

INTRODUCTION

Background Information:

The following report provides an overview of substance use disorder (SUD) prevention initiatives supported through the LRE during fiscal year 2020/2021 (FY21), 2021/2022 (FY22), and 2022/2023 (FY23). As one of ten Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHP) in Michigan, the LRE is responsible for managing substance abuse prevention services provided under contract with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). The LRE service region includes Allegan, Kent, Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Oceana, and Ottawa counties.

Funding to support the initiatives discussed in this report were provided by Block Grant, Public Act 2, and other short-term specialty grants managed by the LRE and dedicated to SUD prevention services. Initiatives supported under the Medical Marijuana Operation and Oversight Grants are not managed by the LRE, however initiatives are referenced throughout this report where they overlap with LRE supported initiatives.

This report provides a record of activities to inform multi-year outcome evaluation for regional prevention services. Data reviewed in this report has been updated as available. The most recent youth survey data available at the time of this report's publication was for school year 2022. An addendum to this report will be provided once 2024 data is available.

Prevention providers funded during this time period include:

OnPoint - *formerly Allegan County Community Mental Health Services*
Arbor Circle (AC)
Community Mental Health of Ottawa County (CMHOC)
District 10 Health Department (D10HD)
Family Outreach Centers (FOC)
Kent County Health Department (KCHD)
Network 180 (N180)
Muskegon Community Health Project, Trinity Health (MCHP)
Ottawa County Department of Public Health (OCDPH)
Public Health Muskegon County (PHMC)
Wedgwood Christian Services (WW)

*The acronyms provided above will be referenced throughout this report.

SERVICES PROVIDED

Persons Served: 299,822

Between FY21 and FY23, almost 300,000 individuals received prevention services throughout the region.

During FY21, providers began offering many services using a virtual format rather than in-person due to Covid-19. For many initiatives, virtual programming has continued where it was found to be beneficial.

Persons Served	FY21	FY22	FY23
Allegan	8,660	10,356	10,922
Kent	137,260	41,156	36,131
Lake, Mason & Oceana	4,219	4,860	6,686
Muskegon	5,278	3,801	7,986
Ottawa	7,073	8,392	7,103
Total	162,490	68,565	68,828

During FY21, prevention providers proactively responded to limitations caused by COVID-19. Prevention providers digitized existing programs and resources that schools that could use in remote settings which ensured service continuation. Providers remained flexible and accommodating to ensure communities received the services needed as situations evolved.

Estimated Reach: 16.3M

Estimated reach is collected for activities where when an official count of persons is not possible. Providers estimate that they have achieved more than 16 million impressions through campaigns such as TalkSooner, Above the Influence, and others. Estimated reach for the LRE region totaled 3M in FY21, 10.9M in FY22, and 2.4M in FY23. The increased reach during FY22 was likely due to additional time-limited specialty grants, many of which were used to support marketing campaigns.

Hours of Service: 34,463

More than 34,000 hours of service were provided in the following strategies:

	FY21	FY22	FY23
Education	2,969	3,822	2,902
Community-Based	5,329	4,306	5,025
Environmental	3,664	705	980
Information Dissemination	561	212	623
Student Assistance/ Prevention Assmt	632	664	979
Alternative	383	168	541
Total	13,537	9,877	11,049

Prevention Goal Areas:

Efforts throughout the region are developed to align with the LRE's regional prevention strategic plan. A corresponding logic model provides a framework for how local efforts across the region work together to cumulatively impact regional priorities. Each provider uses local data to determine which priorities of the LRE strategic plan to address within their area.

Priorities established in the strategic plan, the targeted intervening variables for each, and the page on which you will find information about each are as follows.

Reduce Underage Alcohol Usep.4

- Reducing youth access
- Increasing awareness of consequences
- Promoting accurate perceptions of use

Reduce Underage Marijuana Usep.9

- Reducing youth access
- Increasing perception of risk

Reduce Underage Tobacco Use, inc. Vaping p.12

- Reducing youth access
- Increasing perception of risk

Reduce Opioid and Prescription Drug Misusep.15

- Reducing youth access
- Increasing perception of risk

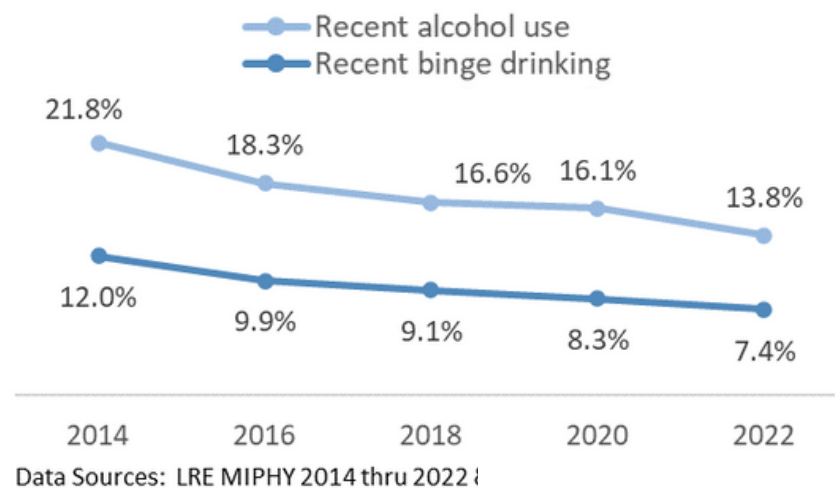
Reduce Early Initiation of Substance Usep.18

- Increase perception of risk
- Association with positive peers
- Promote positive family dynamics
- Coping with life stressors

ALCOHOL

Within the LRE region, the rate of high school students reporting recent alcohol use decreased between 2020 and 2022 to a low of 13.8%. Rates of recent binge drinking also decreased to a low of 7.4% in 2022. Childhood and underage drinking use has been declining in the LRE region and continues to be lower than statewide rates with 25.4% of high school (HS) students state-wide.

Recent Alcohol Use Among HS Students, LRE Region



To address underage drinking, the LRE has developed strategies targeting the following:

Easy Access: In 2020, more than half (59%) of HS students in the region, reported it would be 'sort of' or 'very easy' to get alcohol. The rate remained stable in 2022 at 58%.

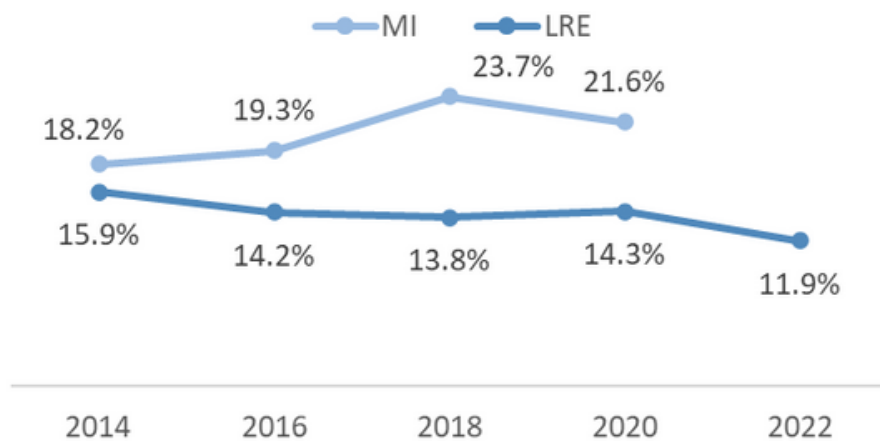
Low Perception of Risk: In 2020, 29.2% of HS students in the region reported that drinking 5+ drinks once or twice each weekend is 'no risk' or 'slight risk'. The rate remained stable in 2022 at 30.4%.

Perception of Peer Use: In 2020, more than 1-in-4 HS students (26.6%) reported believing that more than half of the students in their grade had drunk alcohol in the past month, when only 16% actually had. The rate worsened slightly in 2022 (28.7%).

MARIJUANA

In 2020, 14.3% of HS students in the LRE region reported recent use of marijuana, decreasing to 11.9% in 2022. Rates remain lower than state-wide and remained relatively stable following legalization of recreational marijuana use in 2019.

**Recent Marijuana Use Among HS Students,
LRE Region vs. Michigan**



Data Sources: LRE: MIPHY 2014 - 2022 & MI: YRBS 2013 - 2019

To address underage marijuana use, the LRE has developed strategies targeting the following:

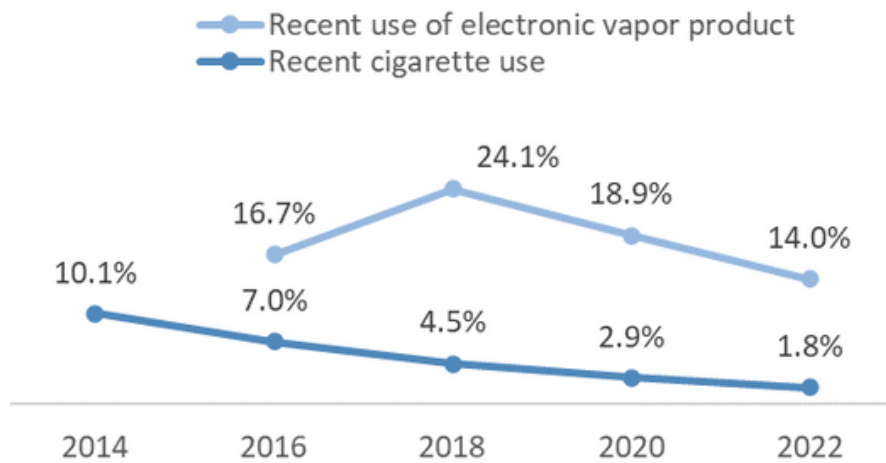
Easy Access: In 2020, almost half (47%) of HS students in the region, reported it would be 'sort of' or 'very easy' to get marijuana. The rate decreased by 10% in 2022 to 43%.

Low Perception of Risk: In 2020, more than half (55%) of HS students in the region reported that using marijuana once or twice per week is 'no risk' or 'slight risk'. The rate remained stable in 2022 at 55%.

TOBACCO

In 2020, only 2.9% of HS students in the region reported recent smoking, lower than state-wide (4.5%) and decreasing substantially in recent years. Rates of HS students reporting recent vaping has been decreasing since a high of 24.1% in 2018 to 18.9% in 2020 and 14.0% in 2022.

Recent Tobacco Use Among HS Students, LRE Region



Data Sources: LRE: MIPHY 2014-2022

To address underage use of tobacco and vaping products, the LRE has developed strategies designed to address the following:

Easy Access: In 2020, 38% of HS students in the region, reported it would be 'sort of' or 'very easy' to get cigarettes, improving substantially in 2022 to 20%. In FY20, 1-in-10 tobacco retailers (9.5%) were willing to sell to an underage decoy during compliance checks, decreasing to 5.4% in 2021, then increasing again in 2022 to 9.9%.

Low Perception of Risk: In 2020, almost 1-in-5 (18%) of HS students in the region reported that smoking one or more packs per day is 'no risk' or 'slight risk'. The rate remained stable in 2022 at 17%.

Regional data is not available for vaping, however data was collected in Ottawa and Lake counties. In Ottawa County in 2019, 24% of Ottawa HS students reported vaping is low risk, improving in 2021 to 20.1%. In Lake County, 39% of HS students (in 2020) reported that vaping is low-risk, in 2022 this worsened to 47%.

REDUCE YOUTH ACCESS

Ensure retailers do not sell tobacco products to persons under age 21.

Regional Strategies:

Utilized Regional No Cigs For Our Kids Campaign which consists of year-round law enforcement compliance checks for retailers, education and support for retailers. Consistent branding is used to enhance visibility.

Incorporated efforts to ensure retailers do not sell vaping products to minors. *

Allegan	Kent	Lake	Mason	Musk.	Oceana	Ottawa
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Youth Tobacco Access: The Federal Synar Amendment requires states to enact and enforce laws prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to individuals under the age of 18. In December of 2019 federal law was enacted to restrict tobacco sales to anyone under the age of 21. Each state must conduct annual unannounced inspections for a random sample of tobacco retailers and achieve a success rate of at least 80%. If they do not, the state risks loss of up to 40% of the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant funds. Checks conducted as part of this sample are called Synar compliance checks.

Synar Compliance Rate:

For statewide assessment purposes, a random selection of retailers is provided annually to each PIHP. The sample provides meaningful results statewide, but is too small to provide meaningful results for the region.

Synar Compliance Check Results	FY21	FY22	FY23
# Checks Completed	45	63	49
# Retailers that Refused Sale	38	58	41
Compliance Rate	84.4%	92.1%	83.7%

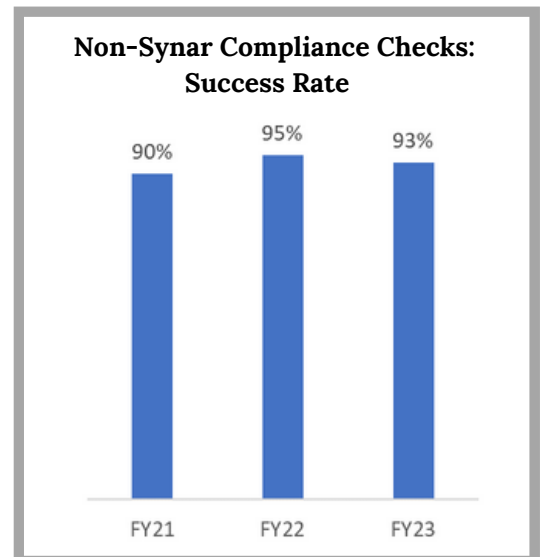
No Cigs For Our Kids Campaign:

To ensure success during the Synar assessment and prevent youth access to tobacco products, the LRE region’s No Cigs for Our Kids Campaign has law enforcement conduct compliance checks throughout the year that result in citations for those who fail plus a vendor education visit. These checks are referred to as non-Synar compliance checks.

All retailers that pass a non-Synar compliance check are mailed a letter notifying them of the results along with a Certificate of Compliance. All retailers that fail receive a vendor education visit and the clerk is issued a citation. Corporate headquarters is also notified of the results for retailers that are part of a larger corporation.

In addition, a minimum of 25% of retailers in each county receive a vendor education visit annually.

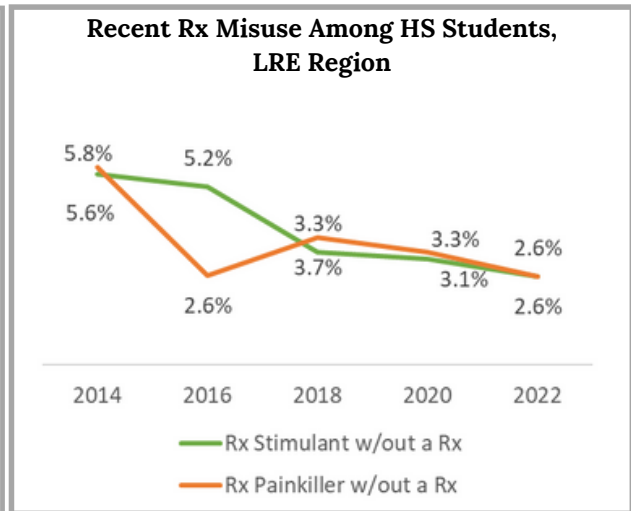
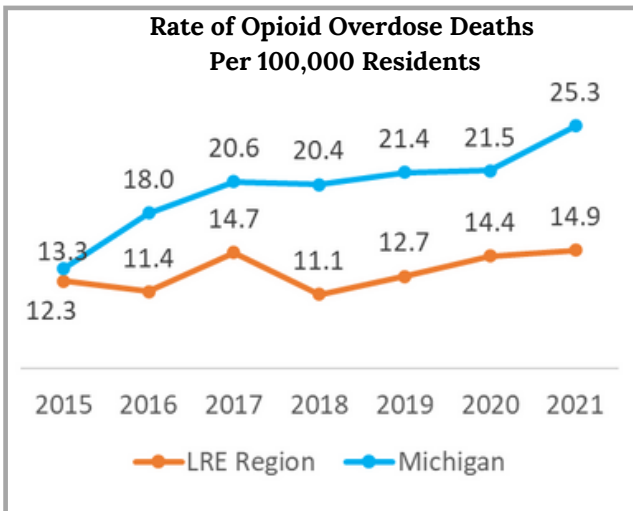
Of the more than 900 tobacco retailers region-wide, a large proportion receives a compliance check each year; 27% in FY21, 49% in FY22, and 46% in FY23. These checks resulted in a compliance rate of 90% or higher each year during the reporting period as shown in the chart to the right.



OPIOID AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE

In 2021, there were 197 deaths in the LRE region due to opioid related overdoses (prescription and illicit). The rate of opioid overdose deaths has been increasing in the region since 2018 but remains lower than state-wide.

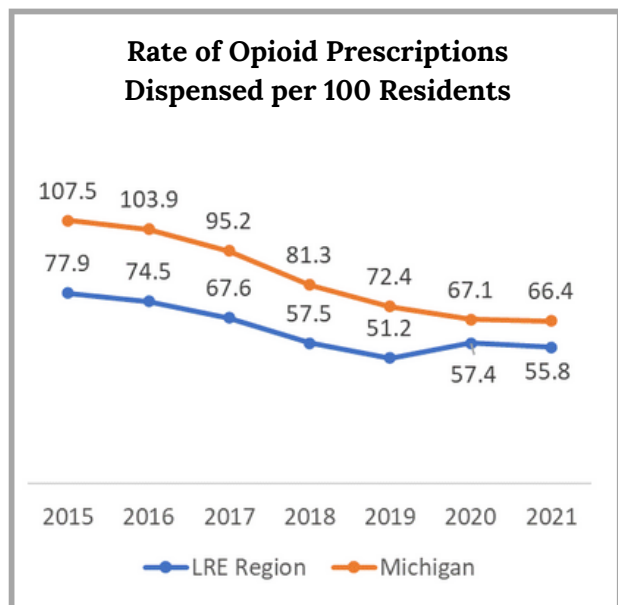
Prescription drug (Rx) misuse among HS students has decreased in recent years to a low of 3.1% for Rx stimulants and 3.3% for Rx painkillers in 2022.



To address opioid misuse, the LRE has developed strategies targeting the following:

Reduce Youth Access: The rate of opioid prescriptions dispensed has been decreasing statewide since 2018 but have remained relatively stable in the LRE region. In 2020 rates varied greatly by county with the lowest in Ottawa (44.6) and Kent (50.2) and the highest in Mason (89.0) and Oceana (88.3%).

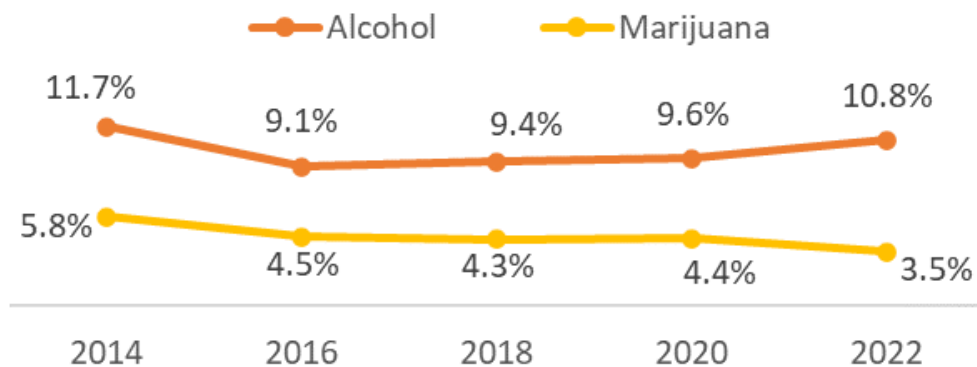
Low Perception of Risk: In 2020, 1-in-5 (21.3%) HS students reported that taking a prescription drug not prescribed to you is 'no risk' or 'slight risk'. The rate remained stable in 2022 at 20.9%.



EARLY INITIATION

Research has consistently found that alcohol or drug use at an early age increases the likelihood of developing addiction as an adult. In 2020, 9.6% of high school students in the LRE region reported use of alcohol before the age of 13 and 4.4% reported use of marijuana before age 13. Across the region, early use of alcohol ranges from a high of 20.4% in Mason, to a low of 7.4% in Oceana. Early use of marijuana ranges from a low of 2.7% in Oceana to a high of 12.6% in Lake County.

HS Students Reporting Use Before Age 13, LRE Region



To delay the onset of substance misuse among youth, the LRE has developed strategies targeting the following:

Low Perception of Risk: Among MS students,

- Two-fifths (41%) reported marijuana use is low risk, remaining stable in 2022 (41%).
- One-third (32%) reported binge drinking once or twice per weekend is low risk in 2020, improving to 29% in 2022.
- One-fourth reported that taking a prescription drug not prescribed to you is low risk in 2020, remaining relatively stable at 23% in 2022.

Positive Peers: In 2020, 72% of students (MS and HS) in the region reported they had at least one close friend who had committed to being drug-free in the past year, remaining relatively stable at 74% in 2022.

Family Dynamics: In 2020, 84% of MS students reported they could ask their mom or dad for help with a personal problem, remaining relatively stable at 83% in 2022.

Family Communication: In 2020, 67% of MS students reported that their parents had ever talked to them about their expectations regarding alcohol and other drugs, remaining stable in 2022 at 68%.

Life Stressors: In 2020, 28% of MS students reported depression in the past year increasing to 30% in 2022. Among HS students, in 2020, 18% reported having seriously considered suicide in the past year, increasing to 20% in 2022.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION

Encourage parent communication regarding substance use.

Regional Strategies:

Promoted Talk Sooner Campaign to educate parents on the consequences of teen use, how to talk to their youth about the consequences through community events, social media, lunch and learns, and newsletters.

Had Family Meals Month to promote TalkSooner & family communication.

Provided info to parents at community events on how to talk to their kids.

	Allegan	Kent	Lake	Mason	Musk.	Oceana	Ottawa
Promoted Talk Sooner Campaign to educate parents on the consequences of teen use, how to talk to their youth about the consequences through community events, social media, lunch and learns, and newsletters.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Had Family Meals Month to promote TalkSooner & family communication.	✓	✓ FY21	✓	✓		✓	✓
Provided info to parents at community events on how to talk to their kids.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ FY22 & 23

Regional Efforts:



The regional TalkSooner campaign continued in FY21 and FY22. This campaign, developed in 2007, encourages parents of youth ages 10-18 to begin talking to their children about alcohol and other drugs at an earlier age. Marketing materials direct parents to visit the locally managed Talksooner.org website. The campaign has continued to expand with more than 30 counties throughout Michigan participating.

TalkSooner is also used as a platform to promote Family Meals Month. This nationwide event is designed to underscore the benefits of family meals and help families share one more meal at home per week.

The LRE and prevention providers work collectively to promote Family Meals Month, host local events and develop regional promotional materials to support local efforts and to promote TalkSooner & family communication and involvement.



FAMILY COMMUNICATION, CONTINUED...

TalkSooner Campaign: FY23

During FY21, the most frequently visited pages of Talksooner.org were the “Trending Drugs” links and Talking Tips page. Other media efforts include:

- Homepage updated to include Conversation Starter Videos and the Virtual Teen Room.
- Social posts on Facebook and Instagram to promote Tips and Tricks for parents.
- Partnered with MDOT for the *Make the Chatter Matter* campaign. Posters from TalkSooner.org in English and Spanish were displayed at most of MDOT's 77 rest areas and Welcome Centers around the state to encourage family conversations.

Media Coverage and Partner Shares

In addition to the paid promotion the following free coverage was received through media coverage and promotion by partner organizations.

- The River interviewed Prevention Specialist Vicki Kavanaugh regarding Holiday Drinking.
- WOTV continued to re-air the 30 min. “Truth About Youth Vaping” special
- WOODTV/Channel 8 and WGVU Morning Show published stories regarding National Drug Take Back Day.
- MDOT-Talksooner hosted a news conference on March 28 to unveil “Make the Chatter Matter” campaign
- Regional Media outlets (Fox 17/WXMI, WGHN, WOOD-TV, WZZM-TV, Fox 17/WXMI) shared the Mayoral Proclamation from the Cities of Grand Rapids & Grand Haven, who declared 4/20 Day as “Talksooner Day”

Family Meals Month Promotion

During September 2023, Talksooner.org promoted Family Meals Month to highlight the campaign “Any Way you Slice it, Prevention Matters.” Our team partnered with 5 locally owned pizza shop owners to share prevention messaging while WOOD TV/Fox 17 Morning Mix/9&10 News promoted the campaign with live interviews of Talksooner Prevention Specialists and pizza owners. Pizza shops distributed over 5,000 fliers and pizza cutters with Talksooner messaging. This generated a total PR Value of \$45,262 in free messaging.



Participating Pizza Shops included:

- Cadena Brothers (Muskegon County)
- Don Petrino's Pizzeria (Ottawa County)
- Russo's (Kent County)
- Chuckwagon (Mason County)
- Pompeil's (Lake County)

FAMILY COMMUNICATION, CONTINUED...

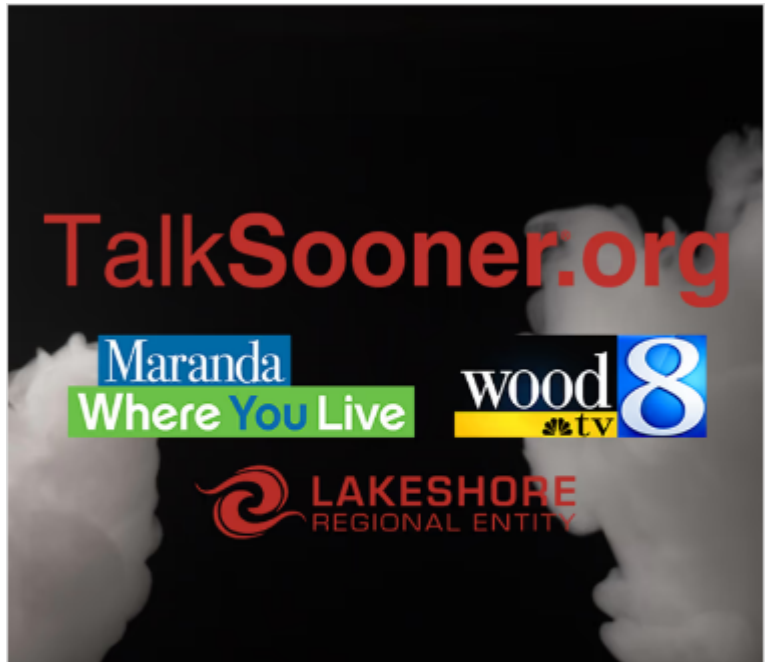
TalkSooner Campaign: FY22

During FY2, Talksooner.org and the Lakeshore Regional Entity teamed up with Maranda from WOTV 4/WOOD-TV/Channel 8 to bring an original streaming “series” of mini segments on the “Truth About Teen Vaping” to West Michigan.

The series ran from April 18 through April 22, with a special all-day streaming on 4/20/22. Maranda canvassed all seven counties, interviewing more than twenty-five teens, parents, prevention specialists, principals, physicians, a prosecutor and more.

These segments continue to be available via: [Watch: Talk Sooner anti-vaping program](#)

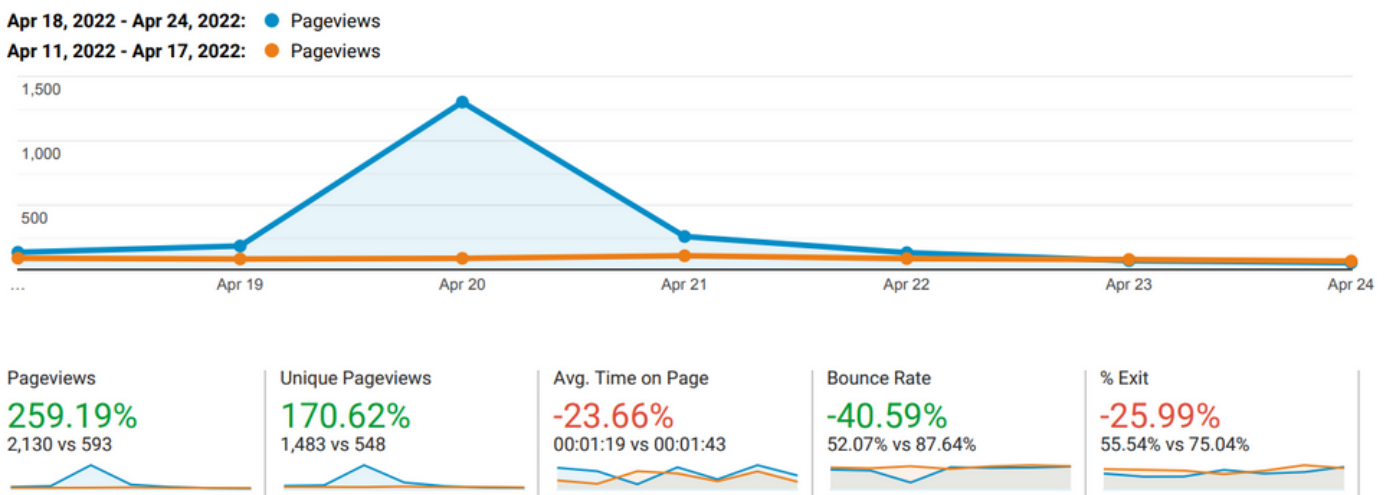
Among visitors during the campaign week the majority were from Norton Shores (25%), followed by Grand Rapids (10%), Grand haven (4%), Wyoming (3%), and Allegan (2%).



Watch: Talk Sooner antivaping program
 Learn to Talk Sooner in this special program from Maranda Where You Live.

Throughout the five-day campaign push, website traffic increased from an average of 104 users the previous week to an average of 196 users per day during the campaign. In addition, the bounce rate decreased indicating that more people were navigated beyond the homepage to explore the content, tips, and information TalkSooner has to offer.

Website traffic analysis during the campaign, compared to the prior week is summarized below:



FAMILY COMMUNICATION, CONTINUED...

TalkSooner Campaign: FY21

During FY21, TalkSooner.org was visited 210 times, by 98 unique individuals resulting in 558 page visits. The average session duration was 1 minute and 45 seconds and the most frequently visited page was the 'What's Trending?' page.

- Homepage updated to include a new cover image and promote testimonials.
- Social posts on Facebook promoted the partnership between local healthcare providers, educators, law officials, and other community members with TalkSooner. Over a dozen posts with individual testimonies were shared.
- Partnered with mParks and the Michigan DNR to place promotional materials at ten Michigan parks, 77 rest stops, and 14 MDOT Welcome Centers. The posters will remain displayed indefinitely.



Media Coverage and Partner Shares

In addition to the paid promotion the following free coverage was received through media coverage and promotion by partner organizations.

- Cherry Health publicly shared its partnership with TalkSooner.
- Interview ran on WGUV news radio with a supplemental web story.
- Interview including a pediatrician at Metro Health – University of Michigan Health – with Channel 17's WXMI.
- Priority Health published a 'Think Health' article on website promoting TalkSooner.
- WOODTV/Channel 8 and WGUV Morning Show published stories regarding National Drug Take Back Day.
- WILX News in Lansing, and Fox 17 News ran stories about TalkSooner partnership with MDNR/mParks.
- MDOT issued a news release announcing its partnership with Talksooner.
- Channel 13/WZZM aired public service announcements regarding Family Meals Month, and a sponsored Facebook article and banner ads on their website.
- Michigan State Parks distributed an e-newsletter to 595,047 people with article about TalkSooner resulting in 99 visits to the site.

