



## Northview Public Schools

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Dear Northview Families,

The Northview Mental Health Team works diligently to promote accurate and up-to-date information about healthy social and emotional development for students. With this goal in mind, the team felt it was important to provide information in response to a growing concern in Kent County as well as around the country related to substance use and abuse.

In 2014-15, the Kent County Community Health Needs Assessment identified substance abuse as one of the top four priorities. The emphasis has grown in importance even to this day as drug overdose continues to be a leading cause of death. An especially deadly type of drug, Opioids, including illegal drugs like heroin as well as common prescription drugs (morphine, codeine, methadone, oxycodone, hydrocodone, and fentanyl) are increasingly available. The addictive quality and danger of these prescription drugs need to be well understood by parents and guardians.

The 2016 Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth (MiPHY) survey data of 9th and 11th graders reports the following:

- 23% of the high school students surveyed had tried marijuana
- 23% of the high school students surveyed had previously been drunk.
- 7% of the high school students surveyed had taken prescription drugs including pain killers that were not prescribed to them in the previous 30 days
- 15% of the high school students reported having been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property by someone within the previous 12 months

Our goal is to assist Northview families in talking early with their children about making healthy choices and avoiding risky behaviors. A helpful app/website has been developed to prevent substance abuse among youth by Network 180, the Lakeshore Coordinating Council and its coalitions. The app is called **TalkSooner** and can be downloaded from [www.talksooner.org](http://www.talksooner.org). It is also available at the app store and Google Play. TalkSooner provides helpful tips, up-to-date information, and resources for support and treatment.

The Northview Mental Health Team wants our students and families to know that there are resources and supports available within our schools and community to assist them through their social and emotional challenges. If you need a referral to substance abuse support, please do not hesitate to contact your Northview school and ask to talk with a counselor or social worker.

Sincerely,

The Northview Mental Health Team