



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Know the Truth Student Survey Finds Substance Use Remains High *35 percent of students reported using a substance during this school year*

MINNEAPOLIS — Know the Truth™ (KTT), the substance use prevention program of Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge, recently completed its 2020 – 2021 student survey and found that substance use continues to be a problem among Minnesota’s youth. Throughout the 2020 – 2021 school year, KTT surveyed just under 4,000 students about substance use through an online survey. Results found that 34 percent of high school students reported using a substance in the past year, over half of youth reported using or considering using substances to cope with mental health struggles, and 47 percent have used or thought about using a new substance since the start of the pandemic. Additionally, 71 percent believe that youth substance use increased during COVID-19.

“The vast majority of people who struggle with substance use as adults started smoking, drinking, or experimenting with illicit substances before the age of 18,” says Mika Nervick, the prevention program coordinator for Know the Truth. “We’re concerned that youth have been using substances to cope with the social isolation of COVID-19, potentially setting themselves up for a lifelong struggle.”

Luckily, the survey also demonstrated that prevention programs are working. On average, 78 percent of students state they will quit using or use less after hearing the KTT presentation.

“Our primary focus is on making sure students can safely hear our prevention message,” says Nervick. “We’re already prepping for the 2021 – 2022 school year and are excited to reach young people in the schools where they are most receptive to the information.”

Since the Know the Truth program began more than a decade ago, it has seen significant success in helping prevent substance use among Minnesota’s young people. The program utilizes a peer-to-peer format, where Know the Truth presenters – often just a few years older than the students – share their personal struggles with substance use. This format allows students to open up and helps Know the Truth bridge the gap between the students and the parents, care givers, teachers and community leaders who support them. In most cases, the Know the Truth presentations are included in standard health curriculum, embedded into the drug and alcohol unit. Presenters speak to more than 160 high schools and middle schools throughout the state during the school year, reaching an estimated 60,000 students.

In addition to classroom presentations, students are encouraged to seek continued dialogue with the presenters through social media, reaching out to @knowthetruthmn on Twitter, and through the anonymous text hotline at 612-440-3967.

About Know the Truth

Know the Truth (KTT) is the substance-use prevention program of Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge. KTT works within communities to help prevent teenage substance use by sharing personal stories about the struggles with addiction and by presenting students with information about the dangers of alcohol and drug use. Each year, KTT speaks in more than 160 high schools and middle schools and reaches more than 60,000 students.