

MEDIA RELEASE | March 30th 2020

North Shore/Coast Garibaldi youth physically active but vaping at higher rates than youth across BC

McCreary Centre Society today released the North Shore/Coast Garibaldi regional results of the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey. The survey was completed by over 38,000 of the province's Grade 7–12 students, including all school districts in the North Shore/Coast Garibaldi Health Service Delivery Area.

Local results showed that North Shore/Coast Garibaldi youth are more active than those across BC but continue to use substances and to vape at higher rates than their peers.

McCreary's Executive Director Annie Smith explained: *“Over a third of North Shore/Coast Garibaldi youth had vaped in the past month, which was higher than we saw across the province and much higher than in communities like Vancouver and Richmond where rates are well below 20%.”*

Smith went on to say *“What is particularly worrying is that while vaping was originally marketed as a smoking cessation tool, more than 1 in 5 local youth who had never smoked tobacco were vaping.”*

Youth in this region have traditionally been more physically active than youth across the province as a whole. They continue to be so, which is great news locally but vaping can definitely affect athletic performance and lung health, which talking to young people is not something they are aware of.”

Other survey results showed an increase in youth experiencing mental health challenges but also in those who had not accessed mental health services when they felt they needed to. This was particularly the case in North Shore/Coast Garibaldi communities outside of North and West Vancouver.

A copy of the report, *Balance and connection in North Shore/Coast Garibaldi: The health and well-being of our youth*, and an accompanying Power Point of the results are available at www.mcs.bc.ca.

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.

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BACKGROUND

The 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey was conducted in 58 of BC's 60 school districts and is the sixth time students have been asked to complete the comprehensive health survey since 1992.

Participation was the highest since the survey began, and the results are considered representative of over 95% of mainstream school students in Grades 7–12 in the province.

North Shore/Coast Garibaldi HSDA is comprised of six 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 school districts in this region have participated in the survey since 2013, and three of the six have participated in all six waves of the survey. The Conseil scolaire francophone school district (SD 93) also participated in the survey for the first time.

The survey provides essential information about health trends, and about risk and protective factors that can influence young people's healthy transitions to adulthood. The 2018 survey included 140 questions asking youth about their perceptions of their current physical and mental health, their engagement in health promoting and health risk behaviours, and about factors that can contribute to a healthy transition to adulthood.

Some key findings from the report:

North Shore/Coast Garibaldi youth are becoming increasingly diverse. For example, the percentage who were born in Canada decreased (73% vs. 78% in 2008) and there was an increase in those who spoke a language other than English at home (47% vs. 42% in 2013).

Locally, 38% of Indigenous youth could speak at least a few words of an Indigenous language (vs. 28% provincially), including 7% who could hold a conversation or were fluent.

Reflecting the provincial picture, there was a decrease in the percentage of local students who rated their overall health as good or excellent (84% vs. 88% in 2013), and a decrease in those who rated their mental health this positively (73% vs. 83%). However, local youth were more likely than those across BC to rate their overall health positively.

Compared to youth across the province, North Shore/Coast Garibaldi students were less likely to report having Depression (13% vs. 15% across BC). However, there was a local increase from five years earlier in the percentage who experienced Depression (13% vs. 9% in 2013), Anxiety Disorder/panic attacks (18% vs. 8%), and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD; 3% vs. 1%).

Reflecting the provincial picture, there was an increase in youth who missed out on needed mental health services in the past year (19% vs. 11% in 2013). Rural youth were more likely than urban youth (i.e., those in North and West Vancouver) to have not

accessed these needed services (22% vs. 18%); and to have missed out because they did not know where to go or because they had no transportation.

There was an increase in youth who had seriously considered suicide in the past year (15% vs. 10% in 2013, but a local decrease in suicide attempts (4% vs. 5% in 2013).

Half of students (50%) slept for at least eight hours on the night before completing the survey (vs. 58% in 2013). Students reported doing various activities after the time they were expected to be asleep, including chatting or texting (57%), homework (49%), gaming (25%), and online activities other than gaming (e.g., watching videos, 71%).

Local students were more likely than those across BC to participate weekly in organized sports (63% vs. 52%), informal sports (58% vs. 52%), and extreme sports (13% vs. 9%).

Similar to results in 2013, 52% of students had tried alcohol and 32% had used marijuana. Also, 19% had tried a substance other than alcohol or marijuana. Local youth were more likely to have tried any of these substances than youth across the province.

North Shore/Coast Garibaldi youth were more likely than those across BC to have vaped in the past month (34% vs. 27% provincially), and specifically to have vaped with nicotine (30% vs. 21% provincially). Among students who had smoked tobacco, 75% had vaped in the past month, as had 22% of those who had never smoked tobacco.

Similar to the provincial picture, 14% of North Shore/Coast Garibaldi youth reported they had been physically abused, and 12% had been sexually abused. Females were more likely than five years earlier to have been sexually abused (18% vs. 13% in 2013).

Most students felt connected to their school and safe at school. Local students reported feeling safer in all areas of their school than youth across the province.

North Shore/Coast Garibaldi youth were more likely than youth across BC to feel connected to their community (48% vs. 42%), and that there was an adult in their community who really cared about them (70% vs. 65% provincially).

Around 7 in 10 local youth (73%) felt the activities they were engaged in were meaningful to them. These youth were more likely to report positive mental health, to feel an adult in their community cared about them, and to feel connected to their community.

Most North Shore/Coast Garibaldi youth could identify something they were really good at, felt good about themselves, reported satisfaction with their life, and were hopeful for their future.

The most common topic North Shore/Coast Garibaldi youth identified wanting to learn more about was mental health.