



# ASAM

The Voice of Addiction Medicine  
American Society of Addiction Medicine

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Susan Awad, sawad@asam.org, 301-547-4103

## Increased marijuana, heroin use contribute to highest reported illicit drug use in more than a decade

**CHEVY CHASE, MD, September 10, 2015** – Findings from the 2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), released today, reveal the percentage of Americans aged 12 or older who used an illicit drug in 2014 was higher than in every year between 2002 and 2013, driven primarily by increases in marijuana use, sustained rates of nonmedical pain reliever use, and increases in heroin use.

“With now one in ten Americans reporting illicit drug use, it’s clear that we have much more to do to prevent drug use and treat the disease of addiction,” said Jeffrey Goldsmith, MD, President of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). “As more and more states legalize marijuana and the opioid epidemic rages on, we must prioritize evidence-based prevention for our youth and access to high-quality treatment for all who struggle with a substance use disorder.”

Despite the overall increase in illicit drug use, illicit use among adolescents aged 12 to 17 and young adults aged 18 to 25 appeared to stabilize, with increases mainly seen among adults older than 25. The rise in overall marijuana use may reflect the increase in use by adults aged 26 and older and, to a lesser extent, increases in use among young adults aged 18 to 25; the percentage of adolescents aged 12 to 17 who were current marijuana users was similar to the percentages in most years between 2003

and 2013. Similarly, the rise in heroin use may reflect increases in use primarily among adults older than 25.

Alternatively, the data revealed declines in adolescent alcohol, tobacco and nonmedical prescription drug use. The percent of adolescents aged 12 to 20 who were current alcohol users and the percent of young adults aged 18 to 25 who were binge or heavy alcohol users were lower in 2014 than in any year between 2002 and 2012. From 2002 to 2014, the percentage of adolescents who were past month tobacco users declined roughly by half, and percentage of young adults who were current users of a tobacco product in 2014 was lower than the percentages in 2002 to 2013.

“While it’s encouraging to see progress being made in terms of lower alcohol and tobacco use among adolescents, the overall picture of drug use in the United States remains troubling,” said Dr. Goldsmith. “ASAM will continue to advocate for increased access to strategies that promote public health and evidence-based addiction treatment, and encourages our federal and state policymakers to take urgent action to increase prevention efforts, treatment access and recovery support services for all who need them.”

For more information about the American Society of Addiction Medicine please visit [www.asam.org/](http://www.asam.org/).

###

*The [American Society of Addiction Medicine](http://www.asam.org/) is a national medical specialty society of more than 3,600 physicians and associated professionals. Its mission is to increase access to and improve the quality of addiction treatment, to educate physicians, and other health care providers and the public, to support research and prevention, to promote the appropriate role of the physician in the care of patients with addictive disorders, and to establish Addiction Medicine as a specialty recognized by professional organizations, governments, physicians, purchasers and consumers of health care services and the general public. ASAM was founded in 1954, and has had a seat in the American Medical Association House of Delegates since 1988. Follow ASAM on Twitter [@ASAMorg](https://twitter.com/ASAMorg).*