

# Preventing the Misuse and Diversion of ADHD Stimulant Prescriptions Among College Students

David M. Arnold

NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

[darnold@naspa.org](mailto:darnold@naspa.org)



@NASPADavid

## David Arnold

Director of BACCHUS Initiatives

CADE Project Director

[darnold@naspa.org](mailto:darnold@naspa.org)

- Started in AOD Prevention as a student peer educator in 2001
- Educational background in Social Work
- Worked in campus AOD Prevention
- Trainer for Certified Peer Educator Training (CPE), Screening and Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment Training (SBIRT)
- Coalition to Prevent ADHD Medication Misuse (CPAMM), NCAA Sexual Assault Prevention Task Force, Coalition of Higher Education Association for Substance Abuse Prevention

# About CPAMM

- Created to help prevent ADHD medication misuse and become a trusted source of information on the issue of ADHD prescription stimulant medication misuse, abuse and diversion
- Diverse membership representing key constituencies
- Initial focus on college students
- Advancing its mission by conducting research, and engaging and educating various groups affected by the issue

# About CPAMM

- Announced its formation and launched a website in August 2014
- Learning more about the issue through research conducted among physicians, college students and administrators with:
  - National market research fielded among college students
  - AAFP physician research
  - NASPA focus groups and quantitative research with students and administrators
- Hosted the first National Summit on the issue of prescription stimulant misuse, abuse and diversion among college students
- Launched an educational campaign, reaching physicians and college administrators
- Currently creating peer-to-peer programming

# CPAMM Partners



# The Issue is Persistent

Young Women Increasingly Turn To  
ADHD Drugs



Just say yes? The rise of 'study drugs' in  
college



**Coming Soon to a Neighborhood Near You: Adderall  
Abuse**



Some students don't see ADHD drug use as cheating



One in Five Ivy Leaguers Has  
Used Prescription Stimulants,  
Study Suggests



Students increase abuse of study drugs  
as finals close in

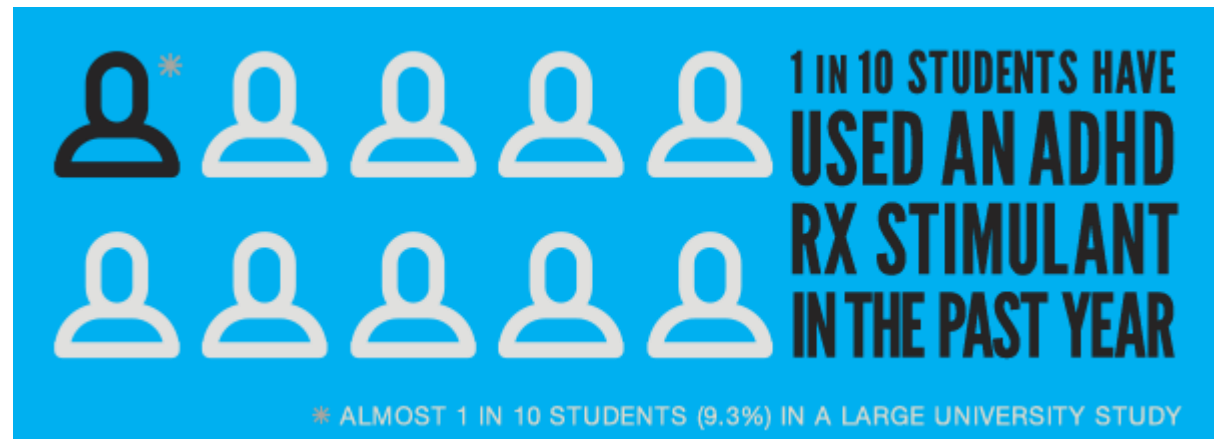


**Will efforts to halt prescription  
drug abuse affect students?**

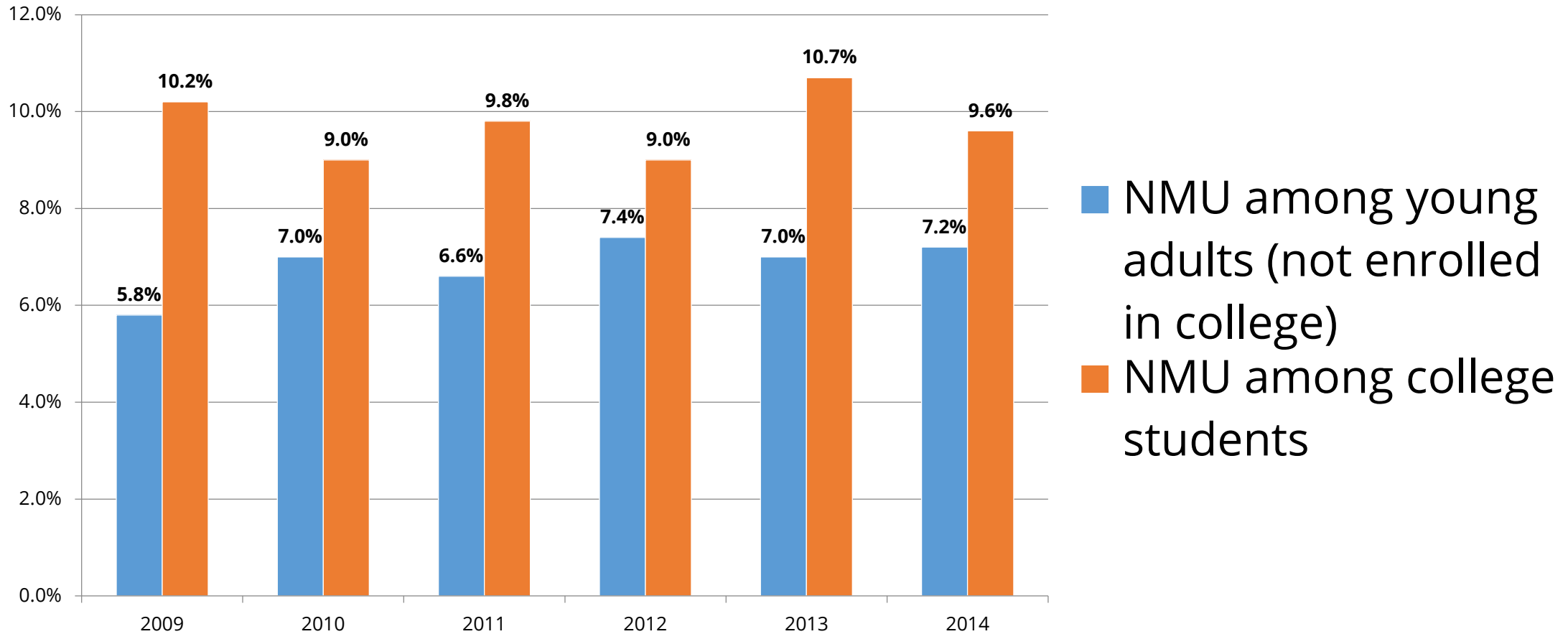


# The Issue is Persistent

- Approximately 10% of college students have used ADHD/stimulant medications non-medically in the past year
- The rate of non-medical use (NMU) is consistently higher among college students than among young adults not in college



# The Issue is Persistent (Annual Prevalence)

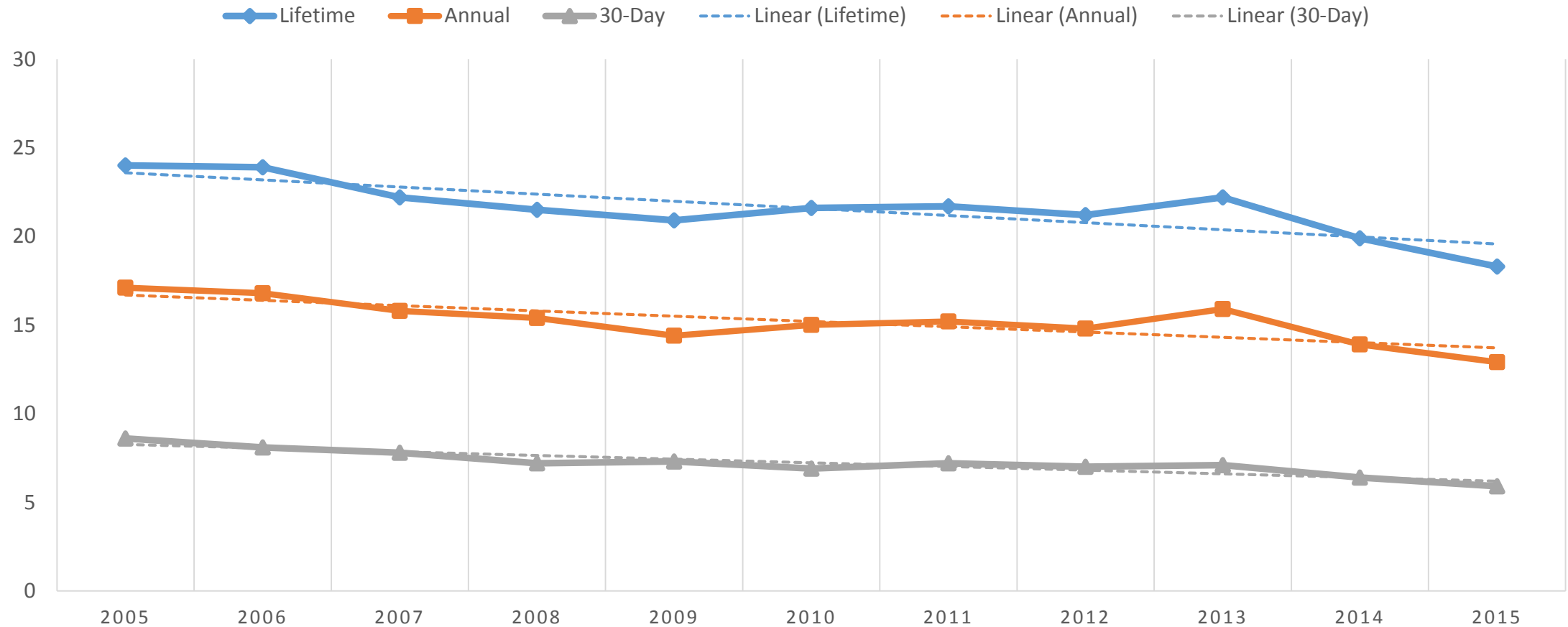




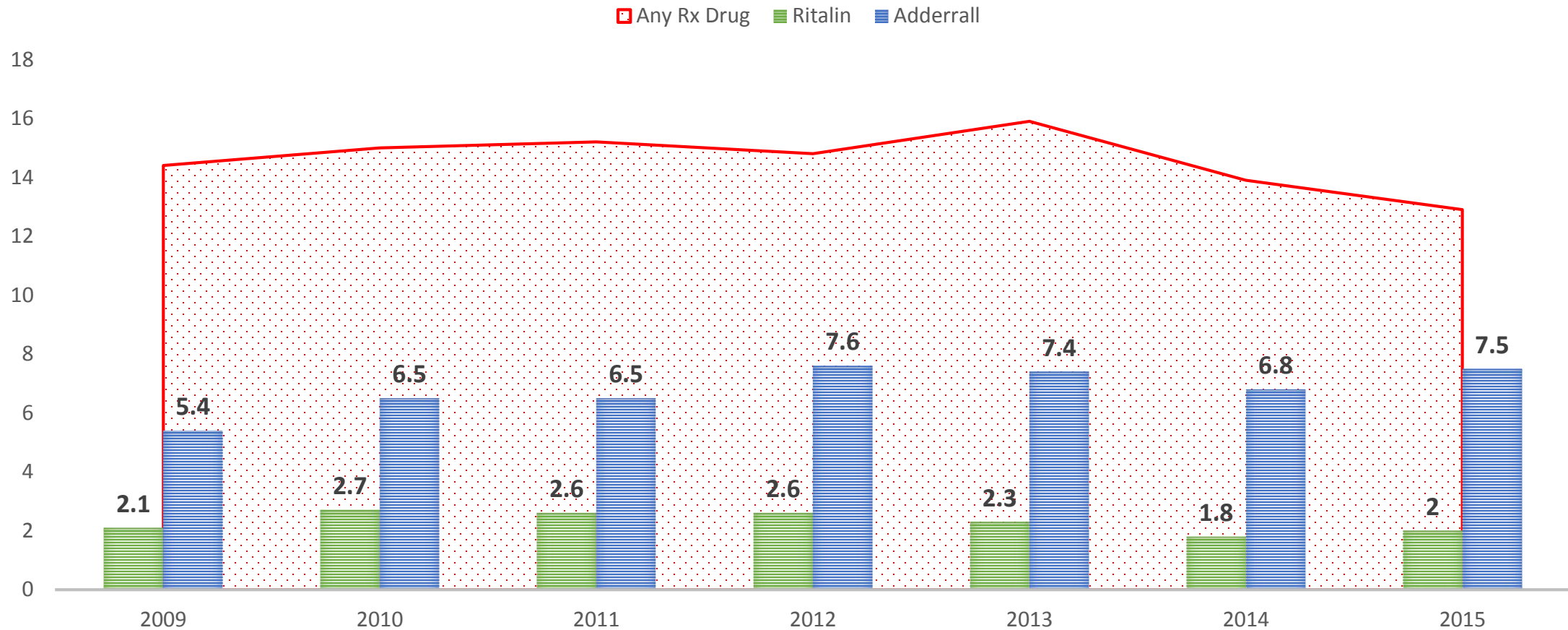
# The Issue is Persistent

- ADHD and stimulant medications carry lower stigma:
  - Federally controlled substances
  - Have legitimate use, not considered “street drugs”
  - Made in safe locations (factories)
  - Prescribed by medical professionals
  - Taken by peers with ADHD diagnosis to achieve effects
  - Easy to obtain
  - Taken for the “right reasons”
  - Pervasive, “everyone is doing it”

# Monitoring the Future Data Prescription Drug Use: 12<sup>th</sup> Grade



# MTF Data - ADHD/Stimulant vs. Any Rx 12<sup>th</sup> Grade - Annual Prevalence

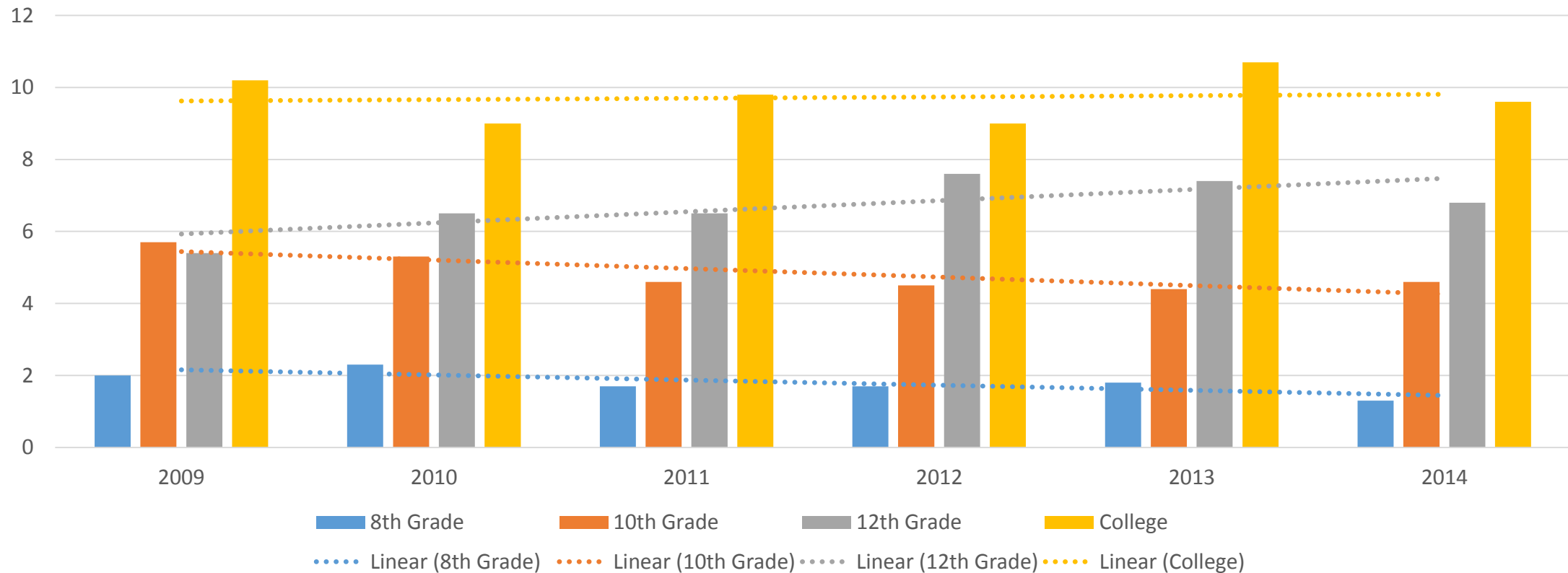


# Monitoring the Future Data Summary: 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Misuse

- About 1 in 5 senior high school students report having misused at least one prescription medication in their lives
- In the past year, prevalence drops to 14-17%, and ADHD/stimulant misuse represents approximately half of that use
- In the past 10 years, there has been a downward trend in prescription drug misuse

# Monitoring the Future Data 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, College Data

Annual Prevalence, Adderall Misuse



# NCHA Data on College Misuse: ADHD/Stimulant vs. Any Rx Misuse

- NCHA Data, Executive Summary [n = 19,681]
- In 2015, 5.7% of college students indicated they misused ADHD/Stimulant medications in the past year
- In 2015, 10.7% of college students indicated they misused one or more prescription medications in the past year
- Undergraduates more likely than graduate students (Stimulant annual prevalence 6.1% [n = 16,670] vs. 3.2% [n=2,665])
- Down from 2014 data
- Very different from MTF data

# **What we Know About ADHD Medication Misuse - Harris Poll Survey**

Coalition for the Prevention of ADHD Medication Misuse

# Research Objectives

- Measure college students' awareness of ADHD prescription medication and its misuse
- Gauge college students' perceptions of ADHD prescription medication misuse
- Assess college students' potential motivations for misusing ADHD prescription medication
- Evaluate how different segments of the college student population vary in their views on ADHD prescription medication misuse
- Results of this research are intended for public release and to inform the actions of CPAMM and our supporters
  - For the purpose of this survey, misuse refers to any time the medicine is used in a way that is different from the doctor's instructions and could include people who do not have a prescription for the medication but obtain it and use it, and people who have a prescription but do not use it as directed by their health care provider.



# Research Method

- Online survey conducted May 15 – June 11, 2014
- Survey length = approx. 20 minutes
- n=2,056 U.S. college students, including n=164 diagnosed with ADHD
  - 18-24 years old, enrolled and seeking a degree at a 4-year college or university and attending at least some in-person classes between January – June 2014
  - Sample included full-time (91%) and part-time (9%) students, living in a range of housing situations (e.g., on-campus, off-campus, with parents, etc.)
- Data weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region and propensity to be online to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population
- Statistical significance testing was conducted at the 95% level of confidence

# Harris Poll Survey: Key Findings

- A majority of college students are familiar with ADHD prescription stimulant misuse and agree that it is unethical to take ADHD prescription stimulants that were not prescribed
  - However, approximately 4 in 10 agree that using ADHD prescription stimulants without a prescription is no more harmful than an energy drink or strong cup of coffee



# Harris Poll Survey: Insights and Implications

- **Insight:**

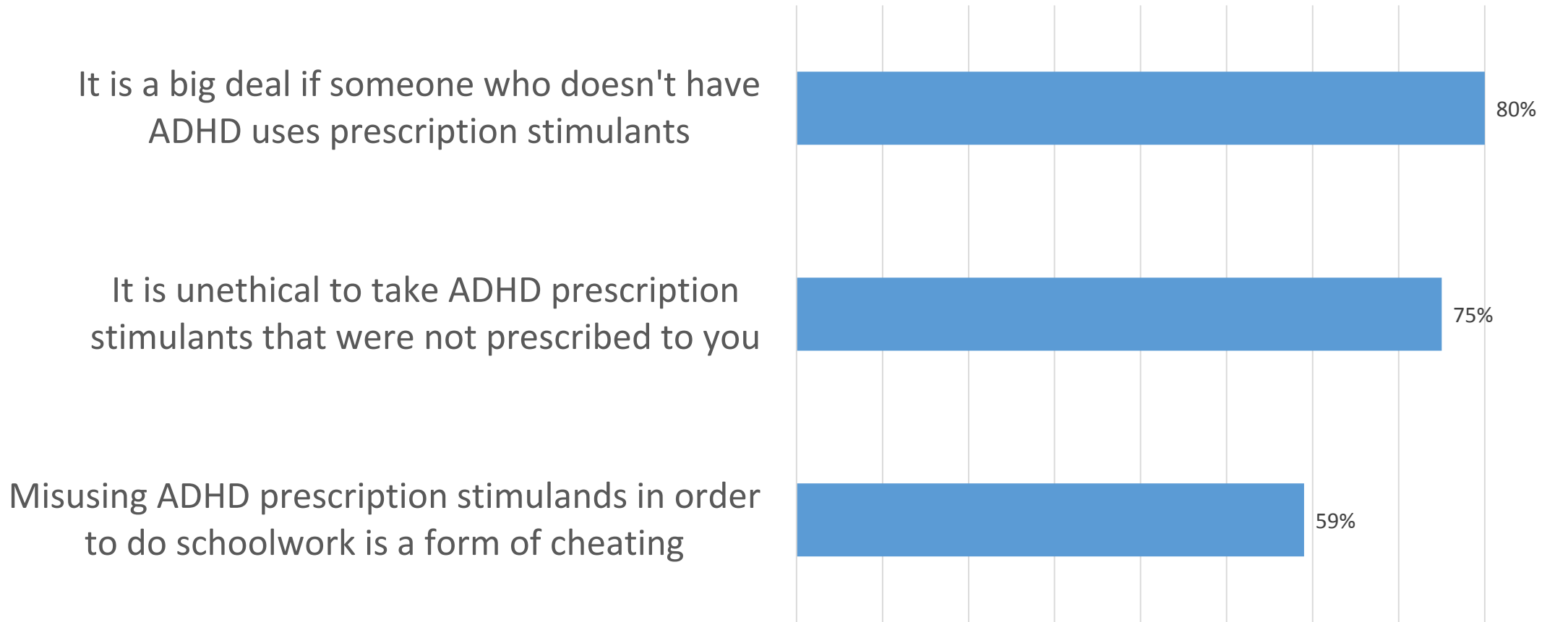
Almost half of students equate the harmfulness of misuse to that of an energy drink or strong cup of coffee – and three-quarters believe that at least some students have misused

- **Implications:**

Identify peer-to-peer tactics to address the social norming of the issue

Communicate to physicians their role in conveying the significant medical and legal consequences of misuse, abuse and diversion of ADHD stimulant medication

# Harris Poll Survey: Key Findings



# Harris Poll Survey: Insights and Implications

- **Insight:**  
College students consider misuse to be harmful and unethical
- **Implication:**  
Leverage this belief through the power of positive peer-to-peer influence by developing programs, tools, and tactics that aim to affect attitudes toward misuse and ultimately the behavior of those who misuse or would consider misusing

# Harris Poll Survey: Key Findings

- College students believe it's easy for non-ADHD students to obtain ADHD prescription stimulants
  - Most cite friends with prescriptions as a likely source, and almost half believe college students who misuse get them from a health care professional by pretending to have ADHD



# Harris Poll Survey: Insights and Implications

- **Insight:**

Most believe friends with prescriptions are a likely source for misusers, and half believe students who misuse get ADHD prescription stimulants from a healthcare professional by pretending to have ADHD

- **Implication:**

Provide resources, tools, and tactics to physicians in order to leverage their power as a key influencer to both the prescribed and to potential misusers

# Harris Poll Survey: Key Findings

48% believe that college students who misuse are just doing what they have to do to keep up with the pressures of college.

- College student perceive peers to misuse ADHD/stimulant medications to
  - Stay awake to study or do schoolwork (80%)
  - Improve their concentration (72%)
  - Stay awake to be able to work at their paid job (52%)
  - Stay awake to go to parties, clubs, etc. (41%)
  - Stay awake for some other reason (39%)



# Harris Poll Survey: Key Findings

## Attitudes About the Pressure of Academics and Stress

- **64%** of students report “I would do anything to get an A”
- **39%** of students report “I struggle to keep up with my school work”
- **29%** of students report “I will do whatever it takes to succeed academically, even if I have to break the rules”

43%

believe that using ADHD prescription stimulants can help college students get better grades even if they don't have ADHD

# Harris Poll Survey: Insights and Implications

- **Insight:**

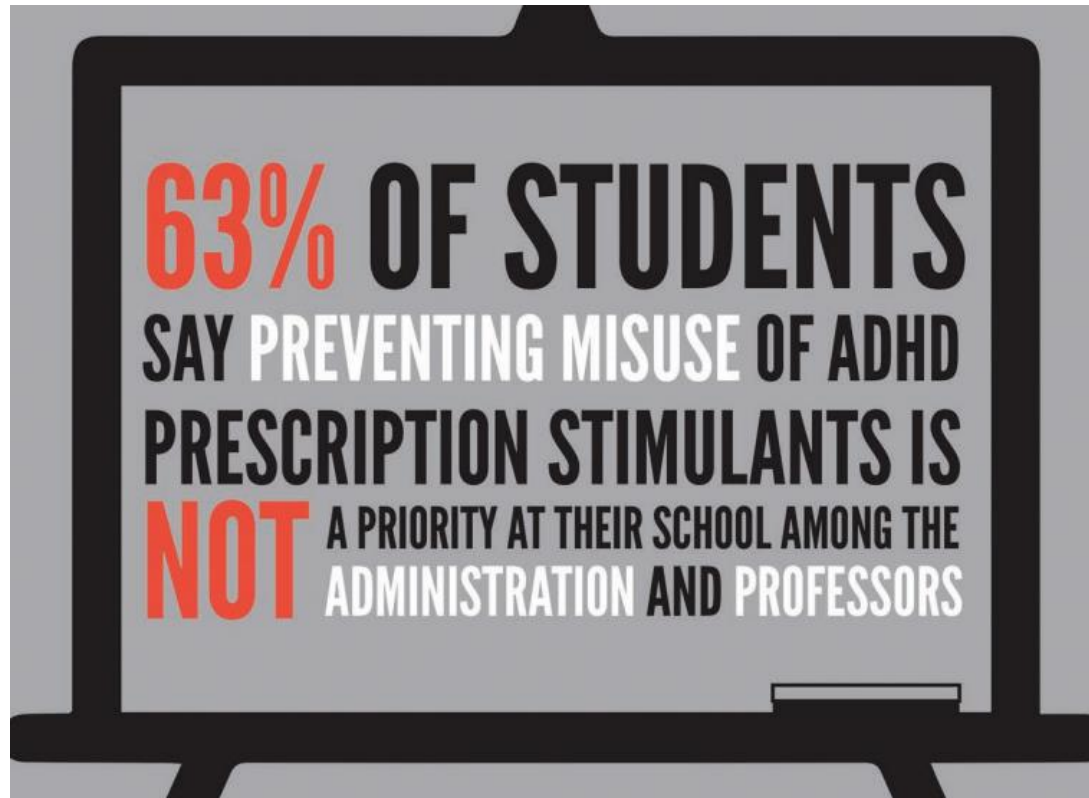
College students are busy and feel stressed – and ADHD prescription stimulant misuse is seen by many as a way to keep up

- **Implications:**

Encourage college administrators, teachers, and other key influencers (e.g., parents) to address the stress of day-to-day college pressures by helping students adopt healthy, lifelong coping skills

Communicate to students that using ADHD prescription stimulants does not guarantee better grades, nor is it a long-term solution for dealing with academic stress

# Harris Poll Survey: Key Findings



- A majority of college students believe that preventing misuse is not a priority at their school and that administration and professors are not aware of misuse on campus

# Harris Poll Survey: Insights and Implications

- **Insight:**

A majority of students report that preventing misuse is not a priority at their school and that the administration and professors are not aware of misuse on campus

- **Implication:**

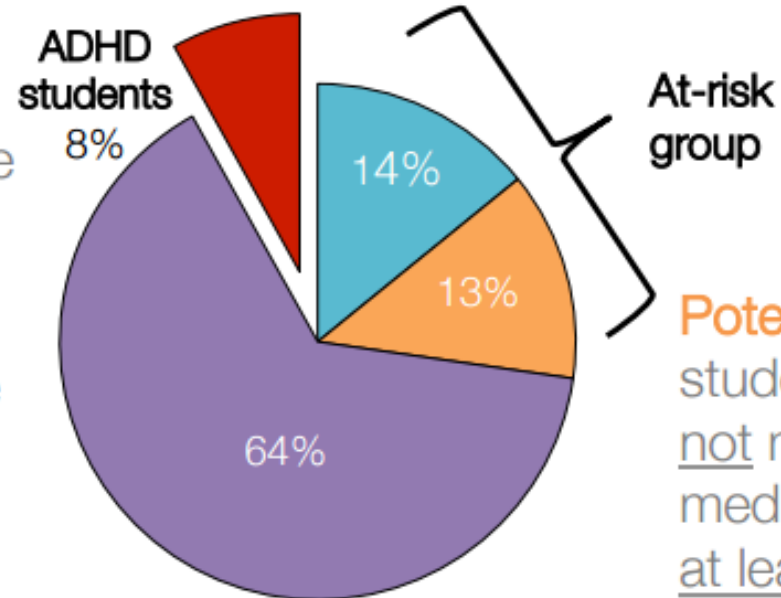
Communicate to college administrators the significance of making their stance on the issue known. Provide resources to administrators on how to effectively communicate their position to students and staff, including examples of policy initiatives

# Harris Poll Survey: Key Findings

## College Students At-Risk for Misuse

**Past Misusers** are college students who say they have used any prescription medications not prescribed to them in the past school year

**Unlikely Misusers** are college students who say they have not misused prescription medications and say they are not at all likely to misuse ADHD prescription stimulants



**Potential Misusers** are college students who say they have not misused prescription medications, but say they are at least somewhat likely to misuse ADHD prescription stimulants

# Harris Poll Survey: Insights and Implications

- **Insight:**

Students diagnosed with ADHD are less likely to view misuse as harmful and more likely to say it is acceptable to share or even sell ADHD prescription stimulants

- **Implications:**

Reach ADHD students to better inform their perception of the issue, including ethical, legal, and medical consequences of misuse, abuse, and diversion.

Instill a greater sense of responsibility in ADHD students to not divert their supply

# Key Findings

- College students diagnosed with ADHD are less likely to view others their age using ADHD prescription stimulants not their own as harmful and more likely to say it is acceptable for a college student with ADHD to share or even sell ADHD prescription stimulants
  - Nearly half of ADHD college students with a prescription feel pressure to share or sell their ADHD prescription stimulant medication

# Harris Poll Survey: Insights and Implications

- **Insight:**

Nearly half of ADHD students with a prescription feel pressure to share or sell their medication

- **Implication:**

Provide support to ADHD students to help them feel empowered to say no when peers approach them for their medication



# Say Something Campaign

- Campaign aimed at key influencers such as physicians, administrators and athletic coaches/trainers
- Encourages conversation with college students to inform them about the consequences of misuse
- Campaign content will drive to specific resources tailored to each influencer group

**COLLEGE IS THE PLACE TO TRY NEW THINGS, LIKE YOUR ROOMMATE'S MEDICATION.**

**Silence says things you never would.**

Unless you speak up, college students may think it's okay to misuse ADHD prescription stimulant medication to cram for exams or write papers overnight. In fact, almost half of students (48%) believe those that misuse ADHD prescription stimulants are just doing what they have to do to keep up with the pressures of college. But there are no shortcuts. And with 63% of students agreeing the prevention of ADHD prescription stimulant medication misuse isn't a priority among administration and the professors at their school, now is the time to tell them what silence never will.

Say something. Learn how at [CPAMM.org/collegeadmin](http://CPAMM.org/collegeadmin)

**CPAMM**  
THE COALITION TO PREVENT ADHD MEDICATION MISUSE

To learn more about the survey results, visit [CPAMM.org](http://CPAMM.org)

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# What Can You Do?

- Go to [CPAMM.org](http://CPAMM.org) to learn more about the issue, what influencers like you can do, the Say Something Campaign and to access downloadable resources
- Share the facts about misuse and raise awareness by talking to campus and student leaders about the issue
- Join the Friends of CPAMM email list to learn more about new peer-to-peer programming and other important initiatives in 2016 and beyond
- Contact CPAMM to discuss other opportunities to collaborate

**[WWW.CPAMM.ORG](http://WWW.CPAMM.ORG)**

# Questions/Discussion

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