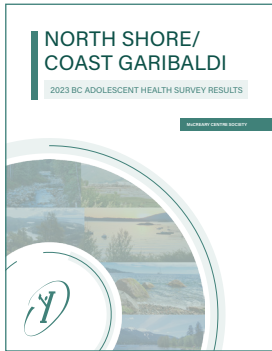


Urban- rural divide apparent for youth in North Shore/Coast Garibaldi



The 2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) results for North Shore/Coast Garibaldi were released today by McCreary Centre Society (McCreary). The results highlight differences in the health picture of those aged 12–19 in urban and rural parts of the region. McCreary's Executive Director and co-author of the report, Dr. Annie Smith, explained: *"The urban centres of North and West Vancouver make up a large part of this region, but we still have more than 1 in 6 young people who are living in rural communities, so it is concerning to see these youth are almost twice as likely to go to bed hungry because there isn't enough money for food at home."*

Smith added: *"The survey also considers material deprivation using the Youth Deprivation Index, which was developed with input from local youth. The Index highlights the material items young people have told us they need in order to feel like they belong and ensure they are able to join in with their peers. A quarter of youth in rural parts of the region reported that they lacked at least one of the items on the Index, and they were more likely than those in urban centres to lack but wish they had a smartphone; money for school supplies, school trips, and extracurricular activities; and access to transportation."*

"We know that economic disadvantage can impact child and youth health but it can also have an impact later in life, and we saw in the survey that while 82% of youth in urban communities had plans to attend post-secondary, fewer than 70% of those in rural communities thought they would continue their education after high school through college, university, or trade school."

In addition to geographical differences, the survey results also highlighted gender differences in the health picture of youth in the region with males generally reporting the most positive health, and non-binary youth the least positive. For example, 75% of males rated their mental health as good or excellent, compared to 51% of females and 25% of non-binary youth.

Despite some concerning findings, there was also some positive news for the region, particularly in relation to physical activity. Youth in North Shore/Coast Garibaldi have traditionally been more likely to engage in physical activity than youth across BC, and this remained the case. For example, 60% of local youth played organized sports (sports with a coach) at least weekly, compared to 49% provincially. Also, 74% reported they were a confident swimmer (vs. 62% provincially), and 43% reported they enjoyed exercising very much (vs. 35% provincially).

Compared to pre-COVID, there were changes in the types of physical activity youth engaged in on a weekly basis. There was a local decrease in those who engaged in organized sports such as sports teams (60% vs. 65% in 2018) and dance, yoga, or exercise classes (14% vs. 20%). Meanwhile, there were increases in participation in informal sports such as skateboarding, cycling, and street hockey without a coach (61% vs. 58%); and extreme sports such as backcountry skiing and BMXing (19% vs. 13%).

To read the full results for North Shore/Coast Garibaldi, please visit mcs.bc.ca/pdf/2023_bcchs_north_shore_coast_garibaldi.pdf.



McCreary Centre Society is a non-government, non-profit organization committed to improving the health of BC youth through research, evaluation, and community-based projects.

Founded in 1977, our vision is that all youth are supported to be healthy and connected.

For interviews, contact:

Annie Smith
Executive Director
Tel: 604-291-1996 ext. 225
Cell: 604-728-9494
Email: annie@mcs.bc.ca

Where to find us:

3552 Hastings Street East
Vancouver, BC, V5K 2A7

Backgrounder

The 2023 BC AHS was completed by around 38,500 young people aged 12–19 in 59 of BC's 60 school districts. The North Shore/Coast Garibaldi report is one of 16 regional reports of the 2023 BC AHS results. It shares data provided by students in Grades 7–12 in the local Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA).

North Shore/Coast Garibaldi HSDA is comprised of the following school districts: North Vancouver (SD 44), West Vancouver (SD 45), Sunshine Coast (SD 46), Powell River (SD 47), Sea to Sky (SD 48), and Central Coast (SD 49). All these school districts have participated in the survey since at least 2013. North Shore/Coast Garibaldi students in Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (SD 93) have participated in the last two waves of the survey.

Some key findings for North Shore/Coast Garibaldi:

- Among youth aged 12–19, there was an increase in those who identified as non-binary (4% vs. 2% in 2018) and as a sexual minority (e.g., 2% identified as gay or lesbian vs. 1% in 2018).
- Historically, youth in North Shore/Coast Garibaldi have been more likely to be sexually active and use substances than youth across BC. This was also the pattern in 2023. For example, local youth were more likely to have ever vaped (33% vs. 26% provincially). However, there were local decreases from 5 years earlier in youth who had ever had oral sex (21% vs. 25% in 2018), drunk alcohol (49% vs. 52%), and used ecstasy/MDMA (2% vs. 4%).
- There was an increase in youth who were seriously injured (40% vs. 31% in 2018) and who experienced a concussion (17% vs. 15% in 2018) in the past year.
- Youth most commonly received health care from a family doctor in the past year (56%). However, they were less likely than those 5 years earlier to access a family doctor (61% in 2018), and were more likely to receive health care from an emergency room (20% vs. 17%).
- Reflecting trends across BC, there was a decrease in the percentage of youth who rated their mental health as good or excellent (62% vs. 73% in 2018 vs. 83% in 2013), and an increase in those who cut or injured themselves on purpose without trying to kill themselves in the past year (24% vs. 17% in 2018 vs. 14% in 2013).
- There were local decreases in youth's sense of safety and connection at school. However, North Shore/Coast Garibaldi youth were more likely than youth across BC to feel like a part of their school (59% vs. 54%), safe at school (71% vs. 63%), and to plan to attend post-secondary (80% vs. 77%).
- Having supportive adults in their life can be a protective factor for youth. Most local youth had an adult in their neighbourhood or community who cared about them (78% vs. 73% provincially). They were also more likely than local youth 5 years earlier to have an adult inside their family they could talk to when they were having a serious problem (78% vs. 74% in 2018), as well as one outside their family (36% vs. 27%).

For more information about the BC Adolescent Health Survey, please visit mcs.bc.ca/about_bcahs.

