



# RHODE ISLAND DATA BRIEF

## Disability and Health Among High School Students in 2013

December 2013

### Introduction

**This brief describes demographic characteristics among high school students with disabilities<sup>1</sup> in Rhode Island. Indicators for health risk factors are compared among students with and without disabilities (see chart on reverse side). The brief is based on data from Rhode Island's 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS),<sup>2</sup> part of a biennial national survey of public high school students on the major causes of disease and injury morbidity and mortality. Only those health risk factors whose differences in values are statistically 'significant' at the 95% confidence level are described in the text.<sup>3</sup>**

### Demographics:

- Twenty-one percent of high school students in Rhode Island report having a disability.
- The prevalence of disability is higher among 9th/10th graders (53%) compared to 11th/12th graders (47%) and slightly higher among males (51%) compared to females (49%).

### Health Risk Factors:

- Fifty-nine percent of students with disabilities are not physically active compared to 52% of students without disabilities.
- Students with disabilities are more than three times as likely to be acutely depressed as their peers without disabilities (54% vs. 15%).
- Students with disabilities are more likely than their peers without disabilities to drink alcohol (41% vs. 29%), ride with a driver who drank alcohol (26% vs. 17%), try cigarettes (40% vs. 26%), and use marijuana (31% vs. 22%).
- Thirty-three percent of students with disabilities report being sexually active with one or more partners compared to 26% of students without disabilities.
- Students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to be bullied at school (33% vs. 13%) and electronically bullied (27% vs. 10%) as their peers without disabilities.
- Twenty-seven percent of students with disabilities engage in physical fighting compared to only 16% of their peers without disabilities.
- Students with disabilities are more likely to receive poor grades in school than their peers without disabilities (42% vs. 23%).

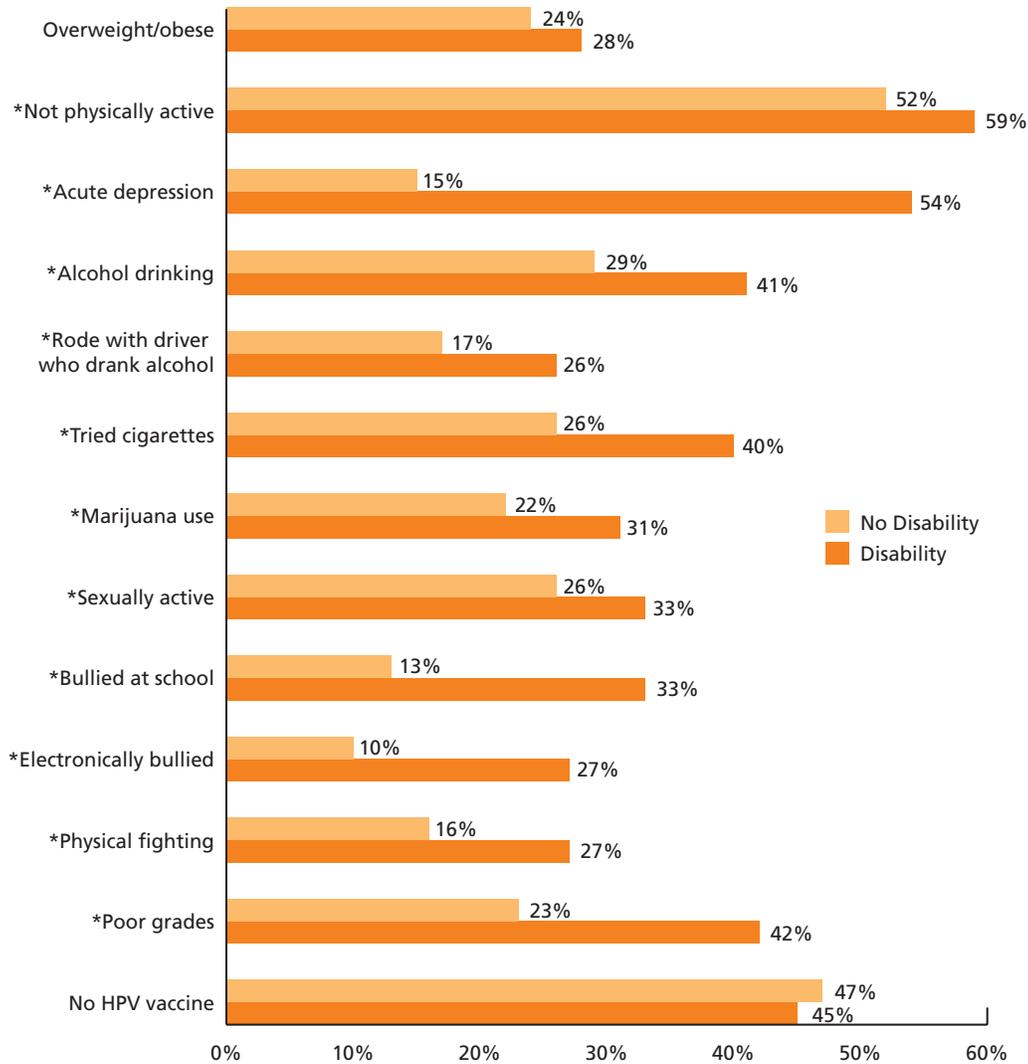
### KEY FINDINGS

Large disparities exist for Rhode Island high school students with disabilities compared to their peers without disabilities for many health risk factors including physical activity, acute depression, and drug use.



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## HEALTH RISK FACTORS BY DISABILITY STATUS, RHODE ISLAND, 2013



\*Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level

Overweight/obese (>85th percentile for body mass index); Not physically active (<60 min on 5+ days a week); Acute depression (sad 2 weeks in past 12 months); Alcohol drinking (1+ days, past month); Rode with driver who drank alcohol (1+ times); Tried cigarettes (ever); Marijuana use (1+ times, past month); Sexually active (1+ partner, past 3 months); Bullied at school (past 12 months); Electronically bullied (past 12 months); Physical fighting (1+ times, past 12 months); Poor grades (in school mostly C's, D's or F's); No HPV vaccine (ever)

<sup>1</sup> Definition of Disability: The YRBS included two screening questions that were asked of all survey respondents in order to identify high school students with disabilities:

- 1) Do you have any physical disabilities or long-term health problems? (Long-term means 6 months or more.)
- 2) Do you have any long-term emotional problems or learning disabilities? (Long-term means 6 months or more.)

Respondents were considered to have a disability if they answered 'yes' to either (or both) screening questions.

<sup>2</sup> For more information call the HEALTH Information Line at 401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711 or go to [www.health.ri.gov/data/youthriskbehaviorsurvey](http://www.health.ri.gov/data/youthriskbehaviorsurvey)

<sup>3</sup> As the RI-YRBS is a sample survey, if the 95% Confidence Intervals of two values do not overlap, one may conclude (with 95% certainty) there was a 'real' difference between the two values (i.e., the difference was not likely due to sampling bias).



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