



Detailed Overview of the State of Delaware's Prevention Efforts Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Prevention Office

In 1992, Congress enacted legislation aimed at decreasing youth access to tobacco products. The legislation, known as the Synar Amendment, requires states to enact and enforce laws prohibiting any manufacturer, retailer, or distributor from selling or distributing tobacco products to individuals under 18. In addition to enacting and enforcing a law, states must implement annual random, unannounced compliance inspections to determine the tobacco products sold to youth under the age of 18. If a state's buy rate exceeds 20%, it stands to lose 40% of its federal SAPT Block Grant funds. Over the past five years, Delaware has maintained a compliance rates below 5% and remain in compliance with the SYNAR Amendment. The SYNAR Amendment is an annual reporting requirement aimed at reducing underage youth access to tobacco products. The SYNAR Amendment and process is one example of an environmental prevention strategy. Environmental strategies aim to decrease the social and health consequences of substance abuse by limiting access to substances and changing social norms that are accepting and permissive of substance abuse.

Delaware, like most states is witnessing an increase in the incidence and prevalence of substance abuse and its negative, often life-altering, impact on its residents. These increases come after a decade of major declines in tobacco use and modest declines in other substance use in Delaware. The data is an indication of the need for renewed prevention efforts in the state. Although small in its geographic size, the need for a comprehensive, statewide, formalized, and sustainable substance abuse prevention system across the life span is critical.

Delaware is comprised of three counties [New Castle County- 523,852 residents; Kent County-127,103 residents; and Sussex County- 175,818 residents]. The State is unique in that the northernmost county, New Castle, is decidedly urban, while the two southern counties, Kent and Sussex, have largely rural characteristics. Delaware's largest city is Wilmington, located in New Castle County, with a population of 72,664. Wilmington and part of New Castle County are included in the Philadelphia Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Delaware is divided into four sub-state planning areas designated by SAMHSA's Office of Applied Studies and adopted by Delaware's State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW), also known as the Delaware Drug and Alcohol Tracking Alliance (DDATA), are the city of Wilmington, the remainder of New Castle County, Kent County and Sussex County.



From 2000-2007 Delaware saw over a 10% population growth and much of it has been driven by increases in minority populations (Delaware Population Consortium 2007). Over the next decade from 2010 to 2020, there is an anticipated 6% growth in both the 0 – 9 year old and 10 – 19 year old populations in the State of Delaware (Kids Count 2008). Recent census data show a decrease by 7% of 20-64 year olds between 2000 and 2030 but an increase of 100% in the 65 and older population and 300% in the 85+ population, with one in four being a minority. Delaware's population as of 2008 includes 80,528 living veterans, 3,249 of whom are under 30 and served in recent conflicts. These demographic trends and Delaware's growing multicultural communities, make the needs of youth and young adults, minorities, veterans and the elderly even more compelling as data suggest these populations are most in need of resources.

Delaware's small geographic size provides advantages to developing, strengthening and sustaining prevention efforts across the State that are relevant to multiple communities and target populations. To better serve Delaware, DSAMH and its state and other partners set out to develop a comprehensive Strategic Plan to address the prevention needs and enhance the prevention infrastructure in the state.