

SAMHSA News Release

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Media Contact: SAMHSA Press Office at 240-276-2130

Report shows 7.5 million children live with a parent with an alcohol use disorder

A new report shows 7.5 million children under age 18 (10.5 percent of this population) lived with a parent who has experienced an alcohol use disorder in the past year. According to the report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 6.1 million of these children live with two parents—with either one or both parents experiencing an alcohol use disorder in the past year.

The remaining 1.4 million of these children live in a single-parent house with a parent who has experienced an alcohol use disorder in the past year. Of these children 1.1 million lived in a single mother household and 0.3 million lived in a single father household. This study is done in conjunction with Children of Alcoholics Week, February 12-18, 2012.

“The enormity of this public health problem goes well beyond these tragic numbers as studies have shown that the children of parents with untreated alcohol disorders are at far greater risk for developing alcohol and other problems later in their lives,” said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde. “SAMHSA and others are promoting programs that can help those with alcohol disorders find recovery – not only for themselves, but for the sake of their children. SAMHSA is also playing a key role in national efforts to prevent underage drinking and other forms of alcohol abuse.”

SAMHSA offers an on-line treatment locator service that can be accessed at www.samhsa.gov/treatment or by calling 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

There are many resources available to help children with a parent who has an alcohol problem. The National Association for Children of Alcoholics (<http://www.nacoa.org>) provides information and resources for professionals who may be in a position to help these children and their families. More resources are available at: <http://www.samhsa.gov/prevention> .

The report entitled, Data Spotlight: Over 7 Million Children Live with a Parent with Alcohol Problems, is based on data analyzed from SAMHSA’s 2005-2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). NSDUH is a scientifically conducted annual survey of approximately 67,500 people throughout the country, aged 12 and older. Because of its statistical power, it is the nation’s premier source of statistical information on the scope and nature of many substance abuse and behavioral health issues affecting the nation. The report is available at: <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/spotlight/Spot061ChildrenOfAlcoholics2012.pdf> .

For more information about SAMHSA visit: <http://www.samhsa.gov>.

SAMHSA is a public health agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. Its mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America’s communities.