This fact sheet presents data from the 2015 New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRRS) on health risk behaviors among American Indian (AI) high school and middle school students in New Mexico. Comparisons are also made between New Mexico American Indian students, and the all-race student population in New Mexico. The overarching aim of the NM YRRS is to better characterize risk behaviors and resiliency/protective factors among youth in New Mexico.

**CURRENT Marijuana Use by Grade**

Current marijuana use among American Indian students increases through middle school and high school, peaking at 11th grade (40%). A higher percentage of American Indian students have used marijuana in the past 30 days compared to the statewide New Mexico population in all grades (6-12). The difference was statistically significant for 10th and 11th grade.

According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, youth experiment with drugs or continue taking them for several reasons including:

- **To Fit In**
- **Feel Better**
- **Feel Good**
- **Experiment**

**EVER DRUG USE INCLUDES**

**Grades 6-8:** marijuana, synthetic marijuana, inhalants, prescription drugs, cocaine and injections

**Grades 9-12:** marijuana, prescription drugs, cocaine, ecstasy, methamphetamine, injections, and heroin
Types of Drugs EVER TRIED by American Indian Middle School Students

The most commonly tried drug among American Indian (AI) middle school students is marijuana (27%), with synthetic marijuana (8%) and inhalants (8%) as the second most commonly tried drugs.

Protective Factors* against CURRENT Marijuana Use

- Parent(s) monitor student
- Student gets mostly As or Bs
- Teacher/ adult listens to student at school

Risk Factors* of CURRENT Marijuana Use

- Any current tobacco use, including e-cigs
- Binge Drinker
- Seriously thought about suicide

* All risk and protective factors are statistically significant and are listed in order from strongest to weakest association with marijuana use

American Indian Students Who Have EVER Considered Suicide and Have Tried Drugs

In 2015, 21.9% of AI middle school students seriously considered suicide. A significantly greater percentage of students who considered suicide had also EVER tried drugs. This difference was statistically significant.
The most commonly tried drug among American Indian (AI) high school students is marijuana (55%), with prescription drugs the second most commonly tried drug (15%).

In 2015, 17.8% of AI high school students seriously considered suicide. A significantly greater percentage of students who considered suicide had also EVER tried drugs. This difference was statistically significant for 9th and 10th grades.
The majority of current marijuana users also use cigars. Slightly more AI marijuana users are current cigar users compared to statewide NM youth.

Sources

NM YRRS is a joint project of the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH), the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center (UNM PRC), the Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center (AASTEC), and the Division of Adolescent and School Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC-DASH). For more information on the NM YRRS visit www.Youthrisk.org.

1 National Institute on Drug Abuse: http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/synthetic-cannabinoids
2 University of Washington Alcohol & Drug Abuse Institute (ADAI) http://learnaboutmarijuanawa.org/factsheets/tobacco.htm