



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT A DECADE OF PREVENTION

# Leave Your Mark



## Prevention Leadership Team DuPage County, IL



### VISION:

DuPage County is a healthy, prevention focused community, where all residents have access to mental wellness and substance misuse services.

### MISSION:

Collaborate with community leaders and partners to assess, educate, fund, and advocate for best practices that promote mental wellness and prevent substance misuse among all residents in DuPage County.

Prevention Leadership Team Young leaders making  
DuPage #LeaveYourMarkPLT #TooStrong4Drugs



## ABOUT:

The DuPage County Prevention Leadership Team (PLT) is a community coalition dedicated to reducing youth substance misuse and promoting mental wellness. Established in 2011 after a Community Health Assessment conducted by the DuPage County Health Department, the PLT has been funded over the past decade by a Drug-Free Communities Grant from the CDC and a STOP Act Grant from SAMHSA. In 2024, the PLT received a five-year Strategic Prevention Framework grant to continue its youth prevention efforts and broaden its focus to include treatment, recovery, and mental health initiatives for all DuPage County residents.

Over the last ten years, the PLT has evolved into a vital prevention resource for the county, bringing together prevention specialists, treatment providers, law enforcement, educators, parents, and community members. Operating under a collective impact model, stakeholders work together to make DuPage County a safer and healthier place to live. Partnering with the DuPage County Health Department, the PLT is well-positioned to achieve significant, long-term reductions in youth alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco use, while also implementing strategies to enhance mental wellness and improve access to treatment and recovery services throughout the county.

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The following report displays the highlights and accomplishments over the past decade spanning from Sept. 2014 - Sept. 2024.





## MEET OUR TEAM:

The success of the PLT can be largely credited to the dedication of its members. Individually, we can achieve only so much, but together, we accomplish far more—demonstrating the strength of coalitions and collective impact. Over the years, the coalition has benefited from exceptional leadership through its Co-Chairs, who have guided the group and overseen the implementation of its action plans. Both coalition members and Co-Chairs volunteer their time, and for that generosity, we are deeply appreciative.

With the support of grant funding, the coalition is able to employ two staff members who assist the organization and its Co-Chairs in carrying out the grant. Mila Tsagalis has served as the Project Director since 2011, while Jordan Esser has been the Project Coordinator since 2014.

The coalition continues to expand each year, now consisting of 119 members representing 12 different community sectors.

## PREVENTION LEADERSHIP TEAM CO-CHAIRS

### 2012 - 2014

Mike Moran  
Angela Adkins



### 2014 - 2016

Mark Piccoli  
Carlene Wold Not pictured



### 2016 - 2020

Doug Petit  
Ann Marie Bianchi



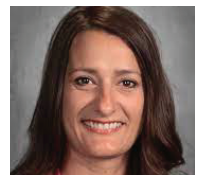
### 2020 - 2022

Jennifer Hess  
Andrew Anselm



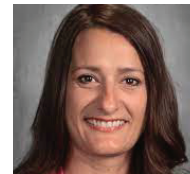
### 2022 - 2024

Jennifer Hess  
Amber Quirk



### 2024 -

Amber Quirk  
Katie Gallagher



Mila Tsagalis  
Project Director  
Jordan Esser  
Project Coordinator

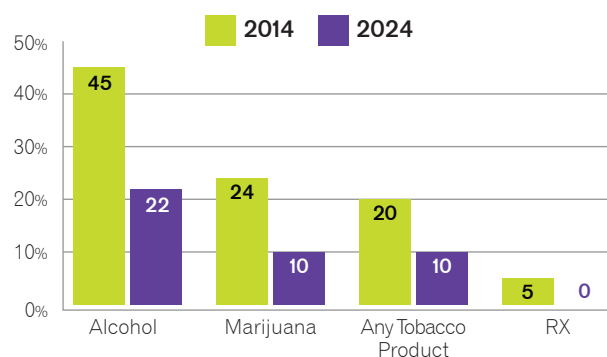


<b>Business</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Civic</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Faith-Based</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Government</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Healthcare</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Law Enforcement</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Media</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Other Organizations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Parents</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Youth</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>Youth-Serving Organizations</b>	<b>13</b>

## SUBSTANCE USE:

Over the past decade, the PLT has received funding to focus on youth substance use prevention. The coalition assesses its efforts using data from the Illinois Youth Survey, a self-reported survey conducted in schools to collect information on various health and social factors, including substance use and perceptions, bullying, school climate, nutrition, and physical activity. Since the PLT started receiving funding and began implementing youth substance use prevention strategies in 2014, substance use rates among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders have declined.

**12th Graders Reporting Past 30-Day Use Data Compared to 2014 and 2024.**



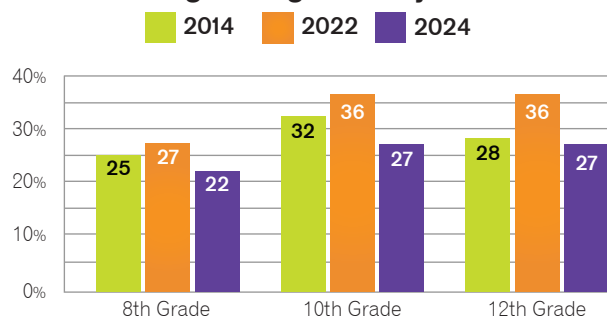
**The PLT received a DFC grant in 2014. Since being funded, substance use rates have declined among DuPage County 12th graders**

## MENTAL HEALTH:

While the PLT has not been funded for mental health strategies, we have been able to implement various mental health initiatives through the support of coalition members from mental health agencies. The coalition recognizes the close connection between mental health and substance use, understanding that our efforts to reduce youth substance use would not be successful without also promoting mental wellness. According to the Illinois Youth Survey, self-reported youth depression in DuPage County has decreased since 2014, though there was a rise in 2022 due to the impacts of COVID-19.

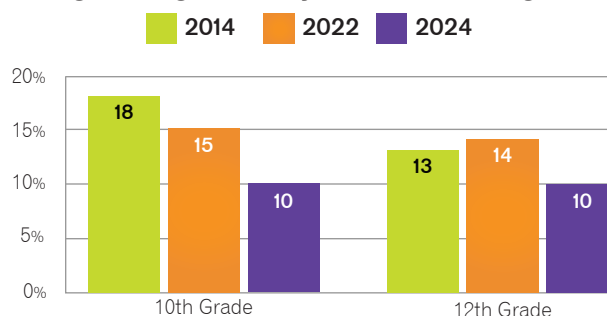
Additionally, self-reported suicidal ideation among 10th and 12th graders in DuPage County has decreased since 2014, although high school seniors reported an increase in 2022, likely due to the effects of COVID-19. This question is not asked at the 8th-grade level in the survey.

**Self-Reported Youth Depression Among DuPage County Youth**



**According to the Illinois Youth Survey, self-reported youth depression among DuPage County youth has declined since 2014, with a noted uptick in 2022 due to COVID-19 impacts.**

**Self-Reported Suicidal Ideation Among DuPage County 10th and 12th graders**



**Self-reported suicidal ideation among DuPage County 10th and 12th graders has also declined since 2014 with an uptick reported by high school seniors in 2022 due to COVID-19 impacts.**



## DECADE OF FOCUS:

The coalition has dedicated the past decade to implementing strategies that have contributed to the reduction in youth substance use and the improvement of youth mental health.

## 10 YEARS AT A GLANCE:

The coalition is proud of the commitment and effort put forth over the last ten years. Coalition members have collectively volunteered over 6,000 hours in monthly and committee meetings. The coalition has organized 466 community events and training sessions, engaging over 36,000 adults and 46,000 youth in prevention initiatives, while delivering more than 28 million ad views through mass media campaigns.

### 2011:

- PLT began as a small group of leaders who identified substance use as a top priority through the DuPage County Health Department's Community Health Assessment process.

### 2014-2015: YEAR 1

- Received federal funding through the Drug-Free Communities Grant.
- Developed the PLT logo and tagline, "LEAVE YOUR MARK."
- Launched the first teen-led, adult-guided "Sticker Shock" campaign to prevent underage drinking.
- Logic models and action plans created to guide PLT's work over the next five years.
- Established PLT's social media presence on Facebook and Twitter.
- Launched the official PLT website: [www.dupageplt.org](http://www.dupageplt.org).
- Introduced the first mass media campaign, "Life of an Athlete."
- Focused on promoting social hosting policies to reduce underage drinking parties.
- Created a data collection and evaluation system to inform data-driven decisions.
- Partnered with Reality Youth Coalition to engage teens in the coalition's efforts.

### 2015-2016: YEAR 2

- Conducted the second "Sticker Shock" campaign, which received local media coverage.
- Launched a new mass media campaign aimed at educating parents about the heroin epidemic and encouraging them to be actively involved in their children's lives.
- Collaborated with the DuPage County State's Attorney to develop a civil-style social host ordinance.
- Glen Ellyn adopted PLT's model social host ordinance.
- Continued partnering with Reality Teen Coalition on service projects and advocacy efforts.
- Sponsored the DuPage Resource Center Games with over 130 youth attendees.

- Worked with youth from the Carol Stream Resource Center to create a PSA promoting healthy lifestyles.

### 2016-2017: YEAR 3

- Introduced a new mass media campaign aimed at educating parents on the dangers of social hosting.
- Launched a second campaign to promote RxBox and encourage safe drug disposal.
- The Project Coordinator and PLT Chairs participated in Capitol Hill Day in Washington D.C., meeting with Illinois Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin.
- Held the first annual Teen PhilanthroParty — a party with a purpose.
- Partnered with DuPage resource centers to launch the Youth Leadership Project, using a train-the-trainer model to improve life skills and decision-making among middle and high school students.

### 2017-2018: YEAR 4

- Released Youth Connections Magazine, a professional prevention magazine for parents, customized for the DuPage community.
- The Youth Leadership Project was recognized by NAACHO as a promising practice.
- Held the second annual Teen PhilanthroParty.
- Wheaton, Glen Ellyn, and West Chicago adopted Tobacco 21 policies at the local level.
- Launched a new mass media campaign aimed at educating youth and young adults on the facts and health impacts of marijuana.

### 2018-2019: YEAR 5

- PLT launched an Instagram page aimed at youth.
- The coalition was chosen to participate in the National Graduate Academy.
- Project Coordinator was appointed to the National Coalition Advisory Committee.
- PLT received the Teen Safety Leadership Award from the National Safety Council.
- Governor Pritzker invited the teen coalition to attend a state bill signing for Tobacco 21.
- Collaborated with coalitions across Illinois to travel to Springfield and advocate against recreational marijuana.
- Introduced the inaugural Changemaker Award to honor individuals, teens, organizations, and communities committed to prevention and healthy living.

- Applied for the highly competitive Year 5-10 DFC grant.
- Established the Crisis Text Line for DuPage with the codeword "REACH" to gather local mental health data.

**2019-2020: YEAR 6**

- Secured funding for an additional five years through the DFC grant!
- The Project Coordinator of the PLT was recognized as the National Advocate of the Year by CADCA.
- The PLT was one of 18 coalitions nationwide selected to participate in the Non-Opioid Choices Project, which aims to educate the community about the risks of opioid use and promote safe alternatives.
- The PLT received the STOP Act grant, providing the coalition with an extra \$50,000 per year for four years to focus on preventing youth alcohol use.
- The PLT adapted to COVID-19 by continuing to meet virtually and implementing its action plan through online events for both teens and adults.
- Launched a newly designed website.
- Supplied 20 police departments with branded "Drive High, Get DUI" banners for their communities.

**2020-2021: YEAR 7**

- Engaged over 5.1 million people through various media campaigns, including "Feel Different, Drive Different," "Those Who Host Lose the Most," "If They Can't Buy It, Don't Supply It," and the Teen COVID-19 Impact Survey.
- Launched a new resource page for teachers on the website.
- Provided youth alcohol prevention banners to 10 police departments.
- Collaborated with the DuPage State's Attorney on a landscape review of recreational marijuana in DuPage.
- Attended town hall meetings and delivered presentations on the impacts of recreational marijuana.
- Finalized and began implementing a sustainability plan, presenting to the DuPage Health Matters board, which approved the solicitation of funds through the 501(c)(3) to support the PLT.

**2021-2022: YEAR 8**

- Boosted youth participation by 42%.
- Developed recommendations for suicide prevention resources to be included on student IDs, which several school districts have adopted.
- Created resources for a mental health days policy affecting schools.
- Hosted panel discussions addressing the effects of expanding recreational marijuana in DuPage.
- Expanded the availability of products in Spanish.
- Launched the Teen Ambassadors Project for students in District 87.

**2022-2023: YEAR 9**

- Secured a Strategic Prevention Framework grant to maintain the coalition and broaden its focus for an additional five years.
- Launched the inaugural color run in collaboration with Teen Ambassadors and NAMI DuPage to combat the stigma surrounding mental illness.
- Organized a community event to unite DuPage Mental Health Boards for a discussion on local needs and gaps in services and resources.
- Directed a statewide team to plan and execute an advocacy day at the State Capitol, utilizing funding from Drug Free America to cover travel and lodging expenses for participants.

**2023-2024: YEAR 10**

- Started executing the Strategic Prevention Framework grant, broadening the PLT's focus to encompass adults and strategies related to treatment, recovery, and mental health.
- Involved new partners from target populations, including LGBTQ+ individuals, those in recovery, and faith-based communities.
- Formed new partnerships with school districts 88 and 94.
- Collaborated with KidsMatter on a community mental health forum to highlight substance use and mental health priorities in DuPage.
- Celebrated a significant milestone: 10 years of prevention efforts!

**CHARGING AHEAD:**

The coalition has recently received a new federal grant, the Strategic Prevention Framework, which will support its work for the next five years. This funding will enable the coalition to maintain its youth prevention efforts while also broadening its focus to encompass treatment, recovery, and mental health strategies for all residents of DuPage County. Our new strategies are outlined below.

SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION	MENTAL HEALTH	TREATMENT	RECOVERY	CULTURAL COMPETENCE
Continue to reduce youth use rates of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, and Rx drugs.	Continue to reduce youth self-reports of depression and suicidal ideation and increase mental wellness among all DuPage County residents.	Work with treatment partners to increase access to treatment.	Work with recovery partners to support those in recovery.	Ensure materials and strategies are inclusive and respectful of all sub-populations and cultures.

**JOIN THE EFFORT!**

The PLT is always welcoming new coalition members and partners to join our effort. We live and breathe the Collective Impact model and know that we are stronger together. To learn more, or to join our coalition efforts, please contact Jordan Esser, Project Coordinator, at [jordan.esser@dupagehealth.org](mailto:jordan.esser@dupagehealth.org)



DUPAGE COUNTY  
PREVENTION LEADERSHIP TEAM  
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