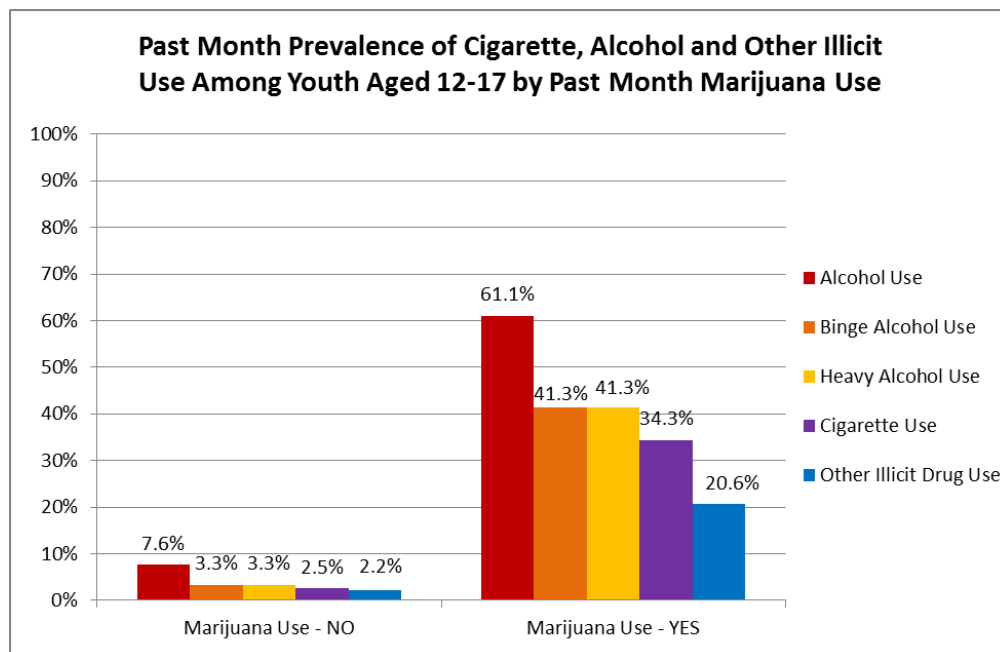


Commentary

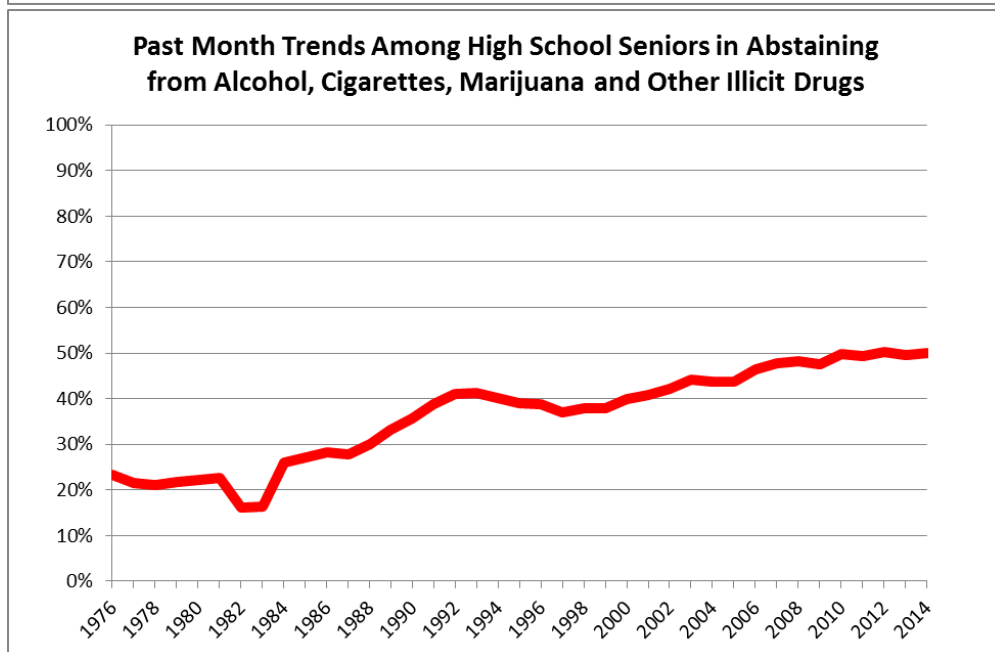
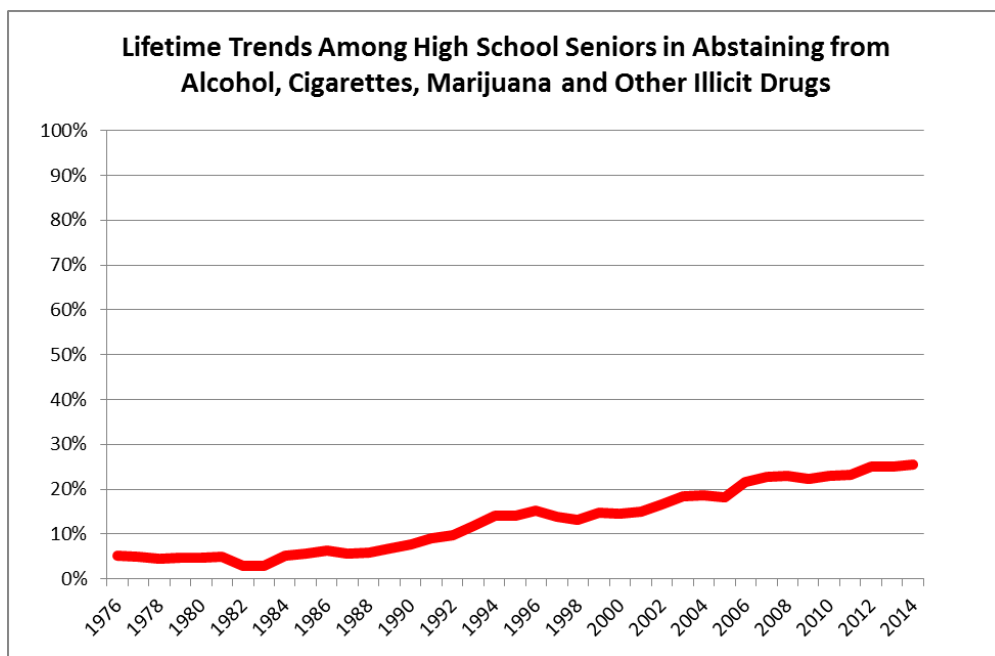
October 23, 2017

For a Healthy Brain Teens Make “One Choice”

One Choice is a consistent, clear social messaging concept designed to encourage young people under 21 not to use any alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other drugs to protect their health, especially the health of their brains. At present, prevention efforts tend to focus on a single substance or circumstance, e.g., only marijuana, only alcohol or binge drinking, or not drinking and driving. *One Choice* cuts through these details and centers in on the single decision that teens face every day: whether or not to use any substance at all. Rather than a series of substance-specific decisions, teens make one overarching, day-by-day decision on whether or not to use any substance, including alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drugs. Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) show that the use by teens age 12 to 17 of any one of the three gateway drugs – alcohol, cigarettes or marijuana – dramatically increases the likelihood of use of the other two substances and other illicit drugs. Similarly, non-use of any one of these substances significantly reduces the likelihood of using the other two or other illicit drugs. This is the basis for *One Choice*. Adolescents, regardless of past substance use, have the choice today and the choice every day to not use any substance to maintain a healthy brain.



Addiction is rooted in adolescence: 90 percent of adults with substance use disorders begin using in the teenage years. The good news is that a growing percentage of teens in the US are making the choice not to use any substance. Nationally representative data from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)-funded Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey show that over the course of the last four decades a steadily increasing percentage of high school seniors report having never used any alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana or other illicit drugs.



In 2014, over one quarter (25.5%) of high school seniors had never used any alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana or other drugs in their lifetimes. Half (50%) of high school seniors had not used any substance in the past 30 days. It is possible for every teen to make the choice not to use any substances. More and more teens are making that *One Choice*.

To learn more about *One Choice* to maintain a healthy brain, visit the IBH website, www.PreventTeenDrugUse.org.

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