



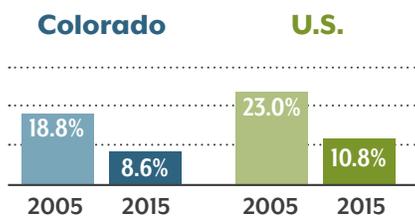
SNAPSHOT

TOBACCO

The earlier someone starts smoking cigarettes, the less likely they are to quit. In Colorado, 8.6 percent of high school students smoke cigarettes, slightly lower than the nationwide rate of 10.8 percent. The good news is Colorado's rate is less than half of what it was 10 years ago. But nearly one of three (30.3 percent) of Colorado high schoolers say they currently use some form of tobacco, either cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, cigars or smokeless tobacco.

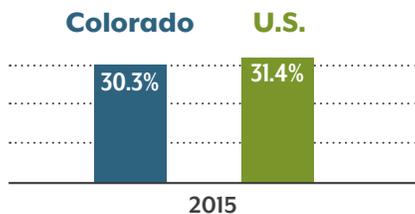
Rate of Cigarette Use:

Fewer high school students are smoking cigarettes in Colorado and nationally. Rates have more than halved in the last decade in Colorado and nationally.



Rate of Any Tobacco Use:

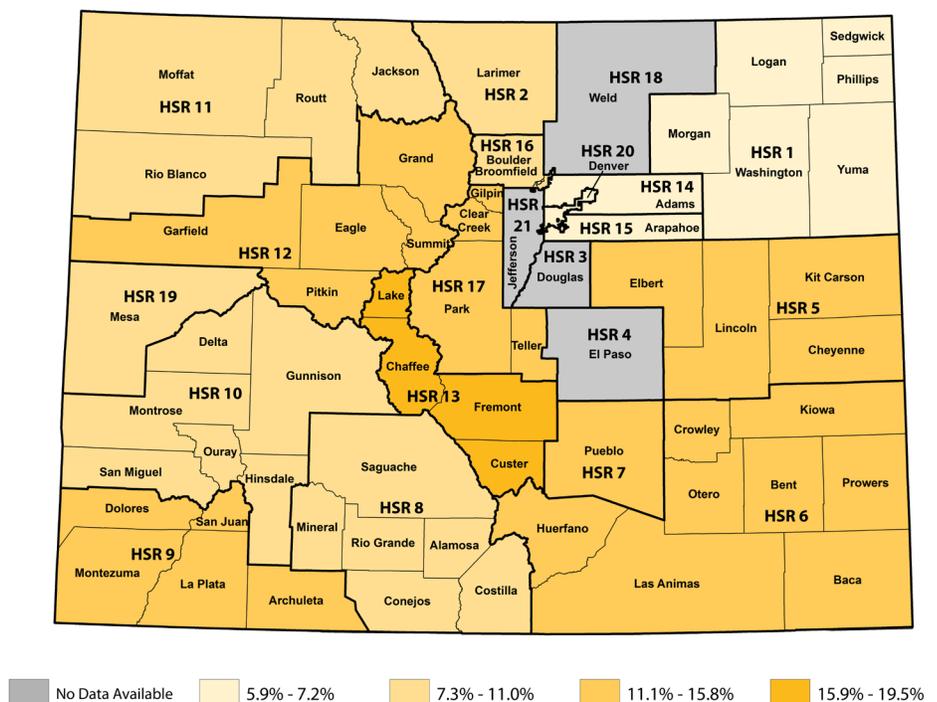
While the rate of current cigarette smoking is at a historic low, nearly one in three high school students in Colorado used a tobacco product in the last month, a trend mirrored nationally.



Colorado Youth: Who's Most Likely to Smoke Cigarettes?

One of five high school students in the Upper Arkansas Valley (19.6 percent) smoke cigarettes, the state's highest rate and more than double the state average. High school students in the Mountain Gateway counties, Pueblo County and the Eastern Plains counties smoke at higher rates as well.

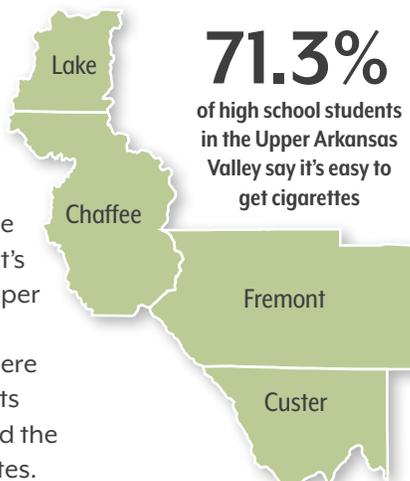
Percentage of High Schoolers Who Have Smoked Cigarettes on One or More of the Past 30 Days



Access

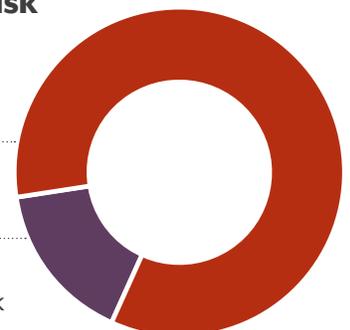
More than half of high school students

(57 percent) say it's easy to get cigarettes. The state's highest rate of high school students who say it's easy to get cigarettes is in the Upper Arkansas Valley counties of Lake, Chaffee, Fremont and Custer, where it's 71.3 percent. This region reports both highest use of cigarettes and the highest ease of access to cigarettes.



Perception of Risk

The majority of high school students (**84.3 percent**) think smoking is risky, but this still means that **15.7 percent** don't think frequent cigarette smokers risk harming themselves. That percentage is holding steady.





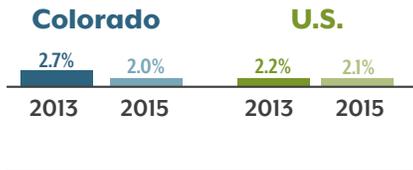
SNAPSHOT

OPIOIDS

The rate of heroin use among high schoolers remains at a steady two percent — on par with the national average. But expanding the age group to include all Coloradans, beginning with 12-year-olds, reveals that the rate of heroin use is increasing rapidly while the rate of prescription opioid use has leveled off. The same trends are seen in overdose death rates. Heroin overdose death rates are skyrocketing in Colorado even as prescription opioid death rates level off, perhaps a sign of progress in the battle against the misuse of prescription drugs.

Rate of Youth Heroin Use:

Two percent of high school students in Colorado report using heroin at least once — a slight decrease from 2013. Pueblo leads the state at 6.3 percent with Denver second at 4.8 percent, both higher than the state average.



Heroin Use Rising, Prescription Opioid Use Steady:

The rate of heroin use among Coloradans 12 and older quintupled from 20 per 100,000 Coloradans in 2003 to 100 per 100,000 Coloradans in 2014. However, the rate of prescription opioid use (pain relievers) has stayed relatively steady since 2007 at about 450 per 100,000 Coloradans in 2014.



of heroin users reportedly started their opioid use with prescription pain relievers.

Fentanyl Overdose Rate:

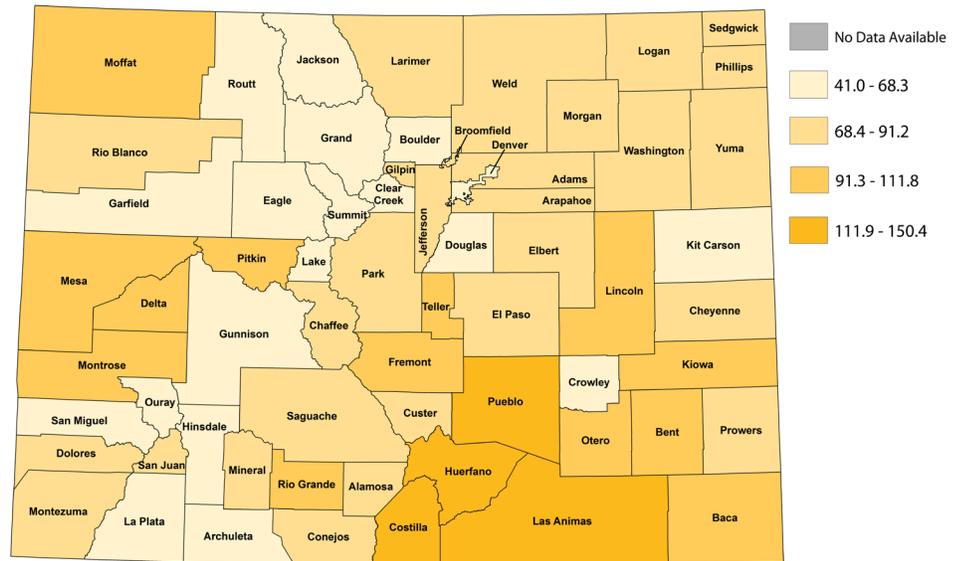
Fentanyl-related overdose deaths shot up ninefold between 1999 and 2016. Nearly 50 Coloradans died from overdosing on fentanyl in 2016



Access to Prescription Opioids: Prescribing Rates Highest in Southeast Colorado, Pueblo.

Colorado averages 76.2 opioid prescriptions for each 100 Coloradans. Counties in southeastern Colorado including Costilla, Huerfano, Las Animas, Pueblo and Otero all have opioid prescribing rates of more than 111 prescriptions per 100 people. Costilla County recorded 150 prescriptions per 100 residents, nearly double the state average.

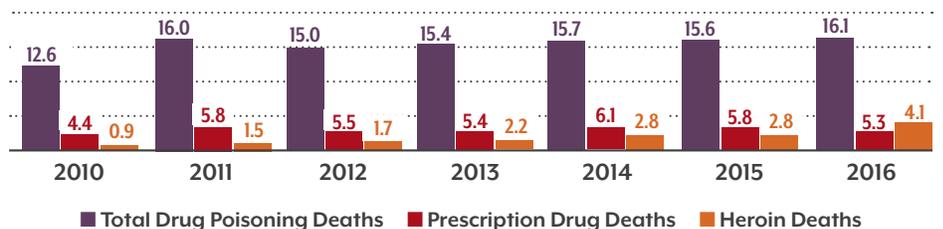
Rate of Opioid Prescriptions Per 100 Colorado Residents, 2016



Heroin Overdose Deaths Climbing, Prescription Opioid Deaths Leveling Off

Colorado has seen a slight downtick in the rate of prescription opioid-related overdose deaths, which stood at 5.3 deaths per 100,000 in 2016. However, the rate of heroin overdose deaths is on the rise — more than quadrupling between 2010 and 2016, when they reached 4.1 per 100,000. Heroin overdose deaths account for 25 percent of all drug poisoning deaths in 2016, up from 18 percent in 2015.

Opioid Overdose Death Rates per 100,000





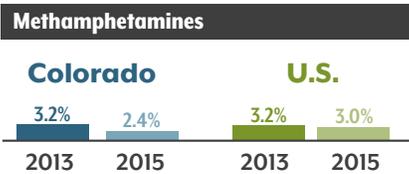
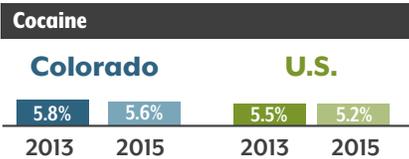
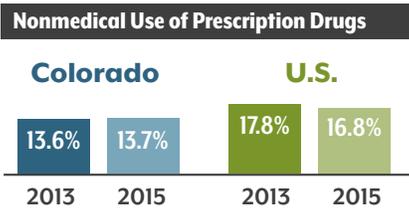
SNAPSHOT

ILLICIT SUBSTANCES

Colorado is about average nationally when it comes to the use of cocaine, methamphetamines, ecstasy, prescription drugs and other illicit substances by high schoolers. Still, some regions of the state are seeing significantly higher rates of high school use. And, disturbingly, overdose deaths are rising among all ages.

Rate of Illicit Substance Use: Little Change From 2013 To 2015

Illicit drug use is on par with the national averages. Nonmedical prescription drugs are the illicit substance the state's high schoolers are most likely to use, with nearly one of seven reporting use at least once in their lives.



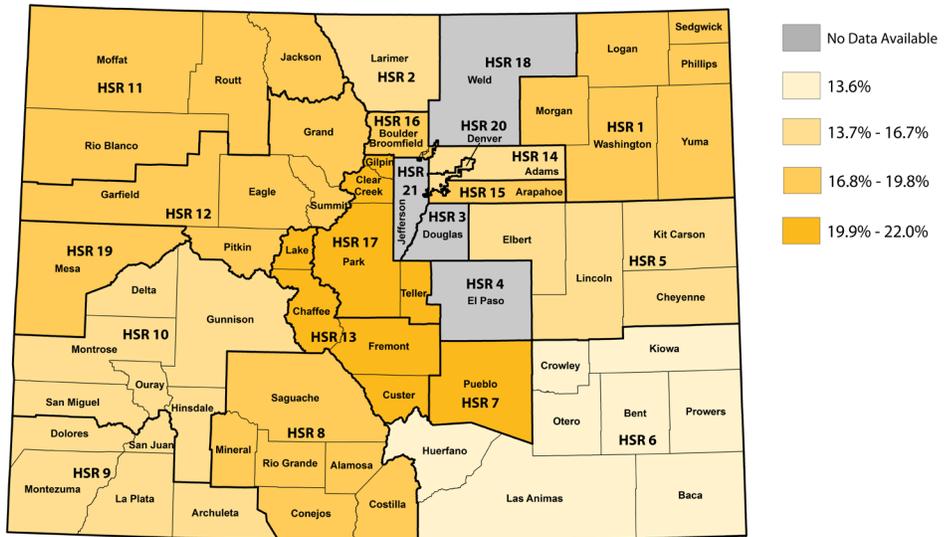
Pueblo and the Upper Arkansas Valley counties

of Fremont, Custer, Chaffee and Lake were in the highest quartile for cocaine, meth, ecstasy and prescription pills.

Youth Access to Drugs: Bigger Problem in Some Regions

The question: How easy is it to get cocaine, LSD, methamphetamines and other illicit drugs? The answer: It's easiest for high schoolers in the Upper Arkansas Valley counties of Custer, Fremont, Chaffee, Park, Lake, Clear Creek and Gilpin. One of five high schoolers there report that it's easy to obtain illicit drugs. Students there also report the state's the highest use of illicit drugs.

Percentage of Students Who Feel it Would Be Sort of Easy or Very Easy to Get Drugs Like Cocaine, LSD, Amphetamines If They Wanted

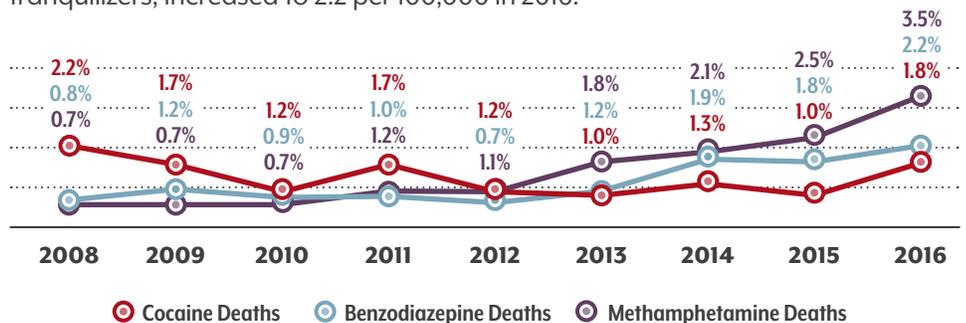


High school students report it would be easy to get ...

25.5% Prescription drugs without a prescription **17.3%** drugs like cocaine, LSD and amphetamines

Illicit Drug Overdose Rates, per 100,000 (All Ages)

Among illicit drugs, methamphetamines contribute to Colorado's highest overdose rate for all ages. The rate increased fivefold between 2010 and 2016 to 3.5 per 100,000 residents. The overdose death rate for benzodiazepines, or tranquilizers, increased to 2.2 per 100,000 in 2016.





SNAPSHOT

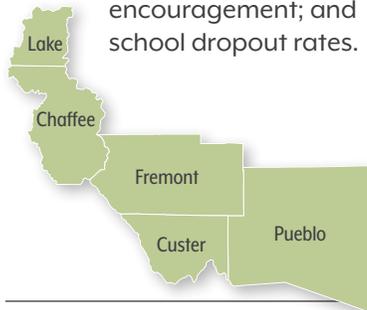
RISK FACTORS FOR SUBSTANCE USE

A person's risk of substance use can be influenced by many factors, including levels of social and emotional support, environmental surroundings, and mental health.

Studies show that youth with serious emotional problems are more likely to use substances and become dependent on them. Youth who lack supervision and supportive adults in their life also are more likely to use substances. These data help to illustrate the differences in risk factors across Colorado that may influence susceptibility to substance use among youth.

High-Need Areas

Pueblo County and the Upper Arkansas Valley counties rank among the state's worst regions for youth reporting difficulty with emotions; feeling sad or hopeless; having an adult to talk to; teacher encouragement; and school dropout rates.



Dropout Rates

Students who have dropped out of school have an elevated risk of substance use. Lake and Fremont counties, both in the Upper Arkansas Valley, share the state's highest dropout rate of 3.3 percent for students of any age.

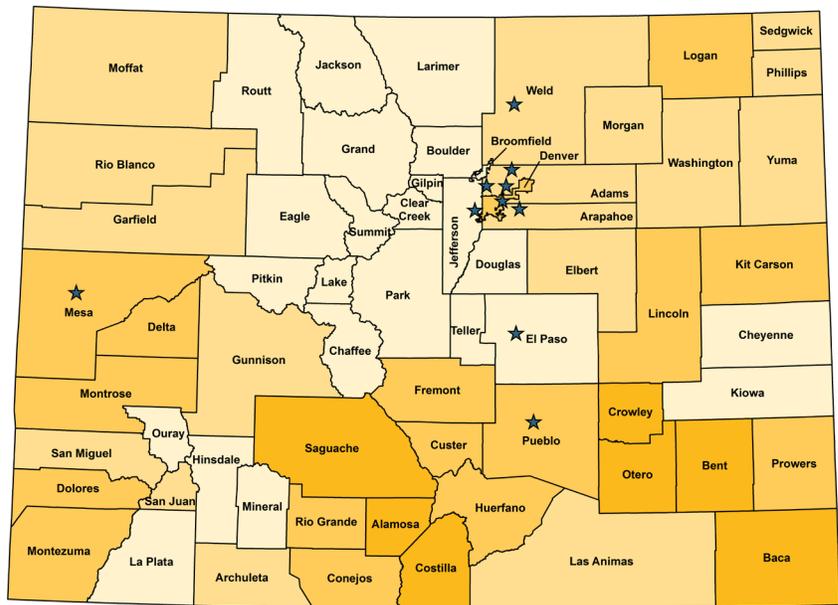
State average: 2.3 percent

1. **Lake** 3.3 percent
2. **Fremont** 3.3 percent
3. **San Juan** 3.2 percent
4. **Montezuma** 2.9 percent
5. **Saguache** 2.8 percent

Poverty and Violent Crime

Studies show that poverty and violent crime are associated with higher rates of substance use. Studies also show that impoverished neighborhoods tend to have higher rates of violent crime. Counties in the southeast area of the state have the highest percentage of households under the federal poverty level. In Crowley County, for example, nearly one of four households (23.5 percent) is in poverty. That's more than twice the state average of 11 percent. Violent crime, meanwhile, is highest in the city of Pueblo, with 9.8 violent crimes per 1,000 people, more than double the state average of 4.4 per 1,000 people. Denver comes in second with 6.6 violent crimes per 1,000 people. Six of the cities with the highest violent crime rates are in the Denver Metro Area.

Poverty and Violent Crime: Southeast Counties Highest Poverty – Pueblo, Denver Metro Area Highest in Crime



Percentage of Families in Poverty, by County

0.9% - 6.7% 6.8% - 10.9% 11.0% - 15.3% 15.4% - 23.5%

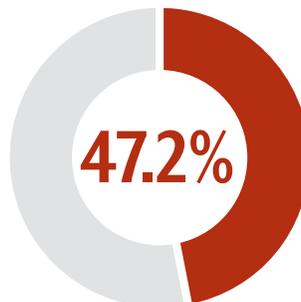
★ Top Ten Cities with Violent Crime

Social and Emotional Support

Nearly two out of five

Pueblo County high school students lack a supportive adult to go to with a serious problem.

Having a supportive adult and a supportive school and home environment can reduce the risk of substance use for adolescents.



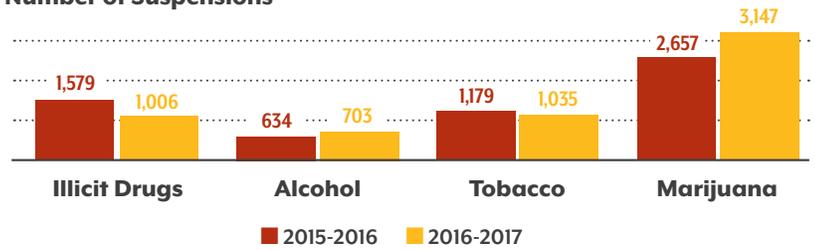
Less than half of students in Pueblo County think their teachers encourage and care about them. Similarly, the number for the Upper Arkansas Valley is 53.5 percent.

Both are below the state average of 60.9 percent.

K-12 Drug, Alcohol, Marijuana and Tobacco Suspensions

In the 2016-2017 school year, marijuana was the substance that resulted in the most suspensions at 3,147 — a noticeable increase from the previous year. Alcohol- and tobacco-related suspensions remained steady, while illicit drugs (other than marijuana) saw a decline from 1,579 suspensions to 1,006.

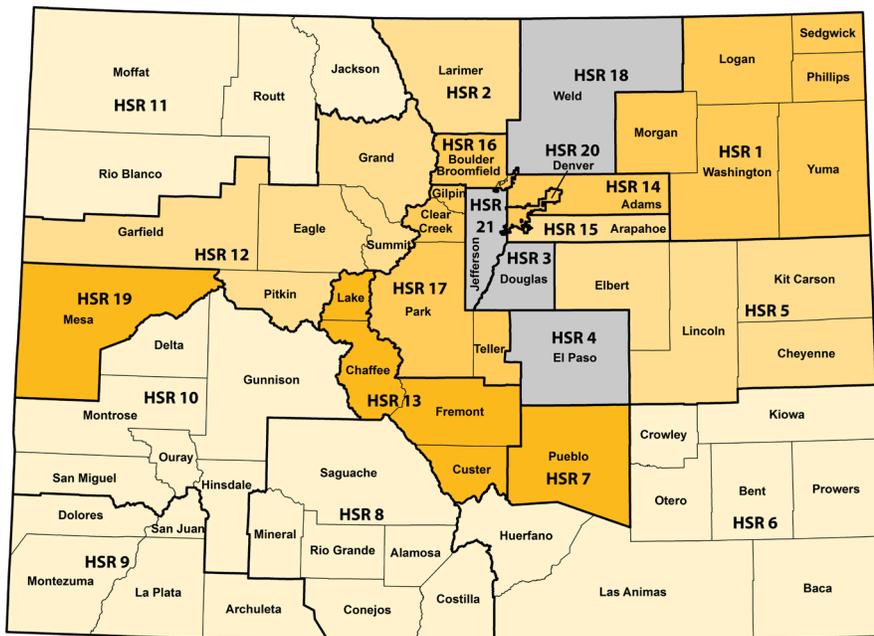
Number of Suspensions



Mental Health

Students who suffer from mental health issues are at greater risk for substance use. Mesa and Pueblo counties, along with counties in the southeast corner and the Upper Arkansas Valley, report the highest rates of children with emotional difficulties and high school students who were sad or hopeless for at least two weeks in a row in the past year.

High Schoolers Who Felt Sad or Hopeless Almost Every Day for Two Weeks or More in a Row



Highest Rates in the State

HSR 19 (Mesa)

37.8%

HSR7 (Pueblo)

34.5%

HSR 13 (Lake, Fremont, Chaffee, Custer)

34.2%

Statewide

29.5%



Difficulty with Emotions

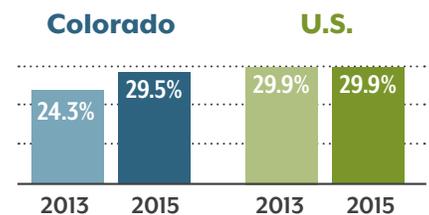


Nearly one of three

youth between ages one and 14 in Southeast Colorado counties have difficulties with emotions, concentration, or getting along with other people (31.7 percent). Those in the Upper Arkansas Valley rank second at about one of four (23.9 percent.) The statewide number is one of five (19.2 percent).

More Youth Reporting Symptoms of Depression

The percentage of students who reported that they felt sad or hopeless every day for two weeks or more in the last year increased by about five percentage points to 29.5 percent in 2015 from 24.3 percent in 2013. This compares with the national rate, which stayed the same between 2013 and 2015 at 29.9 percent.



About four of 10 (37.8 percent) high school students in Mesa County say they felt sad or hopeless every day for two weeks or more, the state's highest rate. The next highest rates are reported by high schoolers in Pueblo County (34.5 percent) and the Upper Arkansas Valley (34.2 percent).