

POLICY & PRACTICE

Teen Smoking, Substance Abuse Linked

The nicotine in tobacco products poses a significant danger of structural and chemical changes in developing brains that can make teens more vulnerable to alcohol and other drug addiction, as well as to mental illness, according to a new white paper from Columbia University. The paper, commissioned by former top federal health officials, found that teens who smoke are nine times likelier to meet the medical criteria for past year alcohol abuse or dependence and 13 times likelier to meet the medical criteria for abuse and dependence on an illegal drug than are teens who don't smoke. The analysis also found that among teens aged 12-17 years, twice as many smokers as nonsmokers suffered from symptoms of depression in the last year, and smoking at a young age is related to panic attacks, general anxiety disorders, and posttraumatic stress disorder.

Combined Vaccine Sheet Considered

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is considering a new vaccine information statement that would combine information for six childhood vaccines, including DTaP, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, inactivated polio vaccine, pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, hepatitis B, and rotavirus. Physicians would have the choice of providing the consolidated statement or the six separate statements on the vaccines to their patients at the time of the vaccines. The American Academy of Pediatrics' Committee for Infectious Diseases is evaluating the proposed statement, but has not yet taken a position on it, according to an AAP spokesperson.

CDC: Schools Improving Health, Safety

U.S. schools have made considerable improvements in their policies and programs to promote the health and safety of students, particularly in the areas of nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco use, according to a CDC study. But more work is needed on health and wellness policies and programs, the CDC said. States prohibiting schools from offering junk foods in vending machines increased from 8% in 2000 to 32% in 2006, and states that required elementary schools to provide students with regularly scheduled recess increased from 4% in 2000 to 12% in 2006. But 22% of schools did not require students to take any physical education, and 36% of schools do not have policies prohibiting tobacco use in all locations at all times, according to the 2006 School Health Policies and Programs Study, a national survey conducted every 6 years.

NIH Adds 22 Centers to Study

The National Children's Study, the largest study ever on the effects of environmental and genetic factors on child and human health in the United States, has awarded contracts to 22 new study centers to manage recruitment and data collection in 26 additional communities. The new centers move the project closer to its goal of recruiting more than 100,000 children representative of the overall population, according to the National Institutes of Health. Researchers will examine what children are eating and drinking, what's in their air and in the dust from their homes,

and their possible exposures to chemicals from materials used to construct their homes and schools. The first seven centers in the study were established in 2005, and federal lawmakers appropriated \$69 million for the project in 2007.

Disordered Eating in Overweight Teens

Factors such as teasing by family, personal weight concerns, and dieting/unhealthy weight-control behaviors are strong and consistent predictors of overweight status, binge eating, and extreme weight-control behaviors later in adolescence, a study in

the American Journal of Preventive Medicine found. About 40% of overweight girls and 20% of overweight boys in the study engaged in either binge eating, extreme weight control, or both. The findings "suggest a need for decreasing weight-related pressures within an adolescent's social environment, decreasing weight concerns, and decreasing unhealthy weight control practices while promoting healthier alternatives," the study's authors concluded.

Medicaid Enrollment Declines

Enrollment in Medicaid declined in 2007 for the first time in nearly a decade, pri-

marily because new documentation requirements have caused significant delays in processing applications and because of the strong economy and lower unemployment, according to a new 50-state survey from the Kaiser Family Foundation. But states expect enrollment and spending to increase in 2008 as they move forward with program enhancements, according to the survey. "States are turning to Medicaid to address the rising number of uninsured to help fill in the gaps for low-income families," Diane Rowland, executive vice president of the Kaiser Family Foundation, said in a statement.

—Jane Anderson

Gets rid of cold symptoms to get back to life...

- Powerful decongestant
- Proven antihistamine
- Great grape taste for enhanced compliance



Dimetapp®

Lets you breathe easier



Wyeth
Consumer Healthcare

© 2006 Wyeth Consumer Healthcare

216061

dimetapp.com
10/06