Fact Sheet: Teen and Family Substance Abuse

- Teenagers whose parents talk to them regularly about the dangers of drugs are 42% less likely to use drugs than those whose parents don’t, yet only 1 in 4 teens reports having these conversations. 1

- Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among young people. 2

- 40% of those who started drinking at age 14 or younger later developed alcohol dependence, compared with 10% of those who began drinking at age 20 or older. 2

- 65% of the youth who drink alcohol report that they get the alcohol they drink from family and friends. 2

- By the 8th grade, 52% of adolescents have consumed alcohol, 41% have smoked cigarettes, and 20% have used marijuana. 2

- In 2000, more than 60% of teens said drugs were used, kept, or sold at their school. 3

- 50% of high school seniors report drinking alcohol in the past 30 days with 32% report being drunk at least once in the same period. 2

- Most people begin smoking as adolescents. Among youths who smoke, the average age of initiation is 12.5 years of age. 2

- Children of alcoholics (COAs) are four times more likely than non-COAs to develop alcoholism. 4

- Almost 1 in 5 adult Americans (18%) lived with an alcoholic while growing up. 4

- One in 4 children under 18 years old in the United States lives with a chemically dependent parent. 5

- Children of substance abusers are the highest risk group for alcohol and illicit drug dependence and are exposed to a variety of ills such as depression, anxiety, problems with cognitive and verbal skills, parent abuse or neglect, and school failure. 5

- 14 million Americans are considered problem drinkers (including 8 million who have alcoholism) and 76 million people who are exposed to alcoholism in family settings. 6

1 Partnership For A Drug-Free America
2 Substance Abuse: The Nation’s Number One Health Problem
3 National Survey of Substance Abuse Attitudes, Feb. 2001
4 National Association for Children of Alcoholics http://www.nacoa.net/impfacts.htm