

2009 RI High School Health-Risks Summary Report



RI Department of Health and Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
~December 2010~



Rhode Island (RI) high school health-risks decreased overall and were generally lower than those in the U.S. From 2001-2009, 21 of 30 risk measures improved, two worsened, and seven were statistically unchanged. In 2009, RI and national rates were similar on 20 measures, nine were better in RI, and one was worse (i.e., 'current marijuana use').

This report examines 30 health-risk indicators for RI public high school students (grades 9-12). Data are from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), an anonymous, voluntary survey of high school students in the U.S.. The Centers for Disease Control sponsors the YRBS, and RI has participated since 1995. The sample sizes for RI's biannual surveys (starting in 2001) were: 1,392, 1,814, 3,262, 2,210 and 3,213, respectively, and the response rates were: 63%, 66%, 71%, 66% and 67%. RI's weighted YRBS data are statistically representative of public high school students statewide. The findings from the YRBS are used to inform policy and programs alike regarding the major causes of injury, disease and mortality.

Ten categories of health-risks are evaluated, with each category containing three individual measures (i.e., 30 measures in all). Also included are six additional measures of activities on school property. RI performance is both trended over time, and compared to that in the nation (*Chart 13*). All the measures are negative indicators, meaning that lower values are always preferred. Statistical 'significance,' whenever referenced, is determined at the 95% confidence level. Findings show:

Violence (*Chart 1*): RI violence measures were mixed. Of the three measures, one improved from 2001 (i.e., '*physical fighting*'), and one worsened (i.e., '*dating violence*'). In 2009, '*physical fighting*' among students was also significantly lower in RI than the nation (25% vs. 32%).

Mental Health (*Chart 2*): RI mental health risks were fairly stable. Only one measure improved from 2001 (i.e., students who '*planned suicide*'), and none was significantly different from the national experience in 2009. However, RI's 8% '*attempted suicide*' rate among high school students in 2009 is a concern.

Tobacco (*Chart 3*): Fewer RI students used tobacco. All three measures improved significantly from 2001. In 2009, RI's '*current smoking*' rate was lower than the U.S. rate (13% vs. 20%), as was the students' use of any tobacco product (19% vs. 26%).

Alcohol (*Chart 4*): Student alcohol use rates were relatively low in RI. All three measures improved significantly from 2001. In addition, all the 2009 values were significantly lower in RI than the nation, including '*early drinking*' (16% vs. 21%), '*current drinking*' (34% vs. 42%), and '*binge drinking*' (19% vs. 24%).

Marijuana (*Chart 5*): RI marijuana use declined, but remained higher than the U.S. rate. All three measures improved from 2001, but the 2009 '*current marijuana use*' rate was significantly higher in RI than the nation (26% vs. 21%).

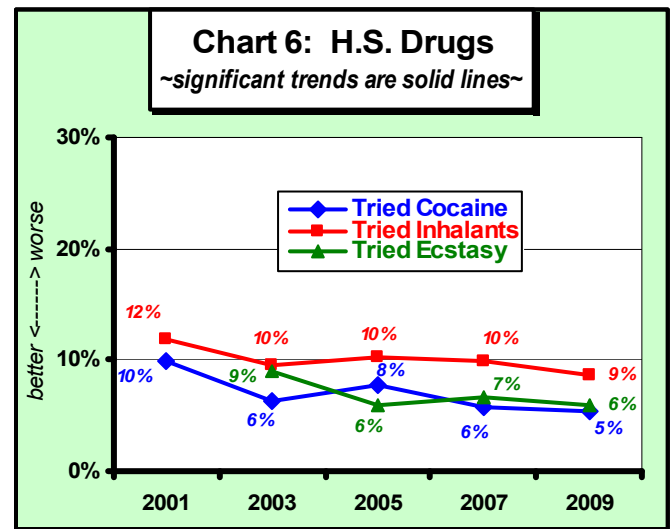
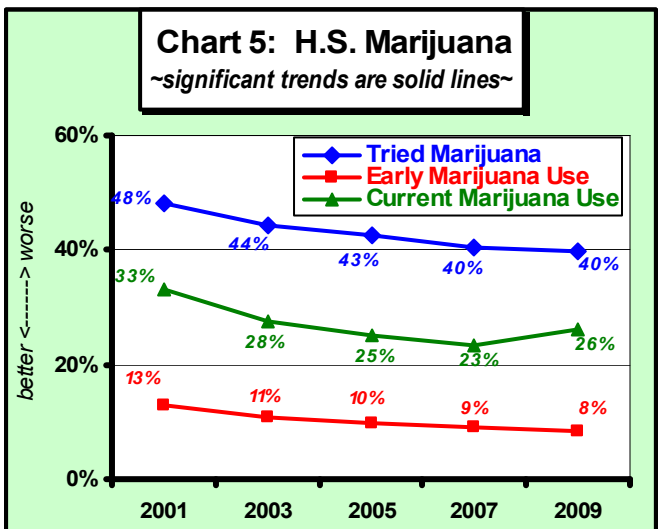
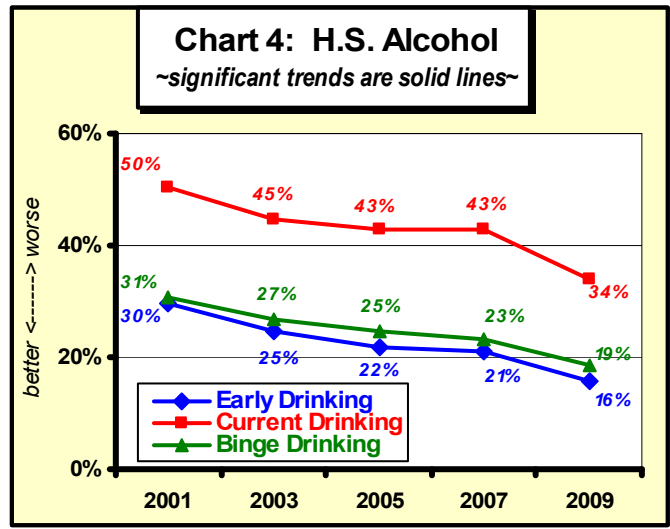
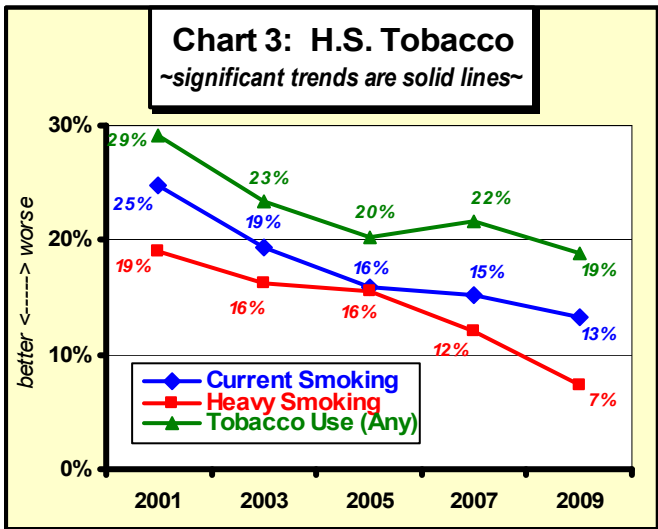
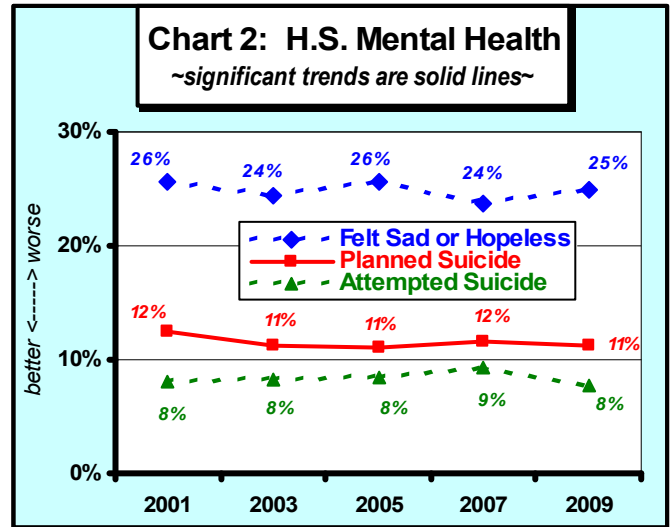
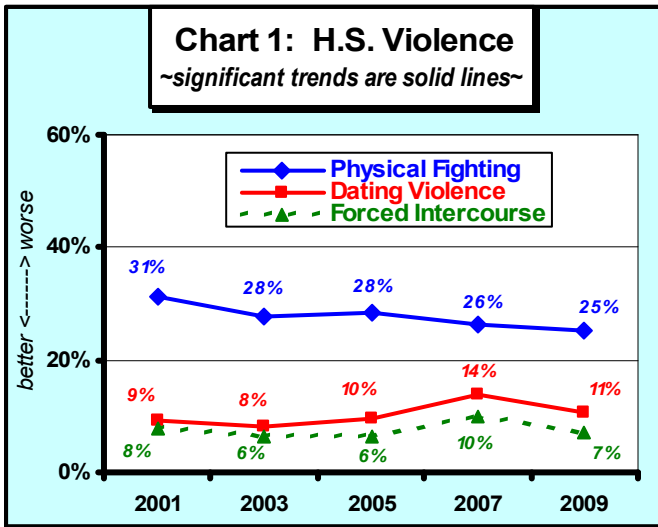
Other Drugs (*Chart 6*): Student use of cocaine, inhalants and ecstasy decreased in RI. All three measures improved from 2001, but none was statistically different from the national experience in 2009.

Sex (*Chart 7*): RI student sexual activity was similar to U.S. Only one measure improved significantly from 2001 (i.e., '*unprotected sex*'), and all of the 2009 rates were statistically similar in RI and the U.S.

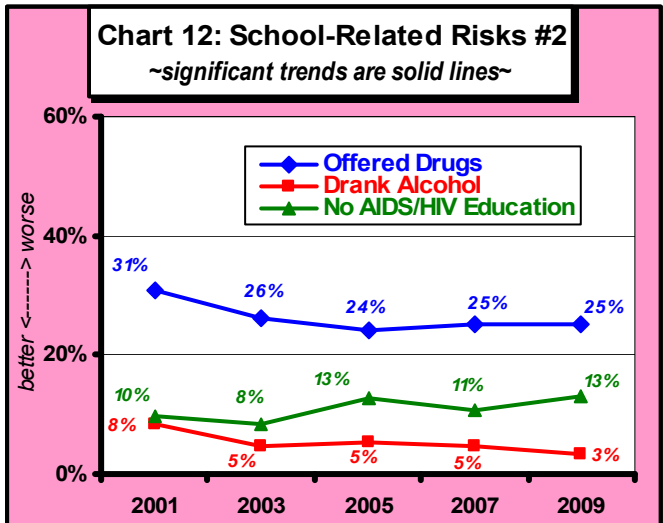
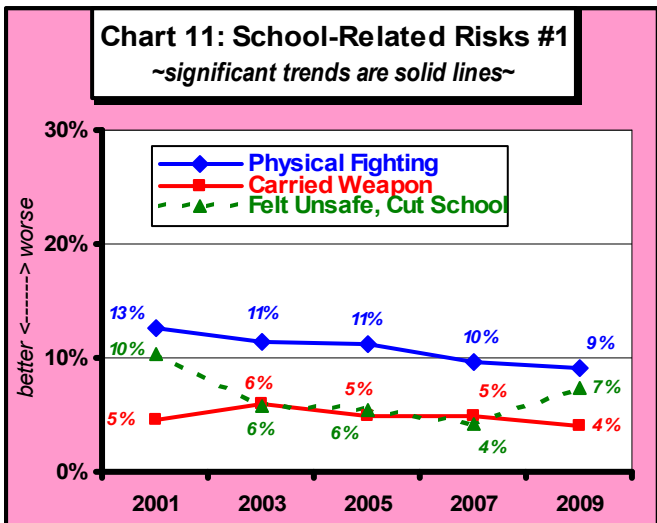
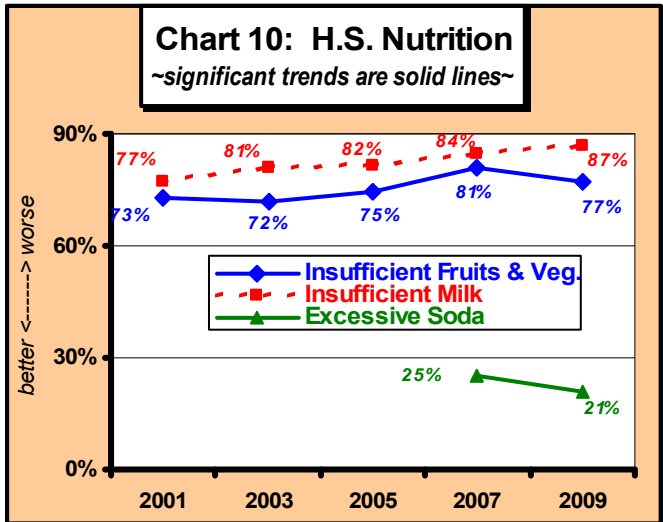
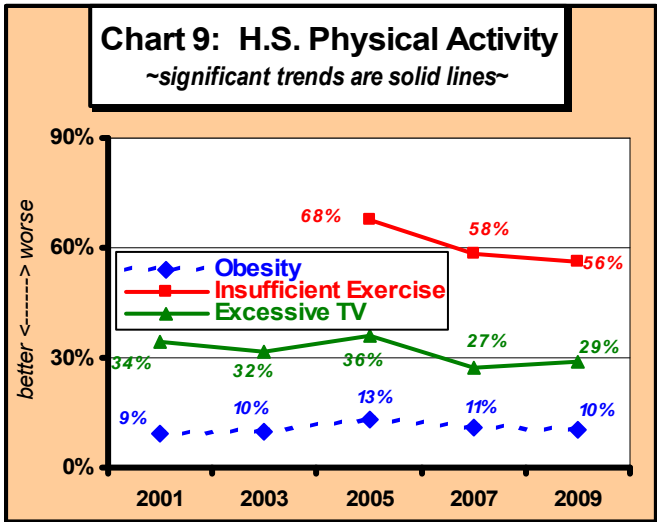
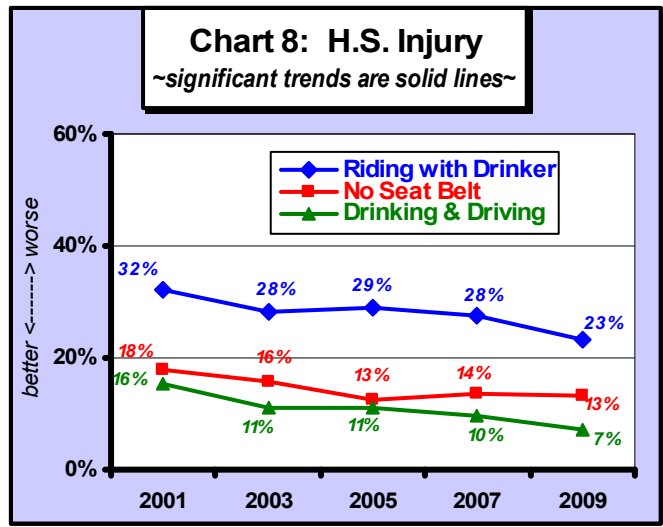
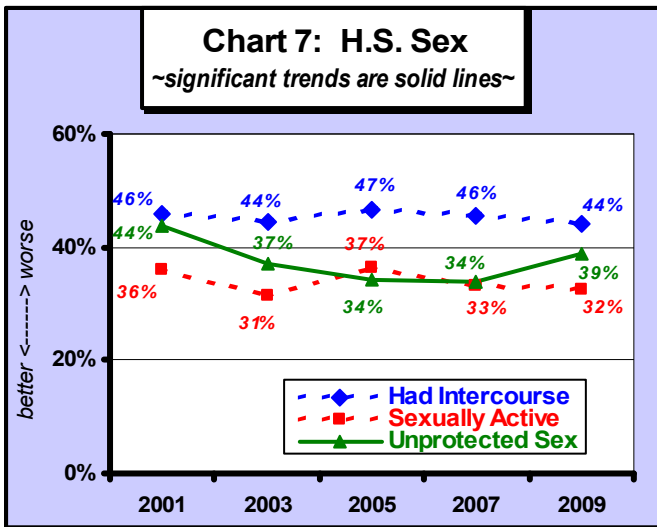
Other Health-Risks (*Charts 8-10*): Most other RI health-risks improved. Six of the nine other measures dealing with injury, physical activity, and nutrition improved from 2001. One measure worsened (i.e., '*insufficient fruits & vegetables*'), and two were unchanged. In 2009, three measures were statistically better in RI than the U.S., including '*riding with drinker*' (23% vs. 28%), '*insufficient exercise*' (56% vs. 63%), and '*excessive soda*' (21% vs. 29%).

School-Related Risks (*Charts 11 & 12*): RI school-related health-risks generally decreased. Four of the six measures improved from 2001, one worsened (i.e., '*no AIDS/HIV education*'), and one was statistically unchanged (i.e., '*felt unsafe, cut school*'). However, in 2009, the rate of students who '*felt unsafe, cut school*' was significantly worse in RI than the nation (7.4% vs. 5.0%), while the percentage of students who '*carried a weapon*' was much better (4.0% vs. 5.6%).

Author: Bruce Cryan, MBA, MS. **Contacts:** RI Dept. of Health (401-222-5111; <http://www.health.ri.gov/data/youthriskbehaviorsurvey/>), RI Dept. of Education (Anne Marie Silvia, MPA, 401-222-8951). **Acknowledgements:** YRBS funding was provided by the Departments of Health; Education; Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals; and the Office of Health & Human Services.



Definitions: **Physical Fighting** (1+ times in the past yr.); **Dating Violence** (hit, slapped or hurt in the past yr.); **Forced Intercourse** (ever had sexual intercourse against your will); **Felt Sad or Hopeless** (for 2+ wks. in a row in the past yr.); **Planned Suicide** (within the past yr.); **Attempted Suicide** (1+ times in the past yr.); **Current Smoking** (smoked on 1+ days in the past mo.); **Heavy Smoking** (more than 10 per day in the past mo.); **Tobacco Use (Any)** (used chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, or smoked cigars or cigarettes on 1+ days in the past mo.); **Early Drinking** (1st alcohol drink before age 13); **Current Drinking** (drank alcohol on 1+ days in the past mo.); **Binge Drinking** (5+ alcohol drinks in a row, on 1+ days in the past mo.); **Tried Cocaine** (1+ times ever); **Tried Inhalants** (1+ times ever); **Tried Ecstasy** (1+ times ever); **Tried Marijuana** (1+ times ever); **Early Marijuana Use** (tried marijuana before age 13); **Current Marijuana Use** (1+ times in the past mo.)



Definitions: Had (sexual) Intercourse (ever); Sexually Active (1+ partner in the past 3 mos.); Unprotected Sex (for sexually active, no condom last time); Riding with Drinker (1+ times in the past mo.); No Seat Belt (rarely/never wear a seat belt as a passenger); Drinking & Driving (drove car after drinking 1+ times in the past mo.); Obesity (=>95th percentile for Body Mass Index by age & gender.); Insufficient Exercise (not physically active for 1+ hrs. on 5+ days in past wk.); Excessive TV (3+ hrs. per avg. school day); Insufficient Fruits & Vegetables (<5 servings per day in the past wk.); Insufficient Milk (<3 glasses per day in the past wk.); Excessive Soda (1+ times per day in the past wk.) **Definitions of school-related measures:** Physical Fighting (1+ times on school property in the past yr.); Carried Weapon (1+ days on school property in the past mo.); Felt Unsafe, Cut School (in the past mo.); Offered Drugs (offered, sold or given illegal drug on school property in the past yr.); Drank Alcohol (1+ drink on 1+ days on school property in the past mo.); No AIDS/HIV Education (never @ school)

Chart 13: 2009 H.S. Health-Risks (RI vs. U.S.)

~statistically significant differences are in CAPS (listed first)~

