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Chippewa County Community Assessment Report

Community Assessment Report Chippewa County, Michigan

March 20, 2025

- Prepared by Chippewa County Communities That Care, March 2025
- Chippewa County Health Department
- Northcare Network
- Ojibwe Charter School
- Pickford School
- Sault Sainte Marie Middle and High School
- St. Mary's School



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Executive Summary

This report describes the results of the risk- and protective-factor assessment completed as part of Chippewa County's *Communities That Care* effort. The *Communities That Care* system is a way for members of a community to work together to prevent youth problem behaviors, including substance use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, dropping out of school, and violence. This system was developed by Dr. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard Catalano. It is based on their research, which has identified risk factors that predict youth problem behaviors and protective factors that buffer children from risk and help them succeed in life.

A key goal of the *Communities That Care* effort is to identify which risk factors, protective factors, and problem behaviors are prevalent in our community and implement evidence-based programs that address our community's unique profile. To that end, the Risk- and Protective-Factor Assessment work group collected and analyzed data on Chippewa County. Then, with input from the community, they identified priority risk factors to address, as well as community strengths to build on.

The assessment was completed using the *Communities That Care Youth Survey* and data available to the public. The *Communities That Care Youth Survey* was administered to students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 in Sault Schools, Pickford Schools, Ojibwe Charter Schools, and St. Mary's Catholic School in Chippewa County in the fall of 2024. To get the most complete picture of our community, the Risk and Protective-Factor Assessment work group also collected data from public records to measure risk factors and problem behaviors not covered by the survey.

Based on the analysis of the data and input from the community, the following risk factors were identified as priorities for community attention:

- Low Commitment to School
- Low Perceived Risk of Drug Use
- Parents' Attitudes Favorable toward Anti-Social Behaviors

These risk factors were selected as priorities for prevention action primarily because data indicated that they are significantly elevated throughout Chippewa County. The data also revealed Chippewa County's strengths. For example, the *Communities That Care Youth Survey* revealed that students are motivated to follow society's expectations and standards. They reported high levels of the protective factor "Family Attachment and significant increase in Rewards for Prosocial Involvement at schools". This is an important area of strength on which to build to help promote well-being and protect our youth from the risk of health and behavior problems.



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This report recommends that the community give particular attention to the risk factors noted above when developing the community's action plan to prevent youth health & behavior problems and promote child and youth well-being.

Introduction

The Chippewa County Communities That Care Effort

In the spring of 2018, Chippewa County began implementing the Communities That Care prevention planning system. Developed by Dr. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard Catalano of the Social Development Research Group in Seattle, Washington, the Communities That Care system is a way for members of a community to work together to efficiently and effectively promote positive youth development and prevent youth problem behaviors such as substance use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, dropping out of school and violence.

Chippewa County implemented the Communities That Care process to achieve the community's vision that all young people in Chippewa County grow up supported and nurtured by the collaborative efforts of their families, schools, and community, and become healthy adults who contribute positively to society.

Key accomplishments to date:

- In the Fall of 2024, the Communities That Care Youth Survey was administered to 6th, 8th, and 10th, 12th graders in Sault Schools, Pickford School, St. Mary's Catholic School, and Ojibwe Charter School.
- From February 2025 to March 2025, the Data Assessment work group, looked at the results of the Youth Survey, compared other publicly available local, state, and national data, attended the Community Assessment Workshop, and developed a plan for completing the community risk- and protective factor assessment. This report is the result of that assessment.

The Community Assessment

Dr. Hawkins and Dr. Catalano have identified risk factors that predict problem behaviors in youth, and protective factors that help protect young people from those risks. By addressing risk and protective factors, communities can help prevent adolescent problem behaviors and promote positive youth development. A key goal of the *Communities That Care* system is for communities to develop a profile of the risk factors, protective factors, and problem behaviors in their community, and to develop a plan for addressing the risk factors that are most elevated while enhancing protective factors.

This report represents the first step in that process. The Data (Risk-and Protective-Factor) Assessment work group has collected data on risk factors, protective factors, and problem behaviors in Chippewa County. With input from the community, the workgroup has identified our community's strengths and the priority risk factors to address in the prevention plan.

Data collection methods

As noted above, the Communities That Care Youth Survey was administered in Fall 2024. All students in grades 6, 8, 10, & 12 were asked to participate. The complete results are provided in the Chippewa County Communities That Care Youth Survey report. In addition, Dr. Hawkins and Dr. Catalano have identified public data indicators that are valid and reliable measures of certain risk factors and problem behaviors that are not measured by the survey, namely Extreme Economic Deprivation, Availability of Drugs and Alcohol, Teen Pregnancy, and School Drop-Out. The Data Assessment work group collected data from local and state agencies to supplement the youth survey.

How the priorities were identified

The Data Assessment work group analyzed the data to identify which risk factors are most elevated in Chippewa County. This initial short list of priorities was presented to the Community Board, which discussed other considerations, such as the community's ability to have an impact on certain risk factors at this time. By consensus, the Community Board then selected the final priorities for prevention action in Chippewa County. Those priorities were presented to Key Leaders for endorsement.

Report Overview

The next sections of the report provide detailed information and analysis of the risk factors, protective factors, and problem behaviors in Chippewa County. The conclusion presents the final list of priorities and recommendations for future action.

Risk Factor: Low Commitment to School

Lack of commitment to school means the child no longer sees the role of the student as meaningful and rewarding. Young people who have lost this commitment to school are at higher risk for five of the six health & behavior problems.¹

Surveys of high school seniors have shown that the use of drugs is significantly lower among students who expect to attend college than among those who do not. Factors such as liking school, spending time on homework, and perceiving the coursework as relevant are also negatively related to drug use.

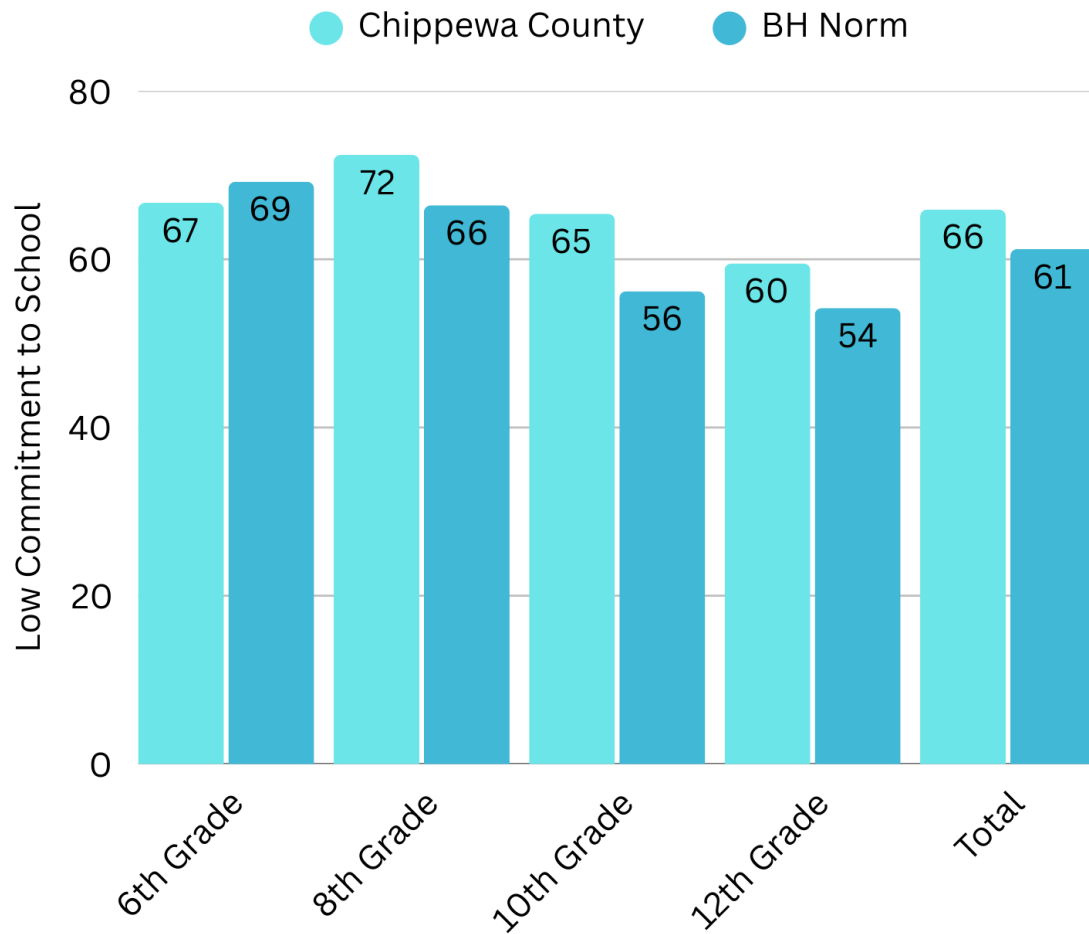
For the risk factor, Lack of Commitment to School, Chippewa County area youths, particularly in grades 8th and 10th grades, show levels of risk exceeding State average levels.

¹ Boers, Reinecke, Seddig, & Mariotti, 2010; Catalano et al., 2011; Gottfredson, 2001; Guo, Hawkins, Hill, & Abbott, 2001; Jessor & Jessor, 1977; Kosterman et al., 2000; Najaka et al., 2001



Low Commitment to School

LACK OF COMMITMENT TO SCHOOL MEANS THE CHILD NO LONGER SEES THE ROLE OF STUDENT AS MEANINGFUL AND REWARDING. YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE LOST THIS COMMITMENT TO SCHOOL ARE AT HIGHER RISK FOR FIVE OF THE SIX HEALTH & BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS.



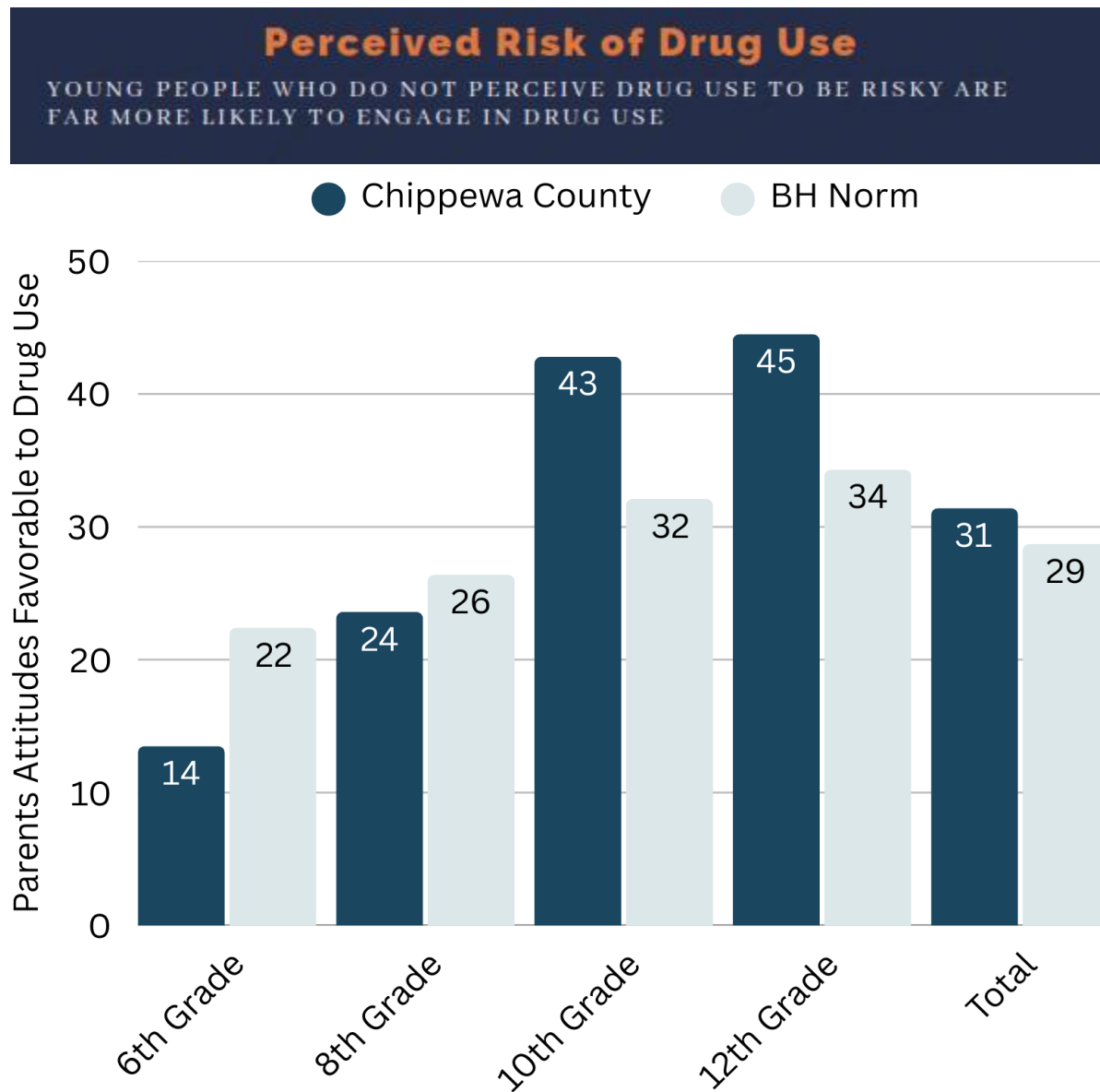


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Risk Factor: Low Perceived Risk of Drug Use

Young people who do not perceive drug use to be risky are far more likely to engage in drug use. Communities with youth who, as individuals, lack the perceived risk of drug use or have friends who demonstrate a lack of knowledge of the perceived risk of drugs, show higher rates and earlier initiation of drug use. For the risk factor of Low Perceived Risk of Drug Use, Chippewa County area youths exceeded State average levels in the 10th and 12th grades. For these reasons, this risk factor has been identified as a priority for Chippewa County.





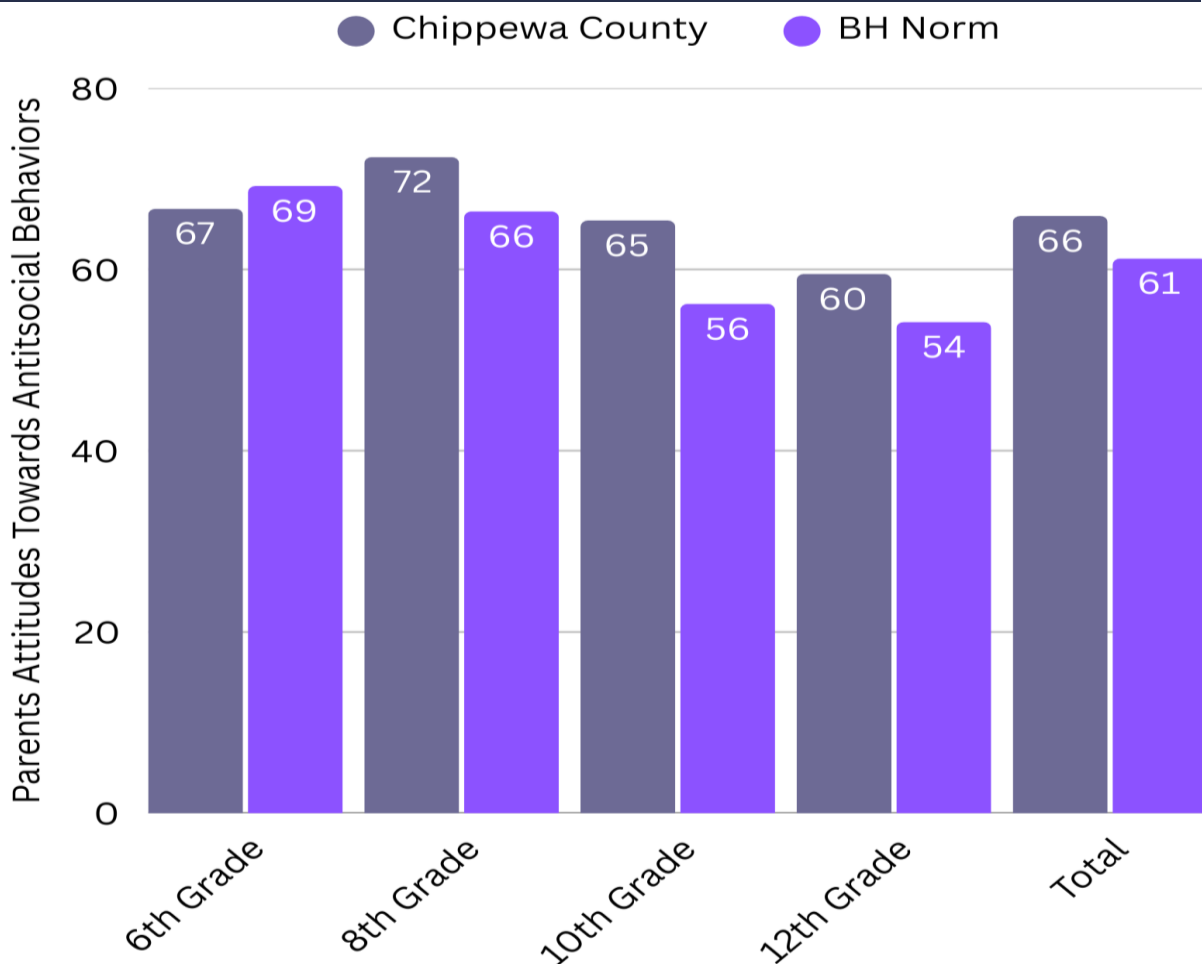
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Risk Factor: Parents' Attitudes Favoring Antisocial Behaviors

In families where parents use illegal drugs, are heavy users of alcohol, or are tolerant of children's use, children are more likely to become drug abusers during adolescence. The risk is further increased if parents involve children in their drug or alcohol using behaviors, for example, asking the child to light the parents' cigarette or getting a parent a beer from the fridge. For this risk factor, Chippewa County area youths exceeded State average levels in the 8th, 10th, and 12th grades. For these reasons, this risk factor has been identified as a priority for Chippewa County.

Parents' Attitudes Favor Anti-Social Behaviors
IN FAMILIES WHERE PARENTS USE ILLEGAL DRUGS OR HEAVY ALCOHOL USE, CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO BECOME DRUG ABUSERS IN THEIR ADOLESCENCE.





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Conclusion and Recommendations

Chippewa County's Strengths

The data revealed that young people in Chippewa County are motivated to follow society's expectations and standards. Young people reported high levels of the protective factor "Family Attachment" and have shown significant increase in "Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement" in the School Sector. Chippewa County should work to build on this strength while enhancing other protective factors in its prevention efforts.

Community Priorities

Based on the analysis of the data and input from the community, the following priority risk factors were identified for the community to focus on over the next several years:

- Low Perceived risk of Drug Use (Peer/ Individual Domain)
- Low Commitment to School (School Domain)
- Parents' Attitudes Towards Anti-Social Behaviors Favorable

These risk factors were selected as priorities because the data indicated that they are among the most elevated throughout Chippewa County. We recommend that Chippewa County give particular attention to implementing strategies or programs to address these risk factors when developing a prevention plan.

Next Steps

The next step in the Communities That Care process is to find out what resources are already in place in Chippewa County that address the priorities outlined above. The Resources Assessment and Evaluation Work Group will attend the Assessing Community Resources Workshops. Their assessment, combined with this report, will make up the profile of Chippewa County that will be used to identify programs and strategies to promote child and youth well-being and prevent health & behavior problems in Chippewa County.