



Youth Opioid Prevention

Vision Statement: Every young person should be equipped to make healthy decisions resulting in positive social, emotional, and physical well-being.



Every dollar invested in Boys & Girls Clubs **returns \$9.60** in current and future earnings and cost-savings to their communities.

The Epidemic

Currently, more than 46 people die every day from overdoses involving prescription opioids. As the opioid epidemic within our communities becomes more pervasive, youth increasingly are the unintended victims. The traumatic experience of growing up within a family and community where substance use and misuse is prevalent disrupts a young person's ability to thrive. The associated adverse experiences, such as childhood abuse and neglect, put young people at increased risk for substance use and other behaviors that lead to poor health outcomes. In order to combat the opioid epidemic, greater investments in prevention must be made.



Boys & Girls Clubs are now the **2nd largest provider of afterschool programs in rural America**—second only to public schools. There are **1,058 rural Clubs** that serve nearly **317,000 registered members**.

Youth Opioid Prevention

Today, over **4,700 Clubs** serve **4.7 million youth** each year, with **460,000** entering the doors of a Boys & Girls Club every day. These Clubs represent a cross-section of America with **1,871** school-based Clubs, **1,058** Clubs in rural areas, **312** Clubs in public housing facilities, **496** affiliated youth centers on military installations worldwide, and **187** Clubs on Native lands. This uniquely positions **Clubs** to disrupt the cycle of addiction and abuse by providing a high-quality youth experience that employs key evidence informed prevention strategies as its universal approach.

BGCA's approach provides improved social & emotional resilience for all youth by enhancing high quality youth development practices, risk prevention practices and messages in programs. BGCA's effective substance abuse prevention strategies include:

- Creating meaningful opportunities to build Social & Emotional Development Skills, specifically, self-regulation, communication, emotional awareness, healthy decision-making, self-efficacy, and healthy peer and adult relationships.
- Using a trauma-informed approach that realizes the widespread impact of trauma, and responds with fully integrated trauma-informed practices, policies and procedures.
- Creating high-yield, small group opportunities that allow youth to develop a sense of emotional safety, peer support, trust and transparency, collaboration, and leverage youth choice and voice.
- Implementing a prevention program and activities that are developmentally responsive and address all forms of substance use.
- Engaging families intentionally within the Club and creating strong community partnerships to support youth and families with needs beyond the scope of the Club.

Findings

According to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America National Youth Outcomes Initiatives Report, prescription drug use abstinence is higher among Club members compared to their peers:

95% of Club 9th graders report abstaining compared to 89% of 9th graders

94% of Club 12th graders report abstaining compared to 82% of 12th graders nationally.

Success Stories

Missouri: The **Missouri Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs** in partnership with the Missouri Department of Mental Health, created a new initiative called *Great Futures Missouri*, funded in part by the SAMSHA State Opioid Respond Grant funds (SOR). *Great Futures Missouri* takes a comprehensive approach by disseminating and implementing substance use prevention curriculum, including the evidence-based model called Positive Action. In the first year of programming, over 1,700 youth completed the Positive Action curriculum and over 5,500 parents, adults and non-Club members attended Club-hosted community health forums or participated in other outreach efforts.

Oklahoma: The **Boys & Girls Club of Chelsea**, with support from the Oklahoma Methamphetamine and Suicide Prevention Initiative, has been a key partner in the health, safety and well-being of tribal youth within Northeast Oklahoma. The Boys & Girls Club of Chelsea along with the Delaware Tribe of Indians focused on the growing substance abuse and opioid epidemics tribal youth face, expanding prevention and intervention practices by adding a component of onsite behavioral health, including a weekly behavioral health specialist (enrolled member of Seneca Cayuga Tribe) onsite to assist staff with education and best practices. Through the program curriculum of **SMARTMoves** and **MethSMART**, the Club ensures youth retain key knowledge, not only in the areas of suicide and drug use, but also in basic life skills. The goal is to enable and equip all young people in the tribal communities with the best knowledge and prevention practices, while ensuring behavioral health remains a top priority.

Rhode Island: **Boys and Girls Club of Warwick** was a 2019 recipient of SOR funds through their partnership with the Kent and South County Prevention Coalitions. The SOR funds were awarded by the R.I. Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals. The Club hired a full time Licensed Social Worker to develop prevention support programming, train staff in emotional intelligence, work one-on-one with at-risk youth and promote social-emotional learning within the organization. The new social worker will be responsible for the three branches of Boys and Girls Clubs and is expected to interact with 1,500 youth.

West Virginia: The **Boys & Girls Club of the Eastern Panhandle** utilizes local partnerships with **college and community mentors**, the **county school system** and the **Martinsburg Police Department** to charter new paths for children through the availability of afterschool prevention programs.