

Behavioral Health Action Team

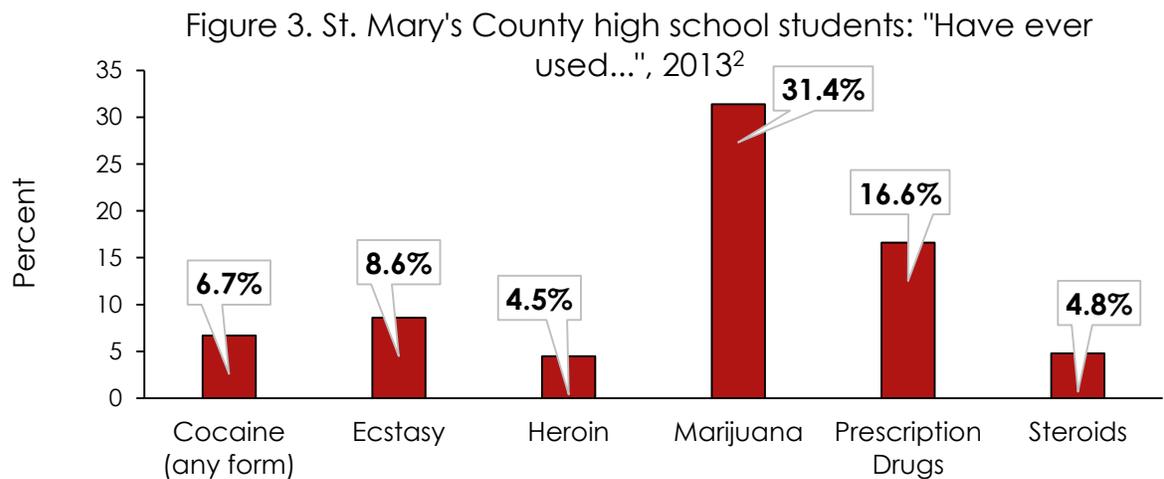
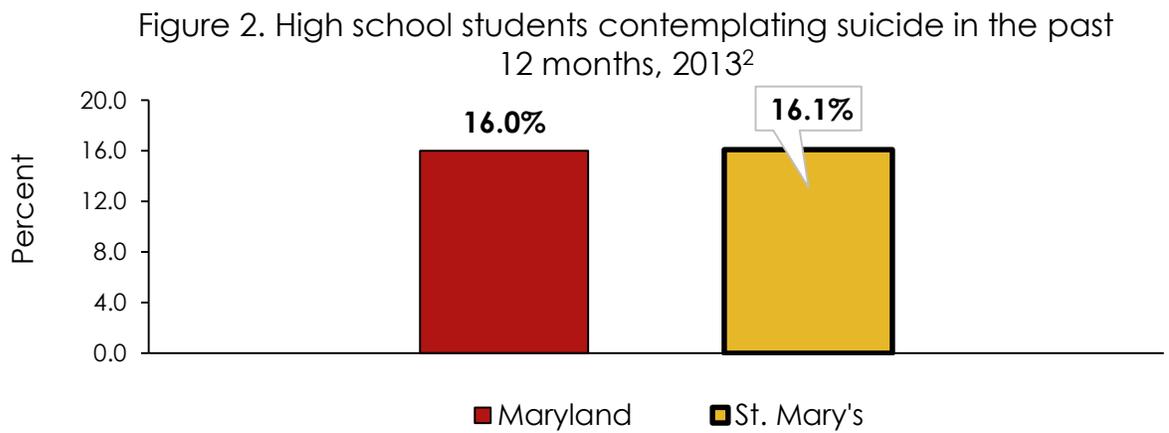
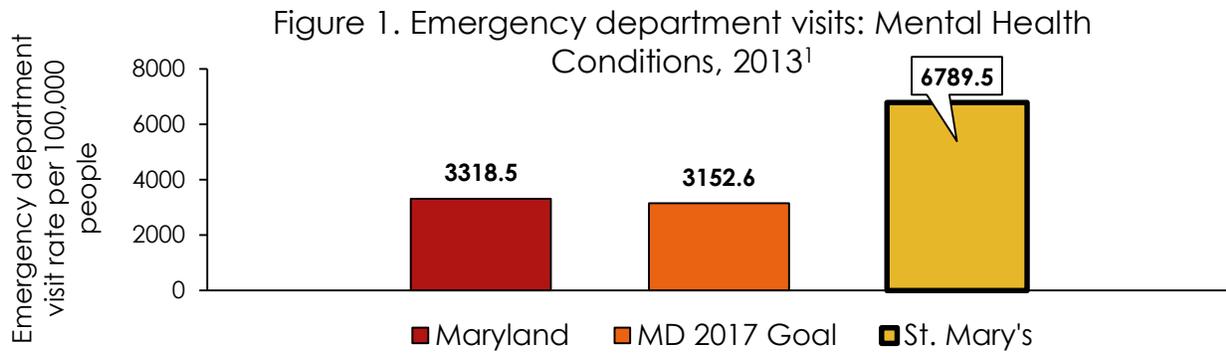
The Behavioral Health Action Team (BHAT) of the Healthy St. Mary's Partnership is dedicated to improving behavioral health outcomes in St. Mary's County, including those related to mental health and substance abuse prevention and control. Mental health and physical health are closely linked. Mental health status influences a person's ability to maintain good physical health. Illnesses such as depression and anxiety may affect people's ability to participate in health-promoting behaviors. Conversely, problems with physical health, such as chronic diseases, may impact mental health and decrease a person's ability to participate in treatment and recovery. A variety of organizations and individuals are working together to collaboratively implement evidence-based strategies that will improve behavioral health for all St. Mary's County residents. **Visit healthystmarys.com to learn more about this and other Healthy St. Mary's Partnership action teams.**

Selected objectives and indicators:

While numerous behavioral health issues are being addressed in the Healthy St. Mary's 2020 Plan, three objectives with associated indicators are presented here:

- Mental health problems can place a heavy burden on the healthcare system, particularly when persons in crisis use emergency departments instead of other sources of care when available. Reducing the rate of emergency department visits related to behavioral health conditions will be an indicator of successful implementation of many of the team's evidence-based strategies to support those with behavioral health needs (Figure 1).
- In Maryland, suicide is the third leading cause of death among teens ages 15–19. Reducing the percentage of high school students who seriously considered attempting suicide is one of several objectives addressing the needs of adolescents in St. Mary's County (Figure 2).
- Drug abuse among adolescents is a persistent challenge in St. Mary's County. BHAT is implementing multiple strategies to decrease illicit drug use by youth in the county (Figure 3).





1. Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission 2. Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey

