases in illegal substance use among youth. This galvanized the community members to form ASAP after determining no single group or agency possessed the resources to substantially impact a change in this trend. This is a special challenge when dealing with a diverse population spread over a large geographic area like Pasco County. Since inception, ASAP has evolved to meet the needs of a rapidly growing county, becoming the coordinating body for prevention services, and continuing the work of



the coalition's mission. As a coalition, ASAP conducts environmental strategies to help create sustainable drug use behavior change at the community level. Although ASAP focuses on policy adoption, changing consequences, social norming, enhancing or restricting access, and changing physical design, a few of ASAP's provider members implement evidence-based curriculum and other such services to prevent drug misuse within the community ASAP currently has 7 active committees, including the Alcohol Initiatives Committee, Prescription Drug Committee, Substance Exposed Newborn Committee, the Recovery Committee, Cultural Competence Committee and the youth component, STAND. These committees perform the "boots on the ground" work of the coalition. In 2019, the Alliance for Healthy Communities (AHC) was formed for expansion and sustainability. Despite the formation of AHC, BayCare Behavioral Health continues to be a strong community partner and the fiscal agent for ASAP's state contract and the Memorandum of Understanding between the two entities is reviewed annually by the AHC Board of Directors.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, ASAP and its youth component, STAND, have had to shift the ways in which members, community, volunteers, etc. are engaged. Beginning in April 2020, all ASAP meetings went virtual via Zoom. Although this started as a barrier, it proved positive for ASAP, as ASAP has garnered the most participation in adult committees since the coalition's inception. More adult members state that they can attend virtual committee meetings and play an active role in the coalition than they could with in-person meetings. Events have also shifted to an online platform. One of our most successful events in 2020 was the NOPE Candlelight Vigil, which engaged almost 200 people in a virtual platform, with representatives present from as far as California. Social media campaigns and evidence-based social media initiatives have also played a huge role in our prevention initiatives during the pandemic. Massive success in reaching community members with prevention initiatives was found in engaging and emphasizing social media platforms for ASAP, STAND and AHC.



STAND youth meetings have also gone virtual for 2020-2021. Traditionally, STAND meetings were held in schools and community buildings. In early 2020, coordinators and mentors found engagement to be more difficult without physical meetings, so STAND mentors developed a new infrastructure. Smaller group sessions (committees) were held via zoom, eliminating the school barrier, and engaging more youth. STAND mentors also developed a large General Coalition Meeting, where youth from various committees meet once per month to exchange ideas and initiatives. Additionally, the GroupMe ap was utilized to reach youth in a way they understood. More growth is needed in engaging youth across the county to be a part of the STAND movement.

MEMBERSHIP BY SECTOR

Below is a chart to better illustrate some of the relationships between ASAP and its key members.

Sector representatives:

Sector/Name	Entity	Summary of Contribution
STAND youth	Various high schools and middle schools	STAND is comprised of Pasco County youth who serve as the youth movement to reverse trends in substance abuse. Members participate in planning youth led initiatives, create, and strengthen positive community norms via creating or co-creating media campaigns, implementing school-based awareness activities for Red Ribbon Week, and conducting ASAP Environmental Scans to assess youth access to alcohol.
Parents	Parent Advocates Lisa Conca Kelly Mothershead	Lisa joined the coalition when she wanted to find support after her son overdosed. She has been an active part of planning several ASAP Events and participates in our RX/Opioid Committee and town hall events. Kelly is an ASAP Board Member who consistently supports ASAP via participation in events, initiatives, and campaigns. She joined to support the cause after her son passed from an overdose.
Business Community Kelly Mothershead	Owner of A Focus on Fitness	Kelly Mothershead is a prominent local-business woman, involved in local chambers of commerce and rotary clubs. She lost her son to an overdose several years ago and is committed to reducing risk of overdose for other families,



		and rowing the economy by creating a healthier community, rid of substance use disorders.
Media B.C. Manion, Evan Axelbank, Sarah Blazonis, Jodi Pushkin	Journalists: Media news reporters; Newspaper in Education Specialist	Reporters (Laker Lutz, Fox News 13, Bay News 9, and Tampa Bay Times) who make it a priority to cover our meetings and events and spread our messages.
School Kurt Browning	Super. District School Board of Pasco County	Superintendent Browning is committed to continuing the District School Board of Pasco's partnership with ASAP and has the authority to grant coalition requests. The schools collect data through the FYSAS which is used in collecting the core measures, in assessing current trends and evaluating the coalition's effectiveness. The School Board also hosts ASAPs annual town hall meeting with partners and Red Ribbon week events.
Youth Serving Org. Gail Ryder	BayCare Behavioral Health	Vice President for BayCare Behavioral Health (BCBH), Gail Ryder, encourages participation among many of the staff of multiple services offered by BCBH including traditional prevention staff and the Community Health Activation Team. BCBH brings a wealth of knowledge, skills, and leadership to the coalition.
Youth Serving Org. Patricia Sowder	Youth and Family Alternatives (YFA)	Instrumental employees who represent YFA that work in schools to reduce youth substance use. YFA builds partnerships with the schools and other community programs to provide services and has been working in the community for over 40 years. YFA brings knowledge of the community, strong prevention skills and community history of trends to the coalition.
Law Enforcement Sheriff Chris Nocco,	Sheriff Pasco Sheriffs Office	An active member of ASAP and encourages the involvement of many of the sheriff's units including the School Resource Officers, County Jail personnel, Special Traffic Enforcement Patrol Unit (S.T.E.P.) and Narcotics. With only 4 incorporated areas of Pasco County, the sheriff's office is the law enforcement agency for the majority of Pasco County.
Religious Org.	Minister Jerry Brewster	Has been instrumental in linking ASAP with resources including their outreach program, recovery resources and Narcan distribution. ASAP collaborated with to bring community events highlighting prevention, early intervention, and recovery.
Civic and Volunteer Larry Coggins	Mothers Against Drunk Driving	As MADD ED, Larry is committed to supporting ASAP's initiatives related to underage alcohol use and impaired driving. Larry is connected with local law enforcement,

		state attorney's office and families impacted by impaired driving.
State/Local Tribal Government Agency Michael Napier	Director Dept. of Health Pasco County	In addition to DOH responsibilities, Michael Napier is the facilitator of Pasco Alliance for Treatment and Health (PATH) which develops and implements an annual Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The Department of Health also coordinates the Tobacco Prevention Partnership of Pasco which includes the youth group Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT).
Healthcare Professional	BayCare Pain Management	To assist with developing and implementing policies and procedures to address pain management protocols in hospital and emergency department settings.
Healthcare Professional	Morton Plant North Bay Hospital	To continue to focus on healthcare reform, population health and wellness.
Healthcare Professional	Crystal Willson	Crystal Willson is a representative from a local hospital that volunteers her time and data to the coalition. As chair of the RX/Opioid Committee she brings invaluable data to the coalition and
State/Local Tribal Government	Teen Court Public Def.	Assist sectors to become aware of new trends and emerging issues as well as data to evaluate our effectiveness with this juvenile population.
State/Local Tribal Government	Child Protective Services	To develop strategies to increase favorable parental perceptions and reduce the number of children removed from the home due to parental drug use.
State/Local Tribal Government	New Port Richey City Council	As the organizer for many events and festivals in Pasco, it is imperative that ASAP works with the local city council to change local policies addressing safe alcohol vendor training and impaired driving prevention messages during local events and festivals.
Civic and Volunteer	Pasco County Re-Entry Task Force	Community re-entry task force addresses incarceration and re-entry initiatives. Addresses the link between incarceration, substance use, mental health, housing, jobs, and barriers to healthy lives for those previously incarcerated and re-entering society. Assist with events and campaigns. More work needs to be done to collaborate with initiatives and engage this sector.
Business Sector	West Pasco Business Association (WPBA)	As a current member of the WPBA, ASAP has been involved in networking with business representatives in the area to build initiatives and gain in kind donations. More work needs to be done to address drug free workplace initiatives within the organization.
School	Pasco Hernando State College (PHSC)	PHSC is a college in Pasco County that takes an active role in the coalition. They have volunteered their space for events and taken part in event planning within the coalition.

<p>Religious Org.</p>	<p>Next Level Church</p> <p>Trinity Church of Christ</p> <p>St. George Greek Orthodox Church</p>	<p>Next Level Church is a Christian church with many members who are in recovery. Their commitment and ownership in ASAP events have resulted in their hosting multiple community events.</p> <p>Trinity Church of Christ is a Christian church with many members in recovery and primarily focuses on recovery ministry initiatives. They have participated in several ASAP events, partnered with overdose prevention efforts, and offer monetary and physical support to the coalition.</p> <p>St. George Greek Orthodox Church is a Greek Orthodox church in Pasco County that donates their space for ASAP events and supports the coalition monetarily.</p>
<p>Other Org.</p>	<p>Career Source</p>	<p>Career Source works with young adults ages 18 to 25 in resume building, training employable skills and employment readiness. They work with the coalition to address issues affecting the economic redevelopment in the area.</p>
<p>Other Org.</p>	<p>Domestic Violence Sexual Assault</p>	<p>Family conflict is one of the highest contributing Risk Factors to youth in Pasco. More work is needed to build relationships with the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services in Pasco County.</p>
<p>Other Org. Gabby Flores</p>	<p>Director, Healthy Start Coalition of Pasco</p>	<p>The Healthy Start Coalition of Pasco and ASAP formed a joint committee in January 2011 to address the alarming increase in newborns going through withdrawal from opioids and the Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. John is a leader in infant health and reducing mortality numbers and a key component to the future of the coalition’s expansion to include community health and wellness.</p>

PLANS TO MAINTAIN INVOLVEMENT OF ALL 12 SECTORS

ASAP ensures that all 12 sectors continue to be actively involved by participating in their community events and asking them to participate in ASAP and inviting them to coalition and committee meetings. The coalition regularly utilizes multiple approaches to ensure stakeholders - especially youth - remain engaged and promote initiatives. These approaches are outlined below.



Many of the ASAP methods to keep stakeholders engaged and active involve strong communication and incentive building strategies. For example, in addition to the coalition's monthly meetings, emails, and newsletters, the coalition staff maintain ongoing, personalized contact with community members and key stakeholders through email, phone calls, and in-person meetings. These tailored communications are imperative to making stakeholders feel valuable and relevant. It is through these communications that stakeholders and the coordinator can create plans that meet the needs of both parties and organizations. By soliciting both individual and corporate members and allowing multiple opportunities for meaningful involvement, ASAP assures that members continue to be invested in the mission and goals of the coalition.

Similarly, it is important to ensure that all members feel valued and appreciated in a way that is specific to their personalities or needs. The coalition staff has multiple ways to show appreciation for esteemed stakeholders; these methods include but are not limited to the following: 1) public announcements of appreciation at monthly meetings, 2) written appreciation or public recognition (i.e., in-kind marketing) in the ASAP newsletters, press releases, social media posts, personalized notes and website pages, 3) Nominations for community awards, including the highly esteemed ASAP Volunteer of the Year award, which is granted in December of each year at the Annual ASAP Brunch and 4) Providing resources and tools to help advance the skills of stakeholders as is applicable to both the coalition and individual person (i.e., sending esteemed members to CADCA trainings). Last of all, to properly implement the work plan, it is always important to recruit and engage new members. Strategies to accomplish this include conducting community presentations, airing coalition advertisements, hosting community events, and leveraging media coverage.

The sector of greatest importance to the ASAP coalition is the youth sector; as such, ASAP has additional strategies to ensure that this sector continues to grow in numbers and involvement. ASAP



funds and supports the club, STAND. These clubs operate at schools and community centers to build rapport among youth leaders and to build momentum for the prevention work they do. Favorite teachers and SROs at schools are selected to be STAND mentors, to increase youth participation. Additionally, multiple trainings, leadership summits, public engagements, and fun activities are scheduled to ensure the youth are receiving the sense of purpose, recognition, training, and community they need and want in a volunteer-based organization.

Activities to obtain/maintain funding and ensure sustainability:

A long-term strategy ASAP has deployed to ensure the sustainability for the coalition is becoming a 501c3 organization. ASAP's Board of Directors made the decision to incorporate Alliance for Healthy Communities, Inc (AHC) to house the ASAP and STAND coalitions. The development of AHC will allow for expansion of the behavioral health scope beyond a substance use focus in the future. As sustainability is the top priority, the AHC board of directors continues to build infrastructure, revamp the website, and identify diverse funding streams.

Sponsorship development has been integral to the success of ASAP and continues to be a strong component of the sustainability plan. In-kind donations are used for speaker fees, meeting space, printing, and marketing. In addition, donations are encouraged at events and through the website to sustain efforts beyond the current funding cycles. The Board of Directors has been instrumental to coalition staff in developing relationships with prevention program providers and local leaders. Through the hiring of a consultant, AHC has an updated Organizational Asset Map and Sustainability Plan.

MEMBER PERCEPTION OF COALITION ORGANIZATION AND EFFECTIVENESS

For a full coalition assessment, please see Appendix I.



PROBLEM STATEMENTS

Alcohol

Pasco County has high rates of morbidity and mortality related to alcohol use such as high motor vehicle crash deaths (17), adult binge drinking (19% of adults), and higher than state average death rates from chronic, alcohol-related diseases. To prevent these consequences, we must change risky behavior by modifying the local contributing factors related to enforcement, perceived risk, access to treatment, and retail access.

MARIJUANA

Pasco County has high rates of mortality, morbidity, and social consequences related to marijuana use such as high motor vehicle crash deaths (17) and high incidence of youth getting in trouble with LE at school due to alcohol and drug use. To prevent these consequences, we must change risky behavior by modifying the local contributing factors related to enforcement, perceived risk, cultural norms, social access, and cultural norms.

OPIOID USE

Pasco County has high rates of morbidity and mortality related to opioid use. Pasco is ranked 6th out of 67 counties as having the highest fatalities from drug poisonings (Florida CHARTS, 2019). Additionally, several diseases related to needle sharing are in the top ten causes of death in Pasco County (Florida CHARTS, 2019), and youth rates of opioid use is higher than the state average. To prevent these consequences, we must change risky behavior by modifying the local contributing factors related to enforcement, perceived risk, access to treatment, and retail access.