

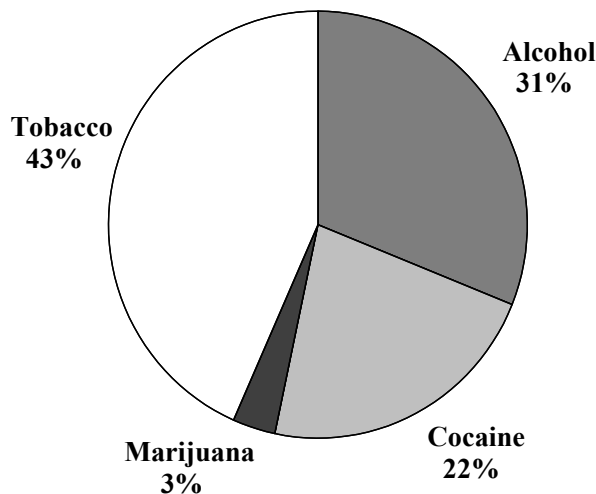
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

***Every \$1 Spent on School-Based Drug Prevention Is
Estimated to Save Approximately \$5.60***

The benefits of school-based drug prevention programs in the U.S. far exceed the costs, according to a recent economic analysis. The lifetime social benefits from one average student's participation in drug prevention are estimated at \$840, while the cost of one student's participation in drug prevention is approximately \$150. Thus every \$1 spent on school-based drug prevention results in a cost-savings of \$5.60. The largest amounts of social cost savings are associated with reductions in tobacco (43%) and alcohol (31%) use. Reductions in cocaine use result in social cost savings of 22%, while marijuana accounts for 3% (see figure below). According to the authors, these are conservative estimates because benefits associated with reductions in use of other illicit drugs, such as heroin, LSD, steroids, and ecstasy, are omitted due to a lack of data on prevention's impact on these substances. The authors note that "although drug prevention is a wise use of public funds, that is mainly because drug prevention is relatively cheap and because drug use is so costly to society, and not because even model programs eliminate a large proportion of drug use" (p. xix).

Cost Savings Attributable to Reductions in the Use of Tobacco, Alcohol, Cocaine, and Marijuana



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Caulkins J., Pacula R., Paddock S., Chiesa J. R. "School-Based Drug Prevention: What Kind of Drug Use Does it Prevent?" *RAND: MR-1459-RWJ*, 2002. Available online at <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1459/>.

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