

Key Findings from 4-Year Institutions: 2025 Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors

Partners in Prevention (PIP) is Missouri's higher education substance misuse consortium dedicated to **creating healthy and safe college campuses**. The coalition is comprised of 27 public and private colleges and universities in the state. The campuses in PIP work to prevent high-risk behaviors by implementing evidence-based strategies including education, social norming campaigns, policy review and enforcement, and more. To measure progress and obtain data needed for the implementation of programs, PIP created the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB) Survey. The MACHB is an annual, online survey that has been implemented each spring since 2007. The survey assesses the roles that alcohol, cannabis, other drugs (illegal and prescription), tobacco/nicotine, interpersonal violence, and mental health concerns have on student health and well-being. This brief includes data for the twenty-one 4-year institutions in the coalition; 2-year campuses participate in a separate version of the survey and their key findings will be published in another brief.

Data consistently shows that academic achievement and retention are impacted by the health, safety, and well-being of students. Substance misuse, experiences of interpersonal violence, and mental health concerns are intersectional issues that impact students' ability to succeed and thrive while attending institutions of higher education. Comprehensive and evidence-informed prevention and health promotion practices are an investment in the lives of students and the overall campus environment.

The following are key findings from the MACHB survey (N= 5,634) of 4-year PIP member institutions from Spring 2025:

Retention

One-quarter (25%) of Missouri college students have thought about transferring from their current college/university in the past year. Additionally, almost 1 in 5

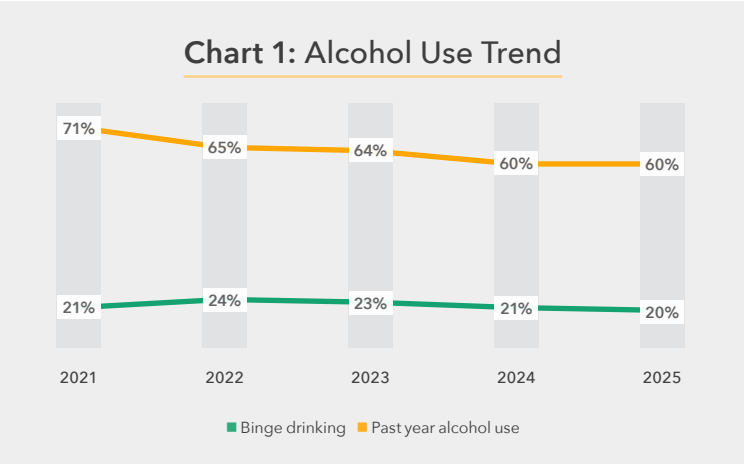
students (18%) say they have thought of discontinuing their college/university education in the past year. Students report that the top reasons contributing to their decision to either transfer or discontinue their education are their own mental health concerns (47%), financial concerns/better financial opportunities at other campuses (45%), lack of friends/loneliness/homesickness (37%), and difficulties keeping up with academic expectations (29%).*

Sense of Belonging & Engagement

Over two-thirds (68%) of Missouri college students agree that they feel a sense of belonging to their campus community. Students also believe that they have the responsibility to contribute to the safety and well-being of other students at their school (80%). Around 73% of students report that they are currently involved in campus organizations/activities.

Alcohol Use

Most Missouri college students (60%) report using alcohol in the past 12 months. Binge-drinking (defined as a pattern of drinking that brings a person’s blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 g/dl or above, which typically means consuming 4+ drinks for women and 5+ drinks for men in a 2-hour period at least once in the past two weeks) is a high-risk alcohol use behavior that PIP closely monitors each year. The binge-drinking rate decreased to 20% in 2025 from 21% in 2024 and is below the national average of around 33%. Approximately 4.6% of Missouri college students engage in frequent binge drinking, defined as binge-drinking 3 or more times in the past 2 weeks. Past year alcohol use and binge drinking are shown in Chart 1. The MACHB also tracks impacts of and safety behaviors for alcohol use in the past 12 months. The top 3 reported consequences of alcohol use include



hangover (36%), vomiting (25%), and blackout/memory loss (16%). Students also report engaging in safety and protective behaviors related to alcohol use, with students saying they always engage in the following behaviors: always keep track of their drink (84%), eaten before/during alcohol consumption (71%), and had a sober friend in the group (55%).

Underage Alcohol Use

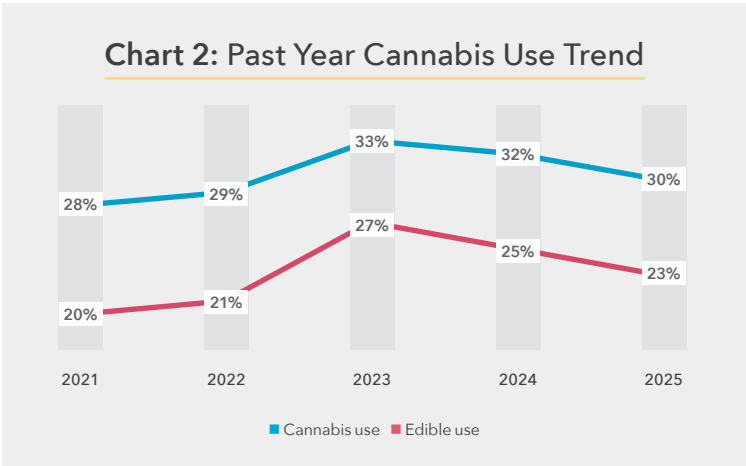
Most Missouri college students who have consumed alcohol in their lifetime report that they first started drinking before age 21 (57%). Almost half of Missouri college students under the age of 21 (49%) report consuming alcohol in the past 12 months and 18% of

underage students report binge-drinking in the past 2 weeks (the same as in 2024). Underage students report that they obtain alcohol in a variety of ways, the most common being from over 21 friends (24%), from family members (13%), or alcohol being readily available in their home (8.0%)*.

Cannabis Use

Cannabis use in any form (smoking, edibles, vaping, derivatives) in the past 12 months among Missouri college decreased to 30% this year from 32% in 2024. In 2025, edibles/edible cannabis products and smoking were the most common form of cannabis used in the past year (both at 23% compared to 19% vaporized, and 8.4% in derivative form like wax/dabs/oils). Past year cannabis use and edible use trends are shown in Chart 2.

Approximately 12.5% of students report frequent cannabis use (using cannabis one or more times per week). Of students who report using cannabis, 29%



report driving after use at least once in the past 12 months and 22% report attending class after use. Related to perceptions of others’ use, though 67% of students have not used cannabis in the past year, most students (63%) believe that their peers use cannabis one or more times per month.

Given the relatively recent change in Missouri state law, questions were included on the 2025 survey about intentions to change use given the legalization of cannabis for adult-use. Among students who do not currently use cannabis, the majority (90%) said that they

do not plan to start using. Additionally, 39% of students reported that they were currently, ready to, or thinking about using cannabis less frequently or quitting.

Illegal Drug Use and Drugs of Concern

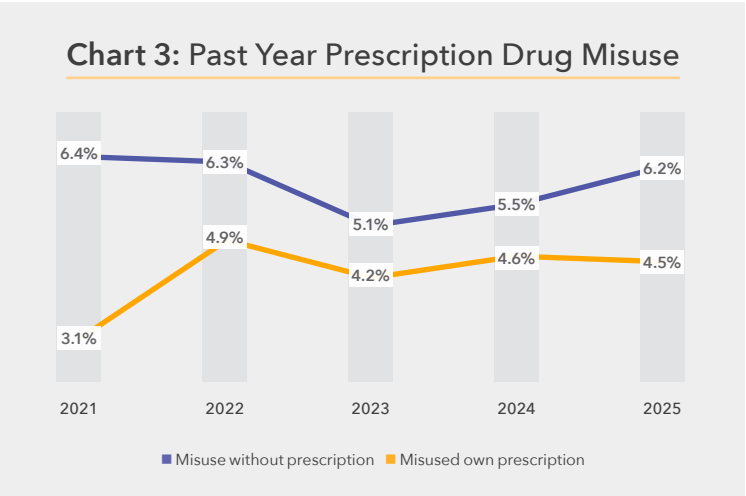
Approximately 11% of students report using at least one illegal drug/drug of concern in the past 12 months (a decrease from 13% in 2024) and use rates of various types are shown in Table 1. We have denoted ‘drugs of concern’ that may be legal to purchase or obtain in Missouri with 2 asterisks.

Table 1: Past Year Illegal Drug Use and Drugs of Concern

Delta-8 THC**	8.3%
Hallucinogens (LSD, PCP, mushrooms, etc.)	4.2%
Cocaine	1.4%
Other (kratom, inhalants, K2, etc.)	0.9%
MDMA/Ecstasy/Molly	0.7%
Heroin	0.2%

Prescription Drug Misuse

Approximately 6.2% of Missouri college students report prescription drug use without a doctor’s prescription in the past 12 months (an increase from 5.5% in 2024). Additionally, 4.5% of students with a valid prescription report using in a manner other than prescribed in the past 12 months (a slight decrease from 4.6% in 2024). Past year misuse of either type is included in Chart 3.



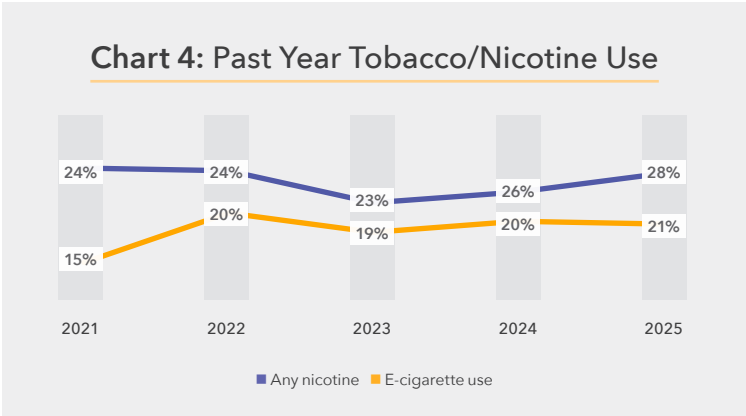
Of students who report misuse of either type, 18% have co-used with alcohol at least once, which can have serious health effects. Rates of misuse both with and without a prescription are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Past Year Prescription Drug Misuse

	Misuse w/o valid prescription	Misused own prescription
Pain medications (Oxycontin, Vicodin, etc.)	2.7%	1.6%
Stimulants (Adderall, Ritalin, etc.)	2.1%	1.6%
Sleep medications (Ambien, Halcion, etc.)	1.2%	0.7%
Benzodiazepines/sedatives (Xanax, Valium, etc.)	0.9%	0.7%

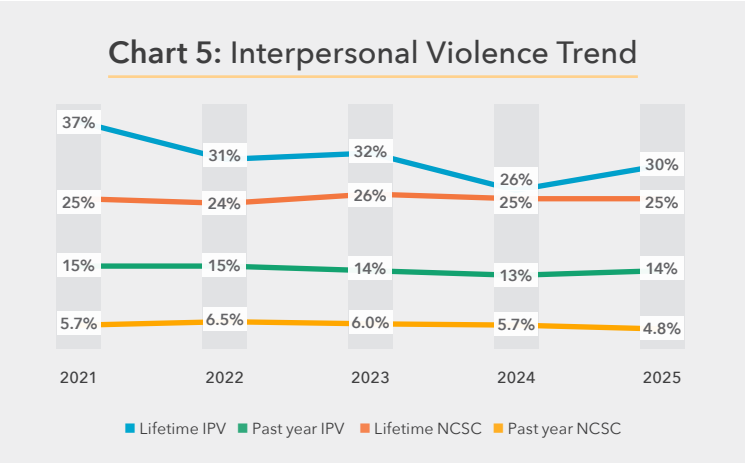
Tobacco and Nicotine Use

Twenty-eight percent (28%) of Missouri college students report using tobacco/nicotine products at least once in the past 12 months (an increase from 26% in 2024). Past year usage rates for various types of tobacco/ nicotine products are as follows: e-cigarettes/ vaporizers - includes JUUL/Puff Bar, etc. (21%), cigarettes (12%), smokeless tobacco/nicotine - including Zyn/nicotine pouches (7.0%), cigars (4.7%), and hookah (1.4%). * Among students who have used e-cigarettes in the past year, over one-third (38%) report using every day. Additionally, students who use tobacco say they have considered quitting (20%), tried to quit (23%), or successfully quit using (29%) since entering college. A five-year trend of past year tobacco/nicotine use and use of e-cigarettes is shown in Chart 4.



Interpersonal Violence

Over one-quarter (30%) of Missouri college students report experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) in their lifetime, and 14% report IPV in the past 12 months. The most common forms of abuse students report experiencing in the past 12 months include emotional/psychological/mental abuse (11%), verbal abuse (8.1%) or sexual abuse (2.7%).* 1 in 4 (25%) Missouri college students report experiencing non-consensual sexual contact (NCSC) in their lifetime, and 4.8% report NCSC in the past 12 months. Most instances of NCSC occurred off-campus and not related to university events (40%) or on campus in residence halls (36%) *. Lifetime and past year IPV and NCSC are shown in Chart 5.



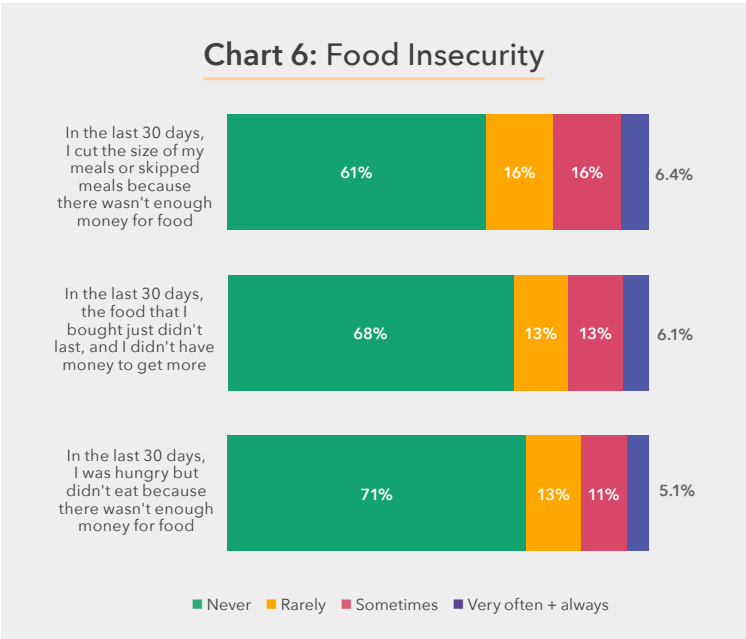
Bystander Intervention

Seventy-two percent (72%) of Missouri college students feel that they have the skills to intervene/prevent a potentially harmful situation, while only 57% of students say they know where to go to find resources on bystander intervention/violence prevention and related trainings at their campus. The vast majority of students (92%) report that they would want a peer to do something if they themselves were in danger of being harmed by someone else. Students report that the resources they are most likely to utilize in situations involving bystander intervention (situations involving substance misuse, bias and discrimination, interpersonal violence, or mental health) are friends/peers (75%), their family/spouse/partner (51%), or health/wellness/counseling services (42%).*

Well-Being & Food Insecurity

Students are asked to gauge their stress levels in the two weeks prior to completing the survey and in 2025, over one-third of students reported high-level stress (stress that is overwhelming – 30% or unbearable – 4.8%). When asked about the most important issues facing college students and what they could use the most support around, students indicated academic stress (74%), financial concerns (69%), and anxiety (66%) as the top three. Students are also asked to report how many hours of sleep on average they get on a typical school night (Sunday-Thursday) with over half of students (62%) reporting seven or more hours of sleep.

To better understand experiences of food insecurity in the past 30 days, students are asked to report if they very often or always: cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food (6.4%), the food that was bought just didn't last and they didn't have money to get more (6.1%), or being hungry but not eating because there wasn't enough money for food (5.1%). Student responses related to food insecurity are shown in Chart 6.



Sexual Health

Questions related to sexual health and STI testing are also included on the MACHB. Forty-two percent (42%) of students report that they had not been

tested for STIs in the past year because they are not sexually active, 42% have not been tested but are sexually active, and 15% of students have been tested in the past year. Among students who did not get tested, the most common barriers/factors contributing to their decision were not thinking they are at risk of getting an STI (48%), lacking access to testing (being too expensive/not being covered by insurance, etc. - 12%) or shame/embarrassment (10%). Students also report using sexual health products themselves/with partners in the past year such as contraception/pregnancy prevention methods (56%), barrier/STI prevention methods (47%) and emergency contraception (15%). *

Mental Health

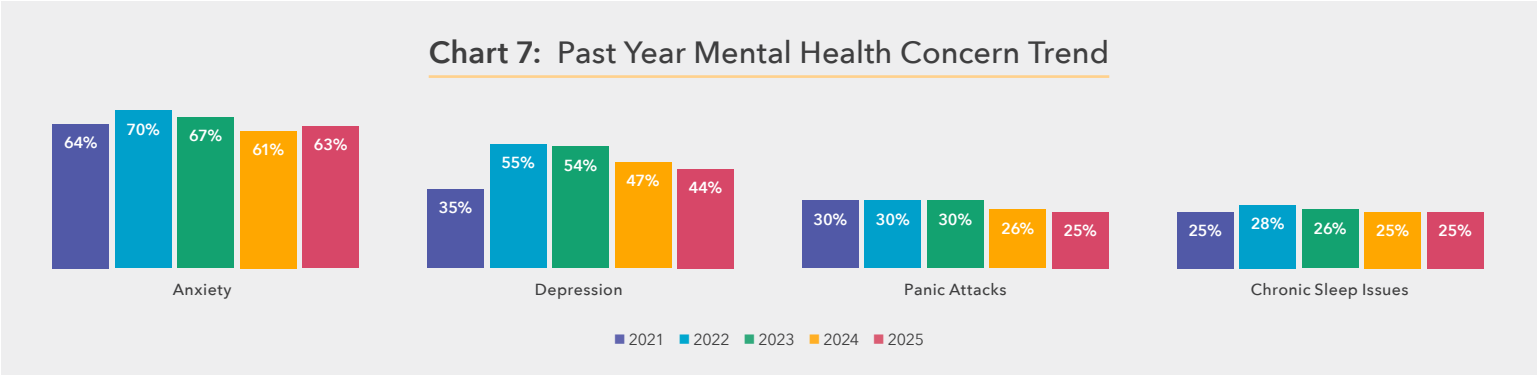
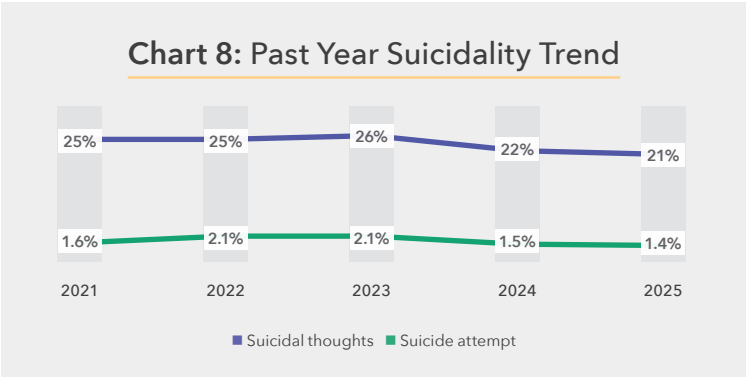
Missouri college students self-report experiencing issues related to mental health in the past 12 months, the most common being anxiety (63%), depression (44%), panic attacks (25%), and chronic sleep issues (25%).* Students are also asked to report if their mental health concern had been diagnosed by a mental health or medical professional. Almost half (48%) of those who had experienced a mental health concern had not received a diagnosis, 37% report being diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, and 28% report being diagnosed with major depression.* A 5-year trend for the top mental health concerns is shown in Chart 7.

For students who had experienced a mental health concern in the past 12 months, 23% did not seek assistance. For those who did seek assistance, their primary source of assistance was family/friends (32%),

an off-campus mental health provider (22%), an off-campus medical doctor (22%), or the college/university counseling services (14%). Around 1 in 10 students (13%) said they did not seek assistance but practice self-care or other types of management on their own.*

Suicide

Almost half (46%) of Missouri college students report having suicidal thoughts in their lifetime, and 21% of students report suicidal thoughts in the past 12 months (a decrease from 22% in 2024). In the past 12 months, 1.4% of students reported attempting suicide. For those who had thoughts or attempts in the past 12 months, 37% sought assistance. The most common places students primarily sought assistance were family/friends (52%), an off-campus mental health center (47%), an off-campus medical doctor (29%), or the college/university counseling services (29%). Additionally, 33% of Missouri college students have been concerned about a friend having suicidal thoughts or exhibiting suicidal behaviors in the past 12 months. Additionally, most students (82%) have heard of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Trend data for past year suicidal thoughts and attempts is shown in Chart 8.



Summary

Partners in Prevention continues to monitor the critical health behaviors of college students. To reiterate, data consistently shows that academic achievement and retention are impacted by the health, safety, and well-being of students. Substance misuse, experiences of interpersonal violence, and mental health concerns are intersectional issues that impact students' ability to succeed and thrive while attending institutions of higher education. Comprehensive and evidence-

informed prevention and health promotion practices are an investment in the lives of students and the overall campus environment. For more information about Partners in Prevention and to explore our research, visit mopip.org/pip/research.

Contact Partners in Prevention at (573) 884-7551.

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*question is select all that apply