



RHODE ISLAND DATA BRIEF

Disability and Health Among High School Students in 2015

February 2016

INTRODUCTION

This brief describes demographic characteristics among Rhode Island high school students with disabilities¹. Indicators for health risk factors are compared to students with and without disabilities.

The brief uses data from Rhode Island's 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS),² part of a biennial national survey of public high school students on the major causes of disease and injury morbidity and mortality. Only those health risk factors whose differences in values are statistically "significant" at the 95% confidence level are addressed in this report.³

- 23% of high school students in Rhode Island report having a disability.
- The prevalence of disability is highest among 9th graders (22%) and lowest among 12th graders (18%).
- The prevalence of disability is higher among females (25%) compared to males (18%).

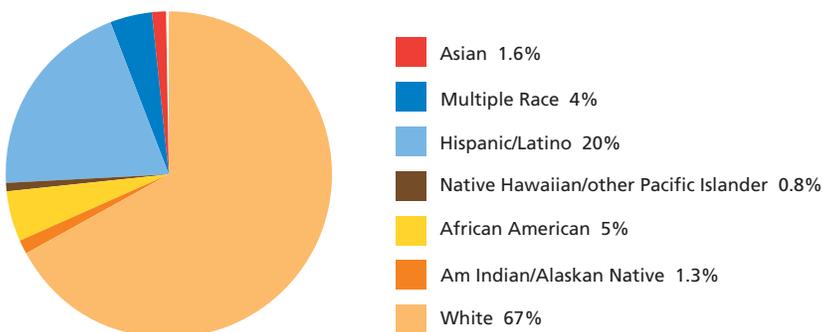
DISPARITY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Students with disabilities are more than three times as likely to feel sad or hopeless as their peers without disabilities (55 % vs. 16%).
- Students with disabilities are more than four times as likely to have attempted suicide as their peers without disabilities (23% vs. 5%).
- 15% of students with disabilities reported having forced sexual contact compared to 5% of students without disabilities.
- Students with disabilities are more likely to receive poor grades than their peers without disabilities (37 % vs. 20%).
- 33% of students with disabilities are overweight or obese compared to 24% of students without disabilities.
- 67% of students with disabilities are not physically active compared to 50% of students without disabilities.
- Students with disabilities are more likely than their peers without disabilities to drink alcohol (32% vs. 25%), use cigarettes (10% vs. 3%), and use marijuana (31% vs. 22%).

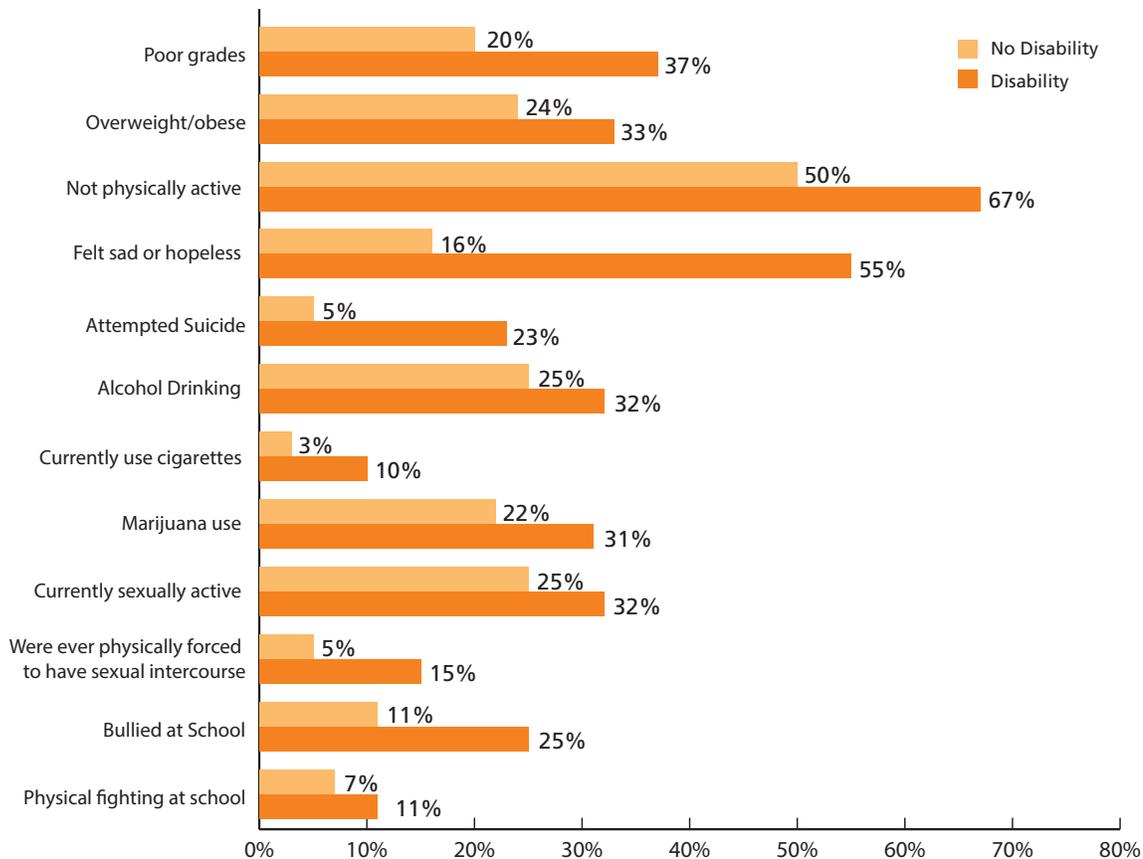
KEY FINDINGS

Large disparities exist for Rhode Island high school students with disabilities compared to their peers who do not have disabilities. The largest disparities existed for health risk factors of feeling sad or hopeless, lack of physical activity, and drug/alcohol use.

RACE/ETHNICITY OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, RHODE ISLAND, 2015



HEALTH RISK FACTORS, RHODE ISLAND, 2015



DEFINITIONS

- Overweight or obese: >85th percentile for body mass index
- Not physically active: <60 minutes of physical activity on five or more days a week
- Felt sad or hopeless: sad for two weeks in the past 12 months
- Alcohol drinking: drank alcohol one or more days in the past month
- Marijuana use: used marijuana one or more times in the past month
- Sexually active: had one or more sexual partners in the past three months
- Bullied at school: reported being bullied in the last 12 months
- Physical fighting on school property: Reported fighting at school one or more times in the past 12 months
- Poor grades: received mostly Cs, Ds, or Fs)
- Attempted suicide: reported attempt one or more times in the past 12 months
- Cigarette use: reported smoking one or more days in the past month
- Forced sexual contact: reported occurrence one or more times in the past 12 months)

*Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level

¹ Definition of Disability: The YRBS included two screening questions that were asked of all survey respondents in order to identify high school students with disabilities: Do you have any physical disabilities or long-term health problems? (Long-term means six months or longer) or Do you have any long-term emotional problems or learning disabilities? (Long-term means six months or longer) Respondents were considered to have a disability if they answered “yes” to either (or both) screening questions.

² For more information call the HEALTH Information Line at 401-222-5960/ RI Relay 711 or go to www.health.ri.gov/data/youthriskbehaviorsurvey

³ As the RI-YRBS is a sample survey, if the 95% Confidence Intervals of two values do not overlap, one may conclude (with 95% certainty) there was a real difference between the two values and the difference was not likely due to sampling bias).



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