



Contact: Marc Homer, Kids Count Director
O: 307-460-4454, C: 307-760-4837
E: mhomer@wykids.org
<http://www.kidscount.wykids.org>



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Prevention Efforts Reduce Youth Alcohol and Tobacco use in Wyoming

Teen drinking and smoking have declined precipitously over the years in alignment with a national trend. State evaluators say that these positive results correlate with substantial increases in funding for prevention programs.

When recently asked about these developments, DFS Director Steve Corsi said, *“We find that underage and teenage binge drinking are at the heart of a lot of risky behaviors for youth in Wyoming. It’s great to see progress on that front.”*

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data appears on the following pages displayed using the following criteria, *Percentage of High School students from 1995-2011 who:*

- 1) Had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more of the past 30 days.
- 2) Had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours, one or more of the past 30 days.
- 3) Smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days.
- 4) Smoked cigarettes on school property on one or more of the past 30 days.

According to Rodney Wambeam, Ph.D with UW’s Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center, underage drinking rates fell as a result of a combination of strategies, including those that affect the culture around drinking. In a recent blog on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s website, Wambeam stated, *“I grew up in Wyoming and have worked as a prevention researcher here for the past 10 years. Wyoming’s culture around alcohol and especially underage drinking has changed. Adults no longer see underage drinking as a rite of passage but a problem with serious consequences. And Across the state I have seen communities addressing the problem with a comprehensive set of strategies.”*

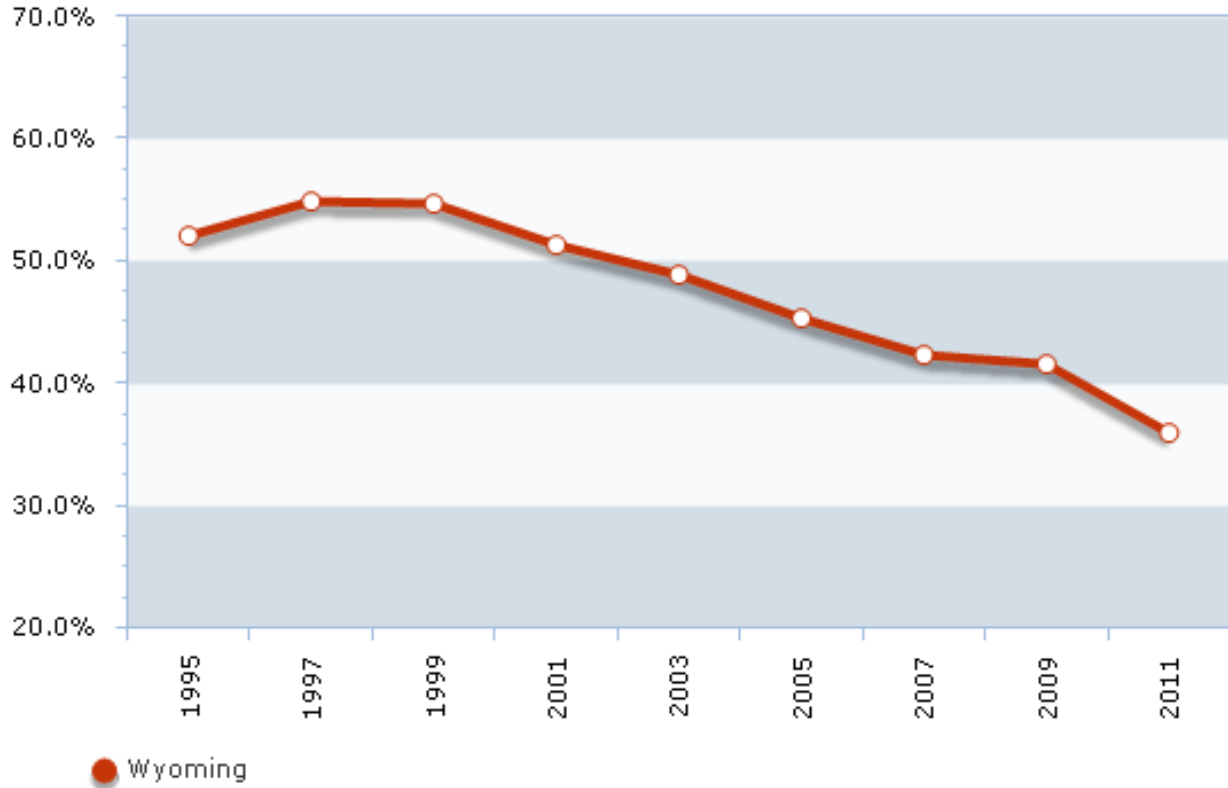
Substance abuse prevention efforts began in earnest in Wyoming when the state received a State Incentive Grant in 2001. Efforts continued with further funding through the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG) in 2005 through 2010.

Tobacco prevention efforts in Wyoming ramped up following the 1998 State Tobacco Settlement that provided money for tobacco prevention to states. According to Tobacco Free Kids, Wyoming is one of just five states spending 50 percent or more of CDC recommendation levels on tobacco prevention programs. Dramatic decreases in teen use rates show a strong correlation with prevention efforts in Wyoming (see data below).

According to Mark Hicks, a Project Coordinator with Wyoming Through with Tobacco, *“Quitting options in Wyoming are excellent. The Wyoming Quit Tobacco Program is available – the State of Wyoming provides a quitline for people who use tobacco to obtain counseling at no cost. Additionally, the Medicaid fee-for-service program in Wyoming provides coverage for tobacco dependence treatment, as well as coverage for individual and group counseling. The Wyoming Quit Tobacco Program can be accessed by Calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW, or online at wy.quitnet.com.*

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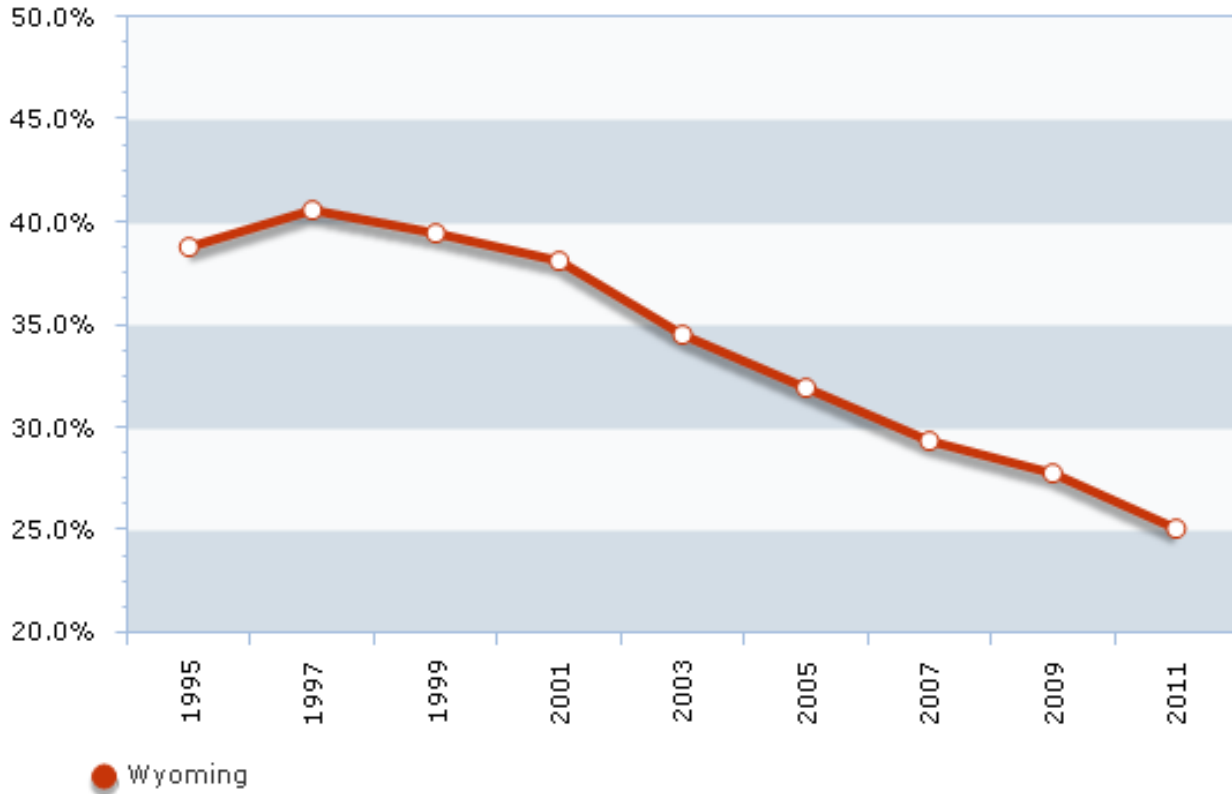
Table 1) Past month drinking among high school students decreased from 52.1 percent in 1995 to 36.1% in 2011.



Percentage of students who had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more of the past 30 days: High School (Percent) – 1995 to 2011

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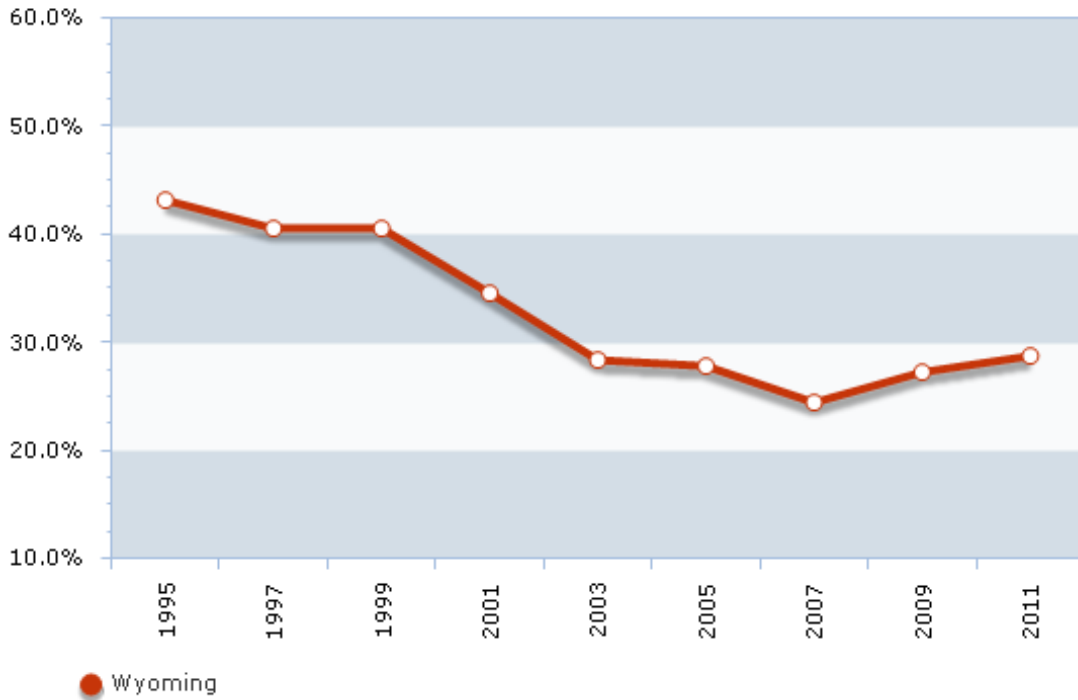
Table 2) Binge drinking among high school students decreased from 38.8 percent in 1995 to 25.1 percent in 2011.



Percentage of students who had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours, on one or more of the past 30 days: High School (Percent) – 1995 to 2011

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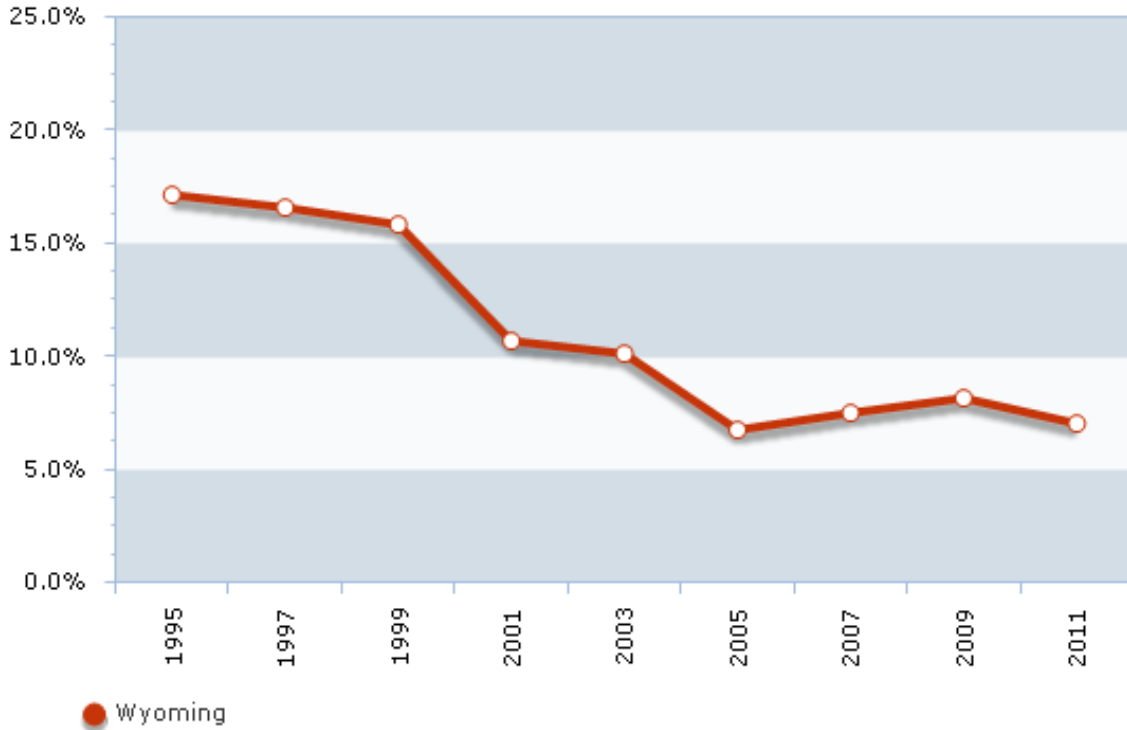
Table 3) Past month smoking among high school students decreased from 43.3 percent in 1995 to 28.9 percent in 2011.



Percentage of students who smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days: High School (Percent) – 1995 to 2011

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Table 4) Past month smoking on school property among high school students decreased from 17.2 percent in 1995 to 7.1 percent in 2011.



Percentage of students who smoked cigarettes on school property on one or more of the past 30 days: High School (Percent) – 1995 to 2011

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For additional data
www.kidscount.wykids.org

County level Teen Risk Data is collected using the Prevention Needs Assessment Survey. A limited set of this data can be found at the Wykids website. Complete PNA data can be found at www.pnasurvey.org.