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Media Contact:

HVCASA

69 Stony Hill Road, Bethel, CT 06801

Phone 203-743-7741

Fax 203-743-7317

Dirk Perrefort & Eileen Fitzgerald

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**Housatonic Valley Coalition Against Substance Abuse
CALLS FOR INCREASED INVESTMENT IN PREVENTION
IN RESPONSE TO 2009 MONITORING THE FUTURE SURVEY**

Marijuana Use Shows Signs of Increasing; Prescription Drug Abuse Continues Upward Trend

Washington, D.C. – The 2009 Monitoring the Future Survey, released Monday by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the University of Michigan, showed that while there were slight decreases in the use of cocaine and methamphetamine among youth, marijuana and prescription drug abuse showed no signs of slowing down. In fact, marijuana use among adolescents increased gradually over the past two years after years of declining use; and past year rates of Vicodin and OxyContin abuse increased during the last 5 years among 10th graders and remained unchanged among 8th and 12th graders.

Several drugs showed signs of increasing with attitudes softening for drugs such as marijuana, ecstasy, inhalants and LSD. For example, the percentage of 8th graders who view occasional marijuana use as potentially harmful dropped to 44 percent, compared to 48 percent last year. In addition, the perception of “great risk” associated with marijuana use declined among 8th and 10th graders.

“The 2009 Monitoring the Future survey aligns with the current data we have from our local youth. It shows that our teens still don’t understand the dangers of abusing prescription drugs, such as Vicodin and OxyContin; and they don’t realize the harm that marijuana use can cause,” said Allison Fulton, Executive Director at HVCASA. “Beliefs and attitudes about these drugs are going in the wrong direction. The decreases of perception of harm around marijuana and inhalants are especially concerning, as that often leads to an increase in use.

“HVCASA plays a critical role in addressing drug abuse in Northwestern Connecticut and in implementing strategies to change attitudes and availability. But we need to increase our investment in substance abuse prevention in order to make a dent in these problems. If we ever hope to reverse these trends, more people need to get the message that these drugs ruin lives. Our coalition needs the help of everyone in the community.”

HVCASA, Inc. is a coalition of volunteers and bare-bones staff dedicated to reducing alcohol, tobacco and other drug use in its service area-among youth, and over time among adults through community education, community mobilization, public awareness and advocacy. To learn more about HVCASA & the 2009 Monitoring the Future Survey visit www.hvcasa.org