

GRATIOT COUNTY

Report shows several health category lows

Mid-Michigan teen pregnancy rate, alcohol and tobacco use are among decreased figures

By Sean Bradley

Sbradley@digitalfirstmedia.com
@MorningSunSean on Twitter

The Mid Michigan District Health Department reports all-time low numbers in several youth-related health categories.

For example, teen pregnancy

is at an all-time low level for the department's region of Gratiot, Montcalm and Clinton counties as reported in its 2017 annual report from data gathered by the Michigan Department of Education Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth survey.

The report indicates there were

24.7 pregnancies per 1,000 female teenagers age 15-19 from the time-frame of 2014 to 2016 in the health department's region. Data up to 2016 is the most recent available.

This rate is the latest number to show a decrease that has continued since the 2000 to 2002 report when the rate was 53.3 preg-

nancies per 1,000 female teenagers age 15-19.

"This means more girls than ever are staying in school and completing their education and entering the workforce," the report indicated.

However, the rate at which teenagers have sex has unchanged for many years, in particular those who do before they graduate high school.

"What has changed is teens are protecting themselves against getting pregnant," the report stated.

"We need to continue giving teens access to birth control or the rate will rise."

Tobacco use among teens has dropped again; the report indicates 8 percent of 11th grade students in the region that were surveyed in 2016 have used cigarettes in the past 30 days, down from 10.9 percent in 2014 and 20.5 percent in 2008. Data up to 2016 is the most recent available.

"Teens are more likely than ever to express negative attitudes

REPORT » PAGE 2

Report

FROM PAGE 1

toward it," the report indicated.

However, it noted the decline is occurring, in part, because teens are vaping instead of smoking.

Teens are drinking alcohol less than in the past; the report indicated 24.7 percent of 11th grade students in the region that were surveyed in 2016 said they used alcohol within the past 30 days. Data from 2016 is the most recent available.

The number of teens involved in physical violence has declined in the region.

Surveyed in 2016, 9.7 percent of 11th grade students in the health district said they had been involved in a physical fight. Data from 2016 is the most recent available. This is down from 10.8 percent reported in 2014 and 21.4 percent reported in 2008.