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Analytic and Political Challenges of Using Data to Drive Policymaking in Substance Abuse Prevention in Indiana

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The Indiana SEOW

Established:

- April 2006 with funds from the Center for Substance Abuse and Prevention (CSAP) through the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG) awarded to the Governor in late 2005

Purpose:

- To review the epidemiological profile of substance use and abuse in Indiana
- To develop data-based recommendations to the Governor's Advisory Council (GAC) regarding SPF priorities for prevention funding



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SEOW Members

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Weston Bush, SPF SIG Youth Council

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Key Data Analytic Challenges

- Limited data, especially at the community (county) level
- Data collected and maintained by multiple state agencies (generally without regard to how data in what agency might relate to data in another agency)
- Limited resources at the state-level to pull data sources together or even to fully analyze available data within agencies
- Differences in perceptions of the quality of the data (e.g., validity/reliability, strengths/weaknesses)



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Key Political Challenges

- Sometimes contentious relationships among and conflicting world views of the criminal justice and mental health/treatment systems
- Organizational separation of key agencies
 - Physically in different buildings
 - Administrative separate silos
 - Distinct funding streams
- External Pressures
 - Governor's Campaign Commitment to Meth
 - CSAP



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How the SEOW Helped Overcome these Challenges

- As an “outsider,” the SEOW Chair could serve as a “referee” and kept the representatives focused on the data.
- Having access to a well-trained, independent support staff that can do the practical and integrative analytic work contributed to the faith the stakeholders had in the process.
- The primary focus on data/analyses that were “shared” among agencies demanded “triangulation” and made it difficult for individual agencies to assert the primacy of their data.
- The public nature of the SEOW process helped to overcome institutional barriers and establish credibility.
- Regular meetings of the SEOW and an expansion of its scope of influence serves as an ongoing bridge among the various policy silos.



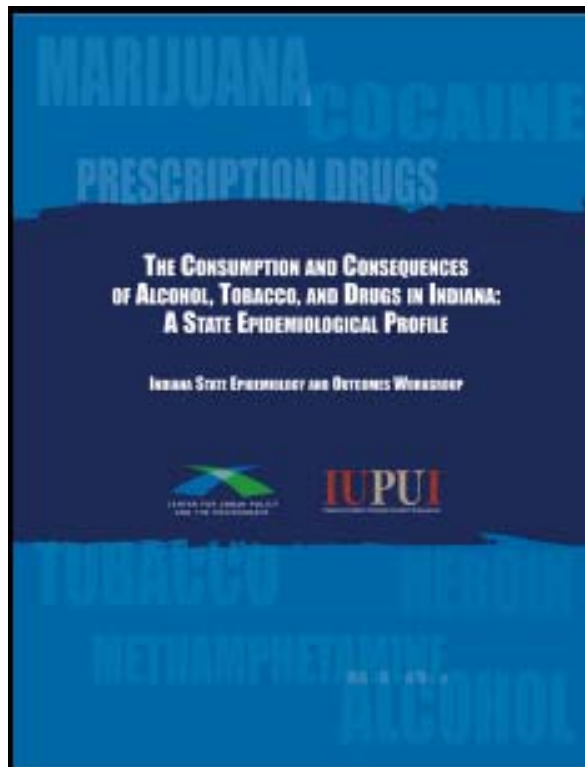
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State Epidemiological Profile



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State-Wide Priorities

- **To prevent and reduce underage drinking and binge drinking among 18 to 25 year olds**
- **To prevent the first use of tobacco among 12-17 year olds and reduce tobacco use among 18 to 24 year olds, blacks, and individuals with lower income and/or less than a high school education**
- **To prevent the first use of marijuana among 12-17 year olds and reduce the use of marijuana among 18-25 year olds**



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Regional/Local Priorities

- **Prevent the first use and reduce the use of cocaine among 18-25 year olds.**
- **Prevent and reduce the abuse of prescription drugs among individuals 12 to 25 years old.**
- **To Prevent and reduce the use of methamphetamine among black youth and among white women and men 18 to 44 years of age.**



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Prioritization Matrix

Priority	Existing Capacity/ Resources	Preventability and Changeability	Community Readiness/ Political Will
Alcohol (60%)	Weak	High	High
Tobacco	Strong	High	High
Marijuana	Weak	Low	Low
Cocaine (20%)	Weak	Modest/Low	High
Meth (20%)	Weak to Moderate	Modest	High
Prescription Drugs	Weak	Low	Low



Identification of High Need Communities

- Highest need/highest contributor model
- Selected proxy indicators for alcohol (6), cocaine (2), and methamphetamine(2) from the UCR and Crash Records
- Assigned scores for each indicator are based on community's percentile ranking as follows:

<u>Percentile</u>	<u>Score</u>
10th	4
15th	3
25 th	2
50th	1

- A total priority score was computed by summing the scores for the rankings of each county within the three selected substance priorities



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Conclusions

- An interagency data analysis group dedicated to a specific policy area can facilitate stronger data-driven decision-making.
- Involving outside experts to lead the group can help to overcome many of the analytic and political challenges associated with working across state agencies involved in a specific policy area.
- Additional resources are critical to facilitate data analysis that go beyond routine reporting.