

# NORTHEAST FLORIDA

## REGIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

# 2024



Prepared by :

COMMUNITY COALITION ALLIANCE (CCA) STAFF



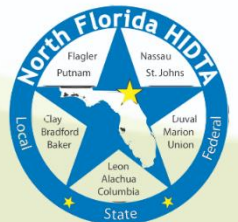
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NORTHEAST FLORIDA

REGIONAL

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

PREPARED BY COMMUNITY COALITION ALLIANCE (CCA) STAFF

REQUESTED BY LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA FUNDED BY THE FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

[www.ccafl.org](http://www.ccafl.org)

## ABOUT US & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2008, the Community Coalition Alliance (CCA) was developed in response to a request from a Federal Project Officer to meet as a group and provide mentoring to one another. CCA provides a forum for partnerships, community involvement and participation, and interagency cooperation and collaboration by focusing on the issues with data-driven decision-making, evidence-based strategies, and the risk and protective factors of youth. The group is comprised of members of community coalitions, who are made up of parents, teachers, law enforcement, businesses, religious leaders, health providers and other community activists who mobilize at the local level to make their communities safer, healthier, and drug-free.

Recognized locally and nationally as a prevention coalition (consortium), CCA has an established infrastructure using the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) process. This 5-step process, developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), provides CCA with the framework for their method of work. SPF is an on-going process of community assessment (needs and resources), capacity building, planning, implementation, and evaluation, all based on data, while considering cultural differences and sustainability. Florida began implementing the SPF process in 2004, under the Substance Abuse Response Guide (SARG) grant.

Assessment is the first step in the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as seen in [Figure 1](#) below. This collaborative Needs Assessment Report provides key information to assist in planning efforts for the Northeast Region. The information included within this report provides a summary of the data gathered to identify consumption and impact patterns, identify trends and data gaps, and bring attention to rising issues. This needs assessment will serve as a tool in future planning for prevention efforts in Northeast Florida and the state.

FIGURE 1: THE STRATEGIC PREVENTION FRAMEWORK



### THE STRATEGIC PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

**Assessment** defines the problem or the issue that a project needs to tackle i.e., Understand a population's needs, Review the resources that are required and available.

**Capacity** mobilizes human, organizational, and financial resources to meet project goals. Training and education are critical.

**Planning** involves the creation of a comprehensive plan with goals, objectives, and strategies aimed at meeting the substance abuse prevention needs of the community.

**Implementation** is focused on carrying out the various components of the prevention plan, as well as identifying and overcoming any potential barriers.

**Evaluation** helps organizations recognize what they have done well and what areas need improvement.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### MISSION:

To serve as a collective voice of community coalitions and partners working towards the health and wellness of all Floridians.

### VISION:

To support communities that work together to provide Floridians with a healthy, safe environment in which they can thrive.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all the **Community Coalition Alliance** members and partners who helped collect the data compiled in this report.

A special thank you to High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) and Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) Health Systems for supporting the efforts of the CCA coalitions and believing in our ability to reduce and prevent alcohol and other drug use in our communities.

Lastly, thank you to the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) for your ongoing support of prevention efforts in the Northeast Region and across the State of Florida.



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## NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Northeast Florida Regional Needs Assessment 2024 is prepared by the Community Coalition Alliance, LLC., sponsored through Lutheran Health Systems and the Florida Department of Children and Families, to highlight and assess needs and gaps related to substance use and mental health in the Northeast region of Florida.

This report will review general demographics and social determinants of health of the region, as well as in-depth data on substance use and mental health. Data presented in this report will be between the years 2016-2024 with the most recent data available being used to develop figures throughout. This report compares data at several different geographic levels including county, CCA service area, region, state, and national. Most data will be presented at the regional and state levels. Data is presented as percentages, rates, and counts based on the types of available data. For data sources see reference **pages 69 & 70**.

With substance use and mental health data it is important to note that data may not be representative of the entire population as samples may not be large enough to draw generalized conclusions. Nevertheless, data gathered and analyzed in this report can help communities to make informed decisions related to substance use and mental health based on current trends.

Below are a few key questions that will be answered throughout the report and reviewed in the discussion and recommendations section. These questions helped to guide the development of this report.

### Key Questions

HOW DOES THE NORTHEAST REGION OF FLORIDA COMPARE TO THE STATE FOR SUBSTANCE USE?

HOW HAVE SUBSTANCE USE TRENDS CHANGED OVER TIME FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS ACROSS VARIOUS SUBSTANCES IN THE NORTHEAST REGION OF FLORIDA?

WHAT ARE THE KEY RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR SUBSTANCE USE AND MISUSE SEEN IN THE NORTHEAST REGION OF FLORIDA?

WHO IS MOST AT RISK IN THE NORTHEAST REGION OF FLORIDA?

WHAT ARE THE MAIN IMPACTS OF SUBSTANCE MISUSE IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA?

DO COUNTIES IN THE NORTHEAST REGION OF FLORIDA WITH STUDENTS REPORTING HIGHER ACE SCORES HAVE HIGHER RATES OF YOUTH AND ADULT SUBSTANCE USE?

ARE THERE ENOUGH RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA?

IS THERE ENOUGH SURVEILLANCE GOING ON FOR THESE TOPICS AND HOW CAN THE DATA BE IMPROVED THROUGH LIVE DASHBOARD SOFTWARE?

AREA DESCRIPTION

NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL SUMMARY & DEMOGRAPHICS

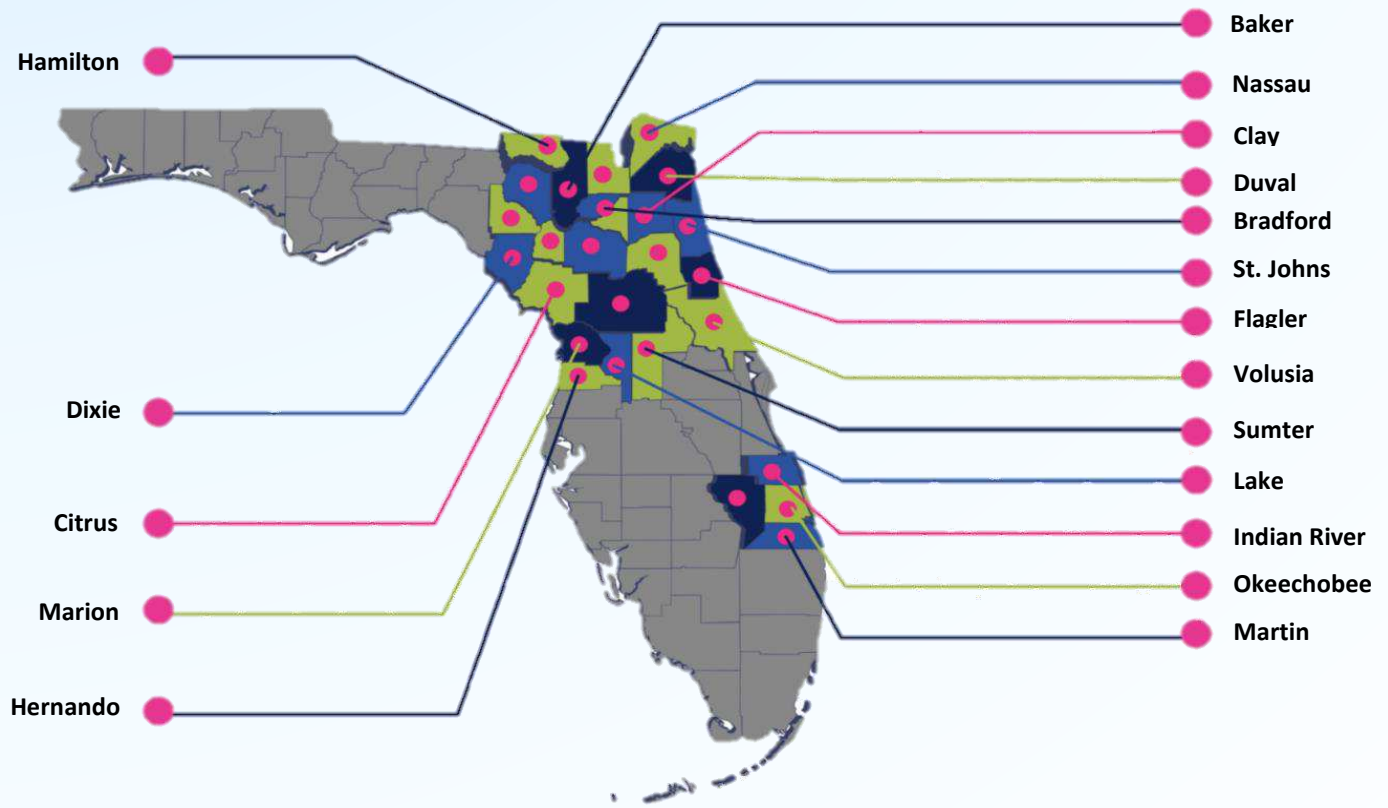
REGIONAL SUMMARY

According to the US Census Bureau (2023), Florida is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most populous state in the nation, with a population of 22.2 million. The state comprises of 50.8% females and 49.2% males, with 54.1% of the residents between the ages of 18-65. Florida is made up of 67 counties, including 23 counties in the Northeast region across 5 circuits:

- **Circuit 4:** Clay, Duval, and Nassau Counties
- **Circuit 3:** Hamilton, Suwannee, Columbia, Lafayette, and Dixie Counties
- **Circuit 8:** Levy, Gilchrist, Alachua, Baker, Bradford, and Union Counties
- **Circuit 5:** Marion, Citrus, Lake, Sumter, and Hernando Counties
- **Circuit 7:** Volusia, Flagler, Putnam, and St. John’s Counties

The **Community Coalition Alliance** supports 15 of the 23 county coalitions, as well as 3 counties in Southeast Florida. See map (Figure 2) below for counties served.

FIGURE 2: COMMUNITY COALITION ALLIANCE SERVICE AREA COUNTIES



(SOURCE: COMMUNITY COALITION ALLIANCE 2024)

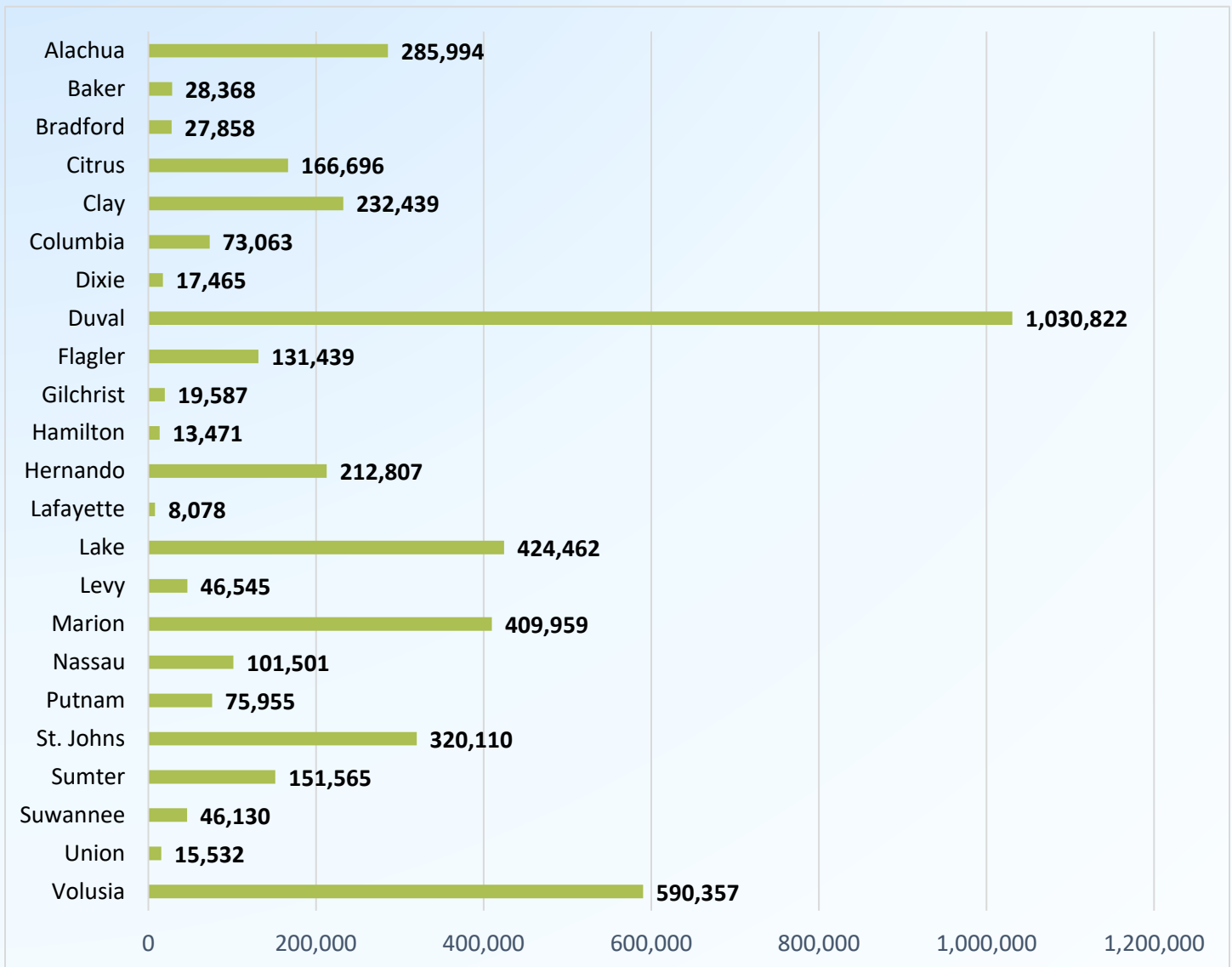


POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

As of 2022, the population of Northeast Florida was 4,430,203 residents, this is a 7% increase since the last Census was officially recorded in 2020, and a 25% increase since 2010. Duval County accounts for the largest portion of the region’s population of just 1,030,822 residents. While Lafayette County has the least number of residents in Northeast Florida, just over 8,000 as described in the most recent US Census data.

See population estimates as of July 1, 2023 (v2023) for each county in [Figure 3](#) below.

FIGURE 3: POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR NORTHEAST FLORIDA COUNTIES

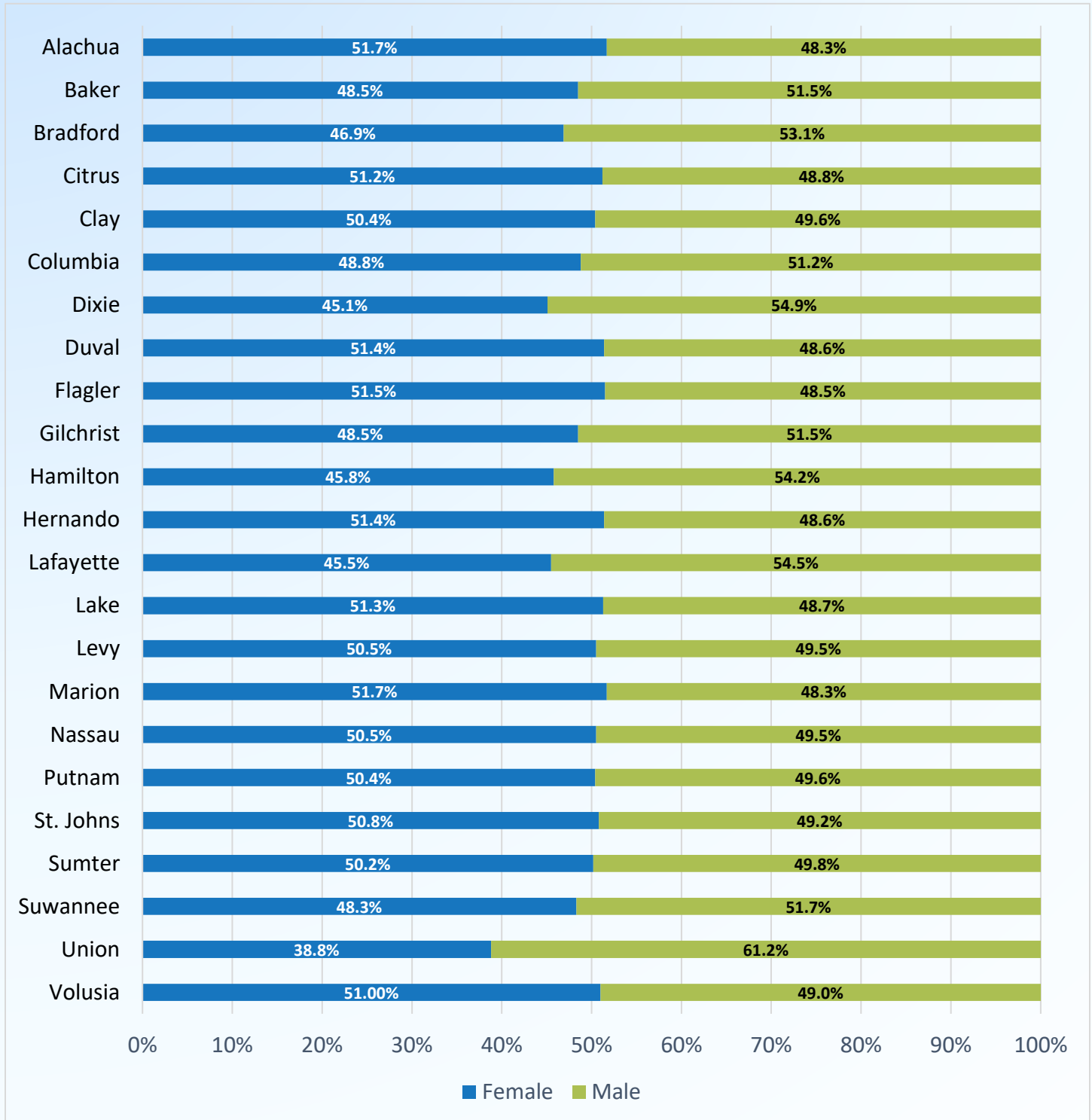


(SOURCE: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU V2023)

According to 2023 Census updates, most counties have experienced some increases since 2010. Clay (↑21.8%), Duval (↑19.3%), Flagler (↑37.4%), Lake (↑42.9%), Marion (↑23.7%), Nassau (↑38.4%), St. John’s (↑68.4%), Sumter (↑62.2%), and Volusia (↑19.4%) county have seen significant increases during this time.

The following figure (Figure 4) breaks down the Northeast Florida population by gender according to 2023 Census data. Counties are typically close in ranges between male and female except for Union County which had only 38.8% female population compared to a 61.2% male population in 2023.

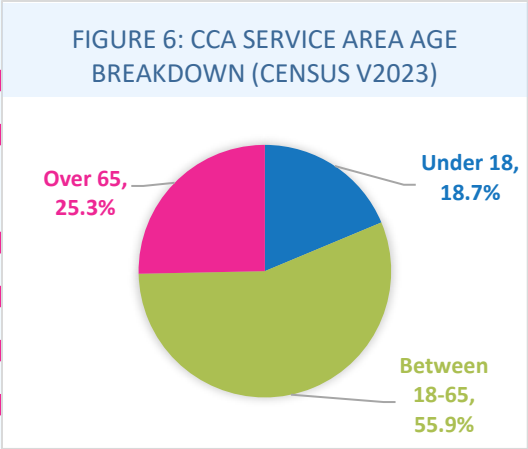
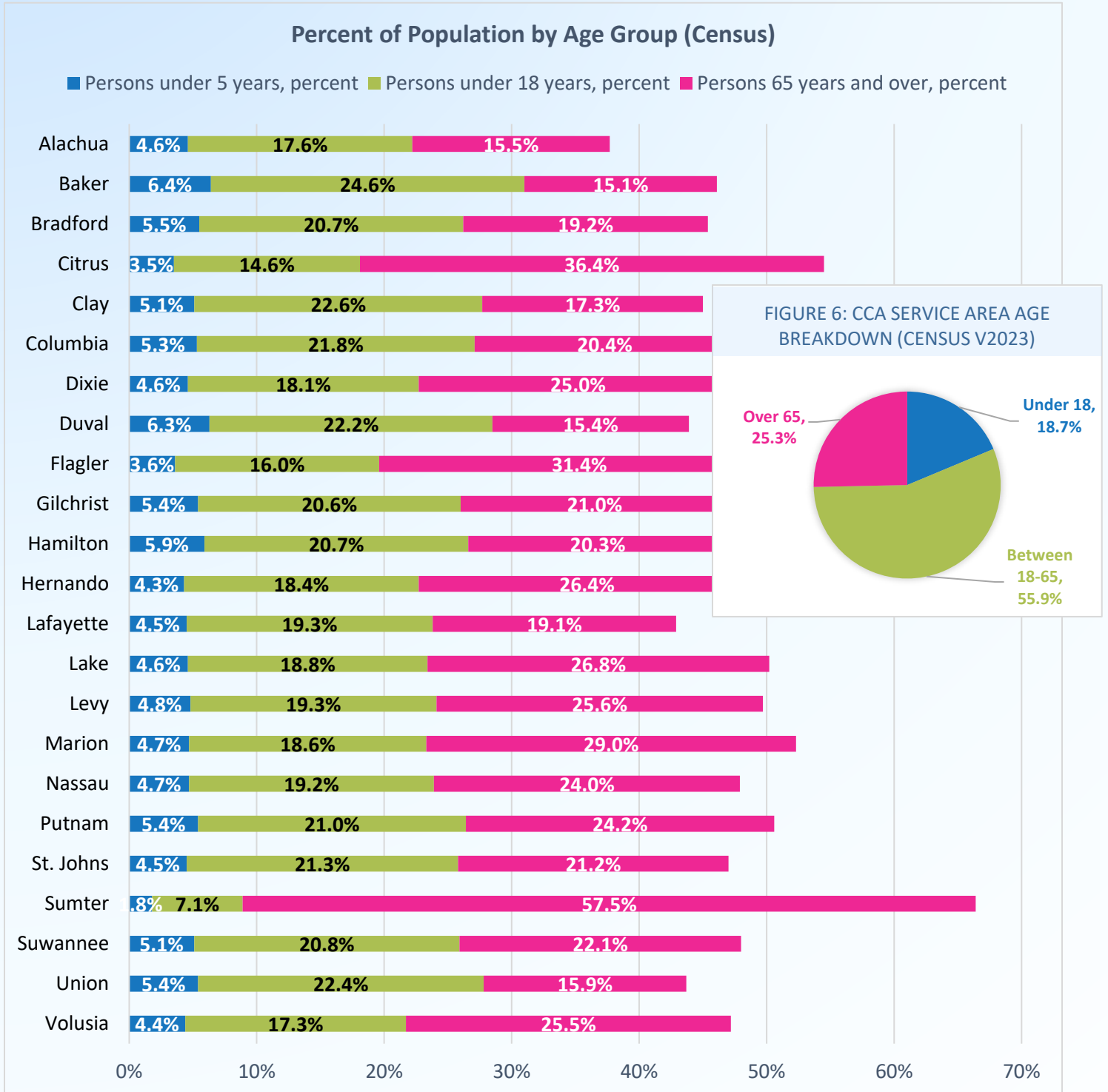
FIGURE 4: PERCENT OF POPULATION BY GENDER IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA COUNTIES



(SOURCE: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU V2023)

Figure 5 further breaks down demographics in Northeast Florida by examining percent of population by age group. Sumter County has the largest population of persons 65 years and over living in the county, followed by Citrus, and Flagler. Youth (persons under 18 years of age) account for 7-24% of all county populations, and children under 5 years account for 1-7%.

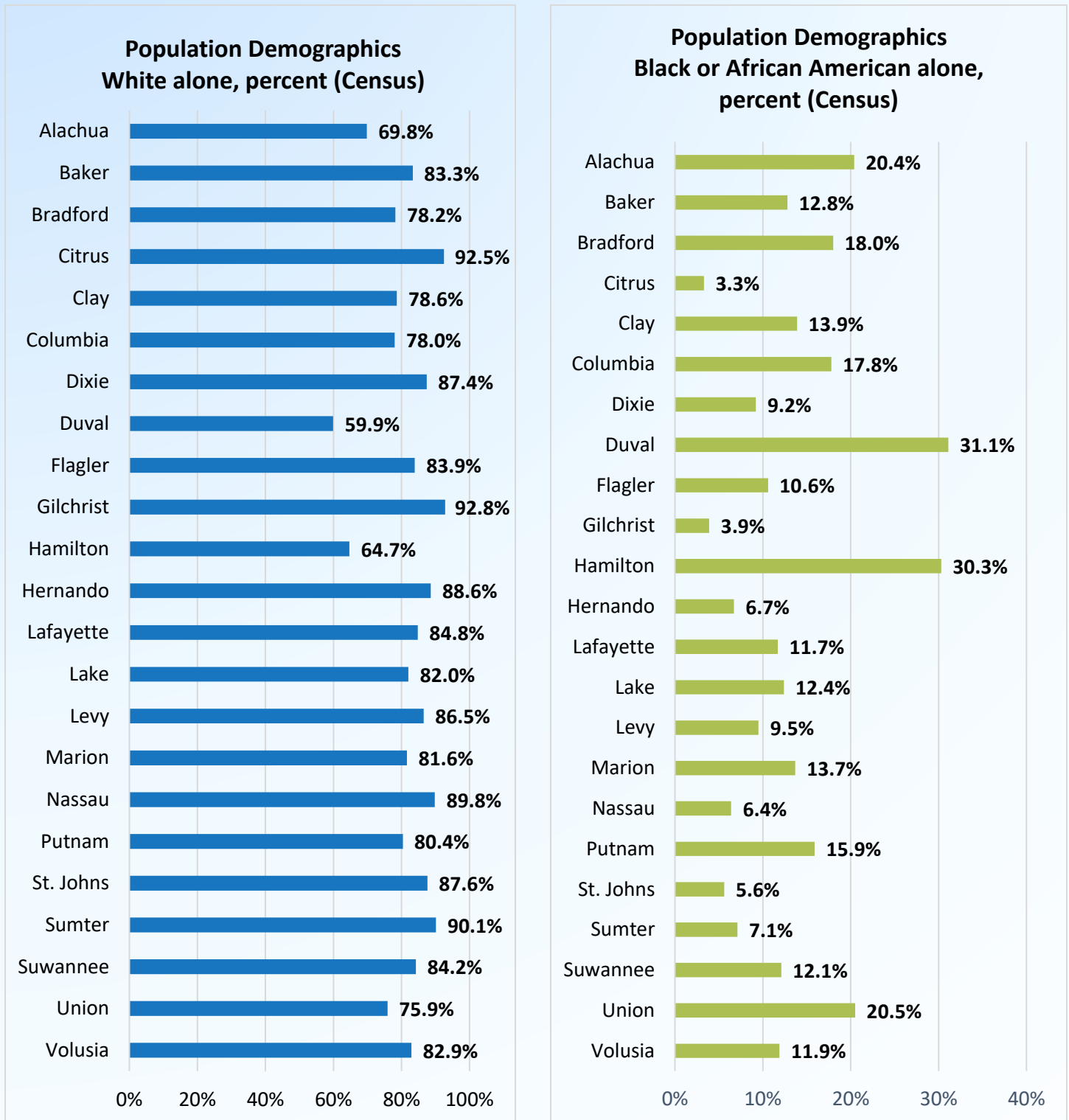
FIGURE 5: PERCENT OF POPULATION BY AGE GROUP IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA COUNTIES (CENSUS V2023)



(SOURCE: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU V2023)

The following figures show the percentage for demographics by race. [Figure 7](#) shows the white alone population, and [Figure 8](#) shows the black or African American alone population.

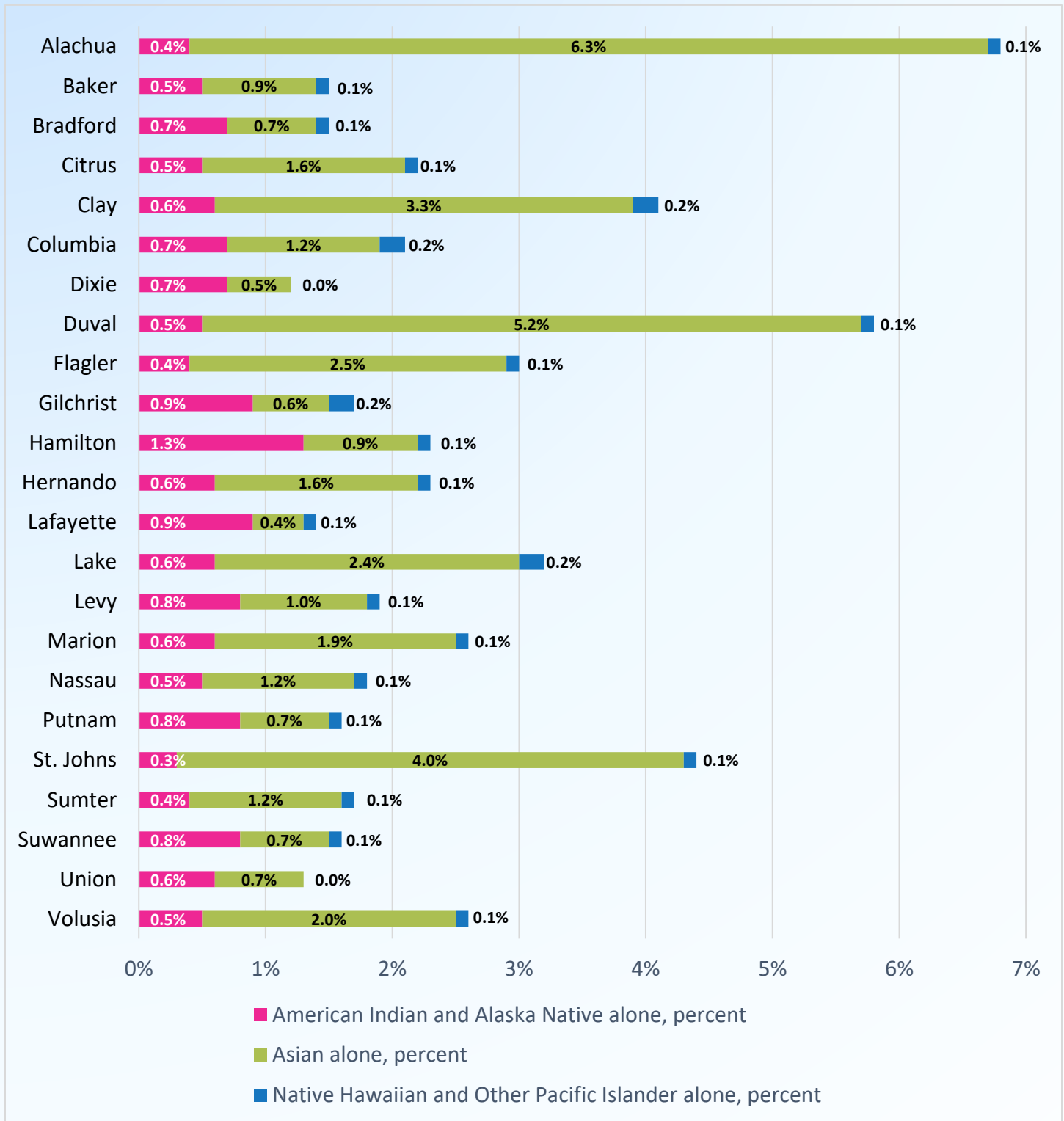
FIGURE 7 AND FIGURE 8: RACE DEMOGRAPHICS (%) WHITE AND BLACK ALONE POPULATION IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA



(SOURCE: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU V2023)

Figure 9 further breaks down population demographics for individuals who reported race as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander.

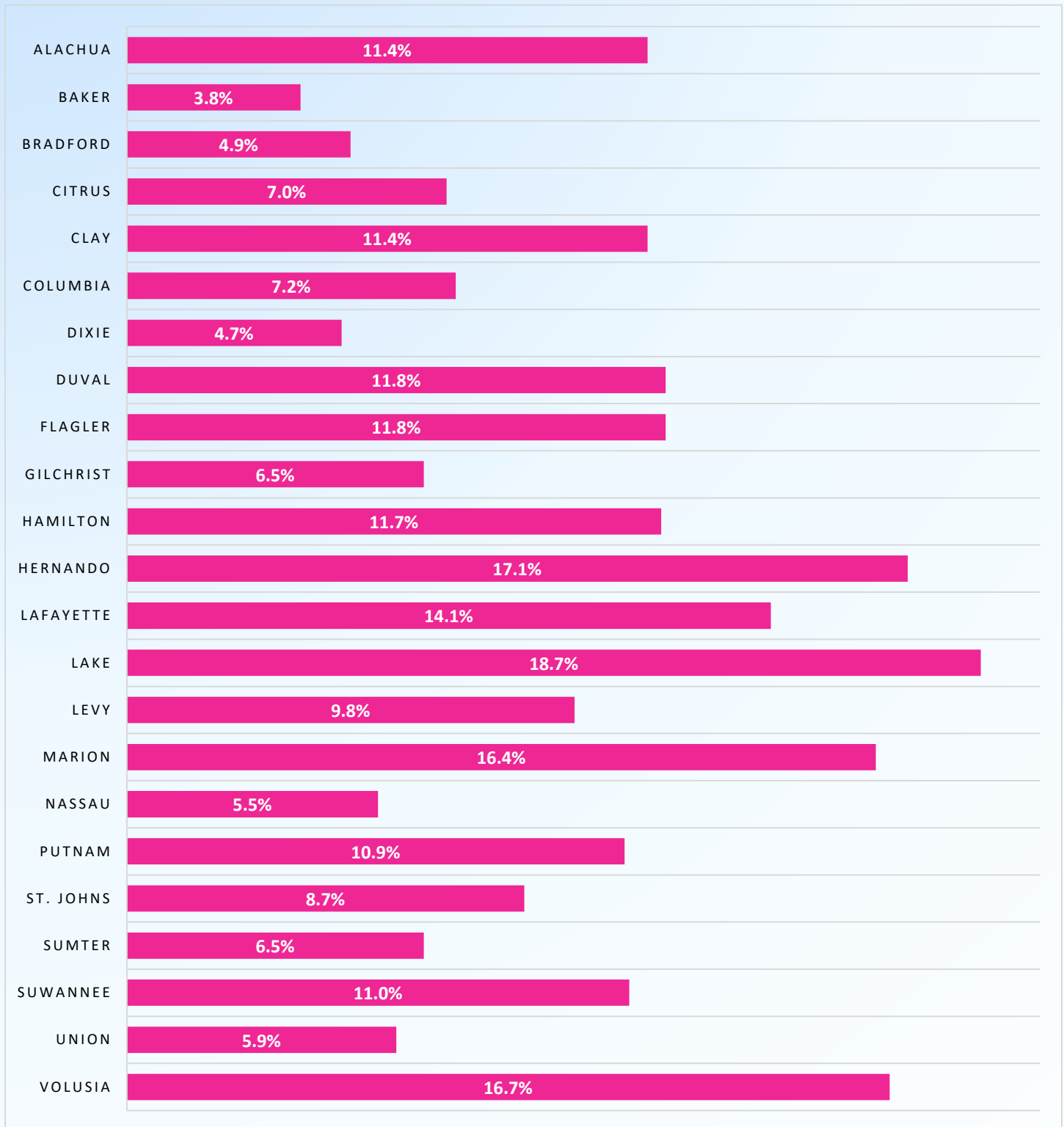
FIGURE 9: POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS BY OTHER RACES IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA COUNTIES



(SOURCE: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU V2023)

Figure 10 below examines the Hispanic or Latino population percentages by County in Northeast Florida. Lake, Hernando, Marion, and Volusia counties have the highest percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents.

FIGURE 10: HISPANIC OR LATINO% POPULATION IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA BY COUNTY

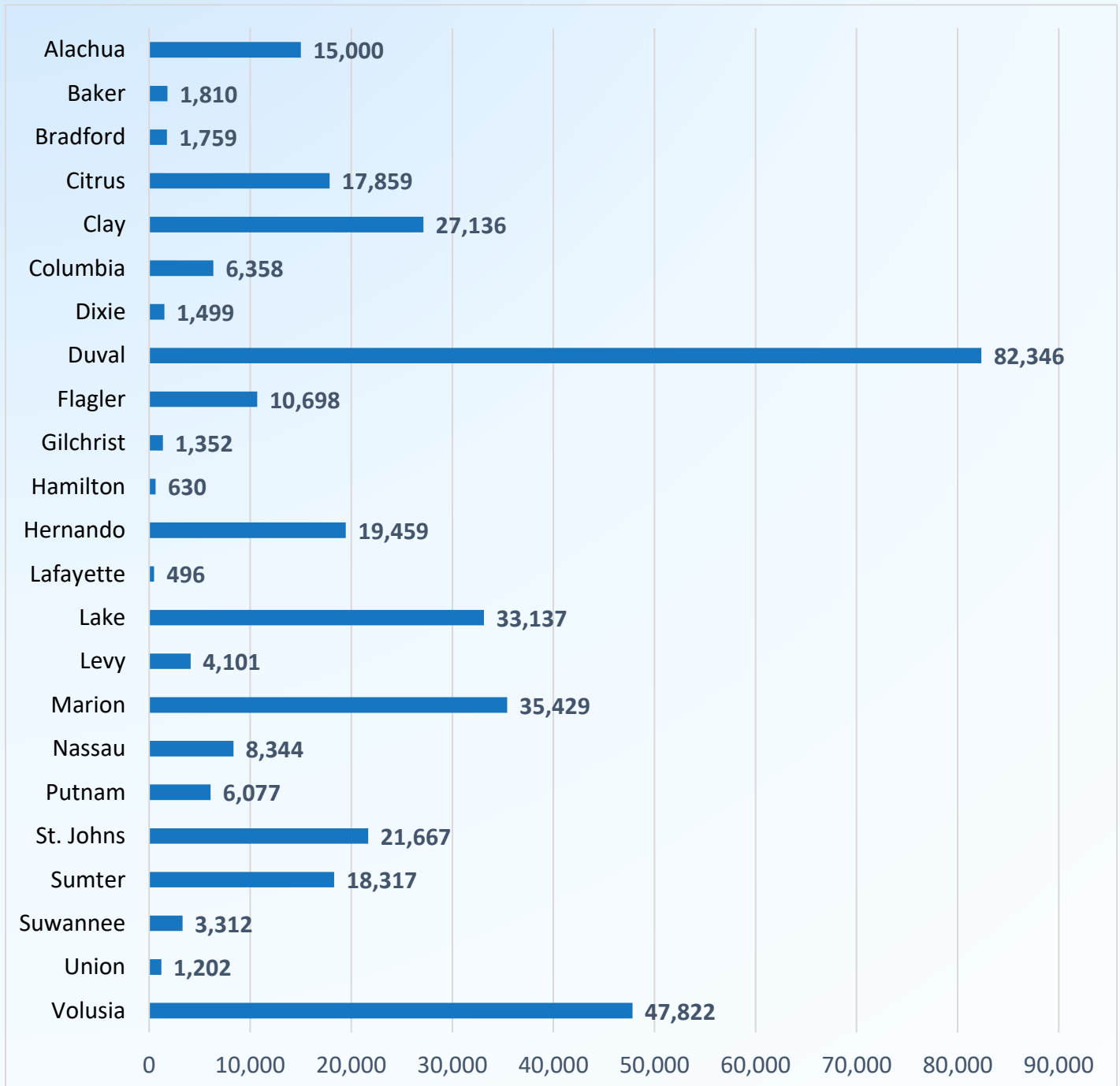


(SOURCE: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU V2023)

VETERAN POPULATION

From 2018-2022 Florida was home to 1,369,719 US military veterans. Northeast Florida accounts for 26.7% of the veteran population in Florida with over 365,000 veterans living in the area during this timeframe. The following data in Figure 11 shows the number of veterans by county between 2018-2022. Duval, Volusia, Marion, and Lake counties account for much of the veteran population in Northeast Florida.

FIGURE 11: TOTAL VETERAN POPULATION IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA BY COUNTY, 2018-2022



(SOURCE: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU V2023)

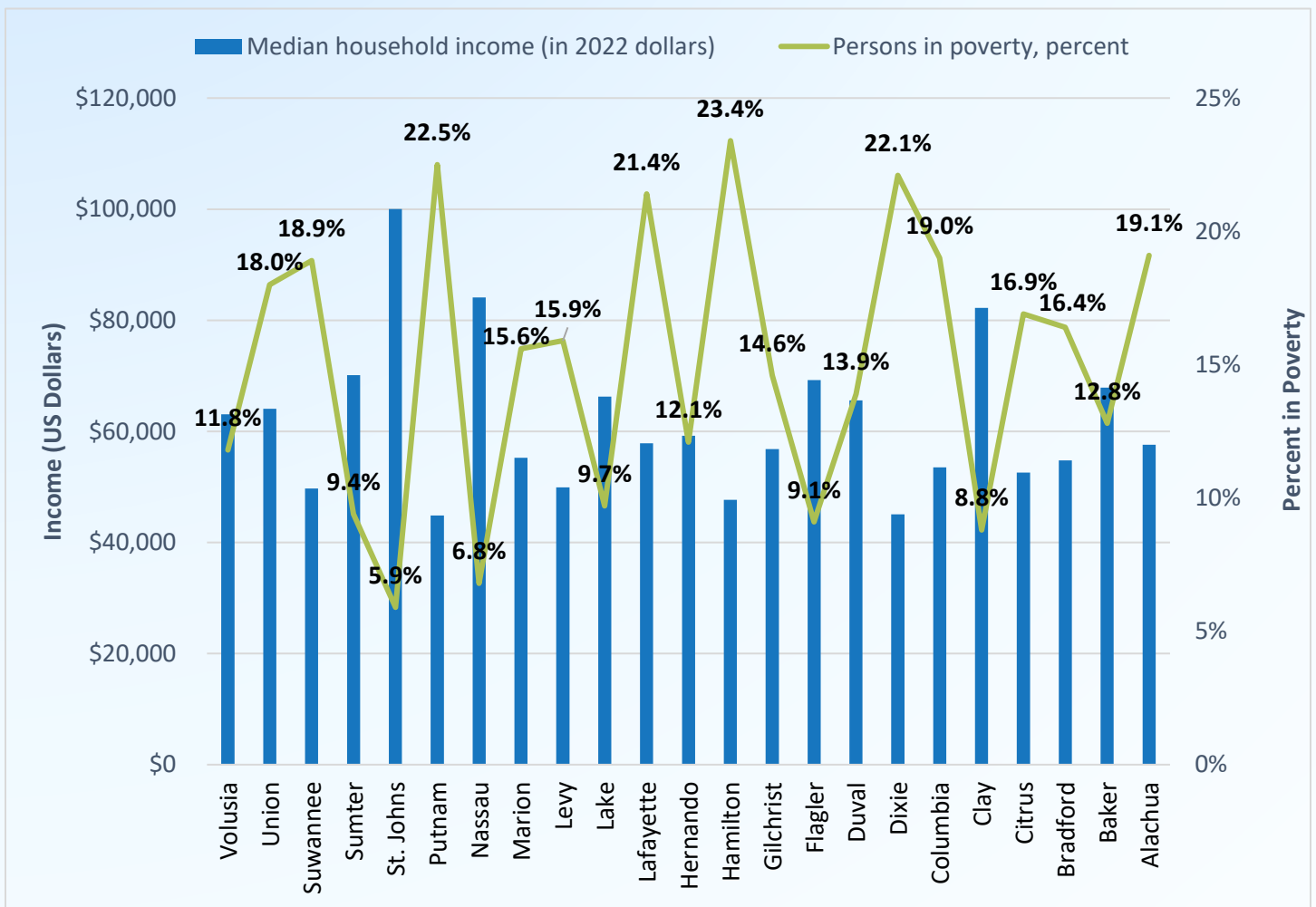
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

NORTHEAST FLORIDA SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

INCOME & POVERTY

Income and poverty, also known as socioeconomic status, are major social determinants of health leading to negative health outcomes and impacts among those affected. The Northeast region of Florida average median income (in 2022 dollars) was \$61,621 with an average of 15.0% or 1 in 6 residents living in poverty, this is 16.3% higher than the state average of 12.7%. The following Figure 12 compares counties by median income and percentage of persons living in poverty between 2018-2022 in Northeast Florida.

FIGURE 12: NORTHEAST FLORIDA INCOME & POVERTY BY COUNTY, 2018-2022



(SOURCE: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU V2023)

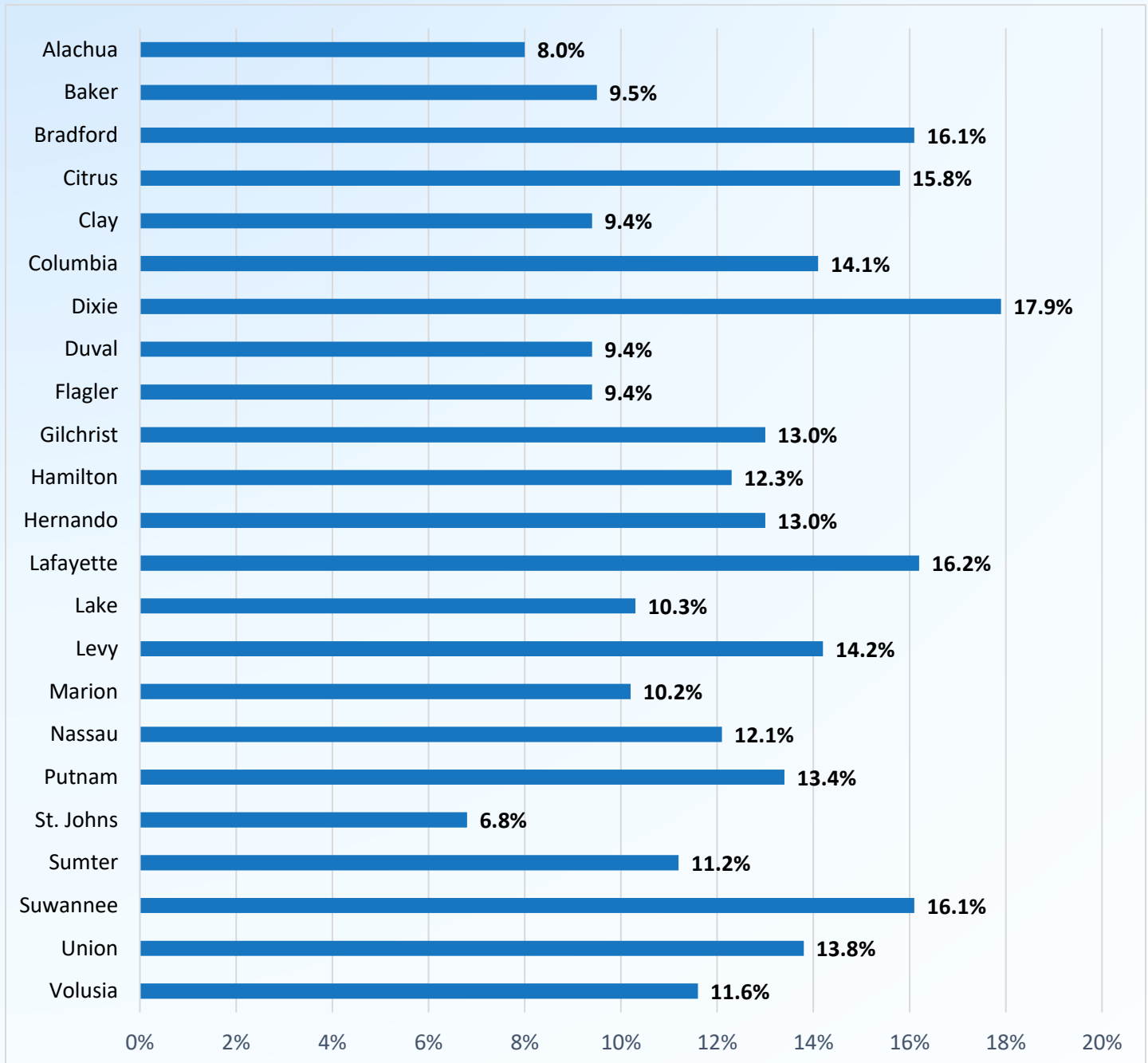
As seen in the figure above, counties in Northeast Florida with the higher percentage of persons in poverty include Putnam, Lafayette, Hamilton, and Dixie. Counties with the lowest poverty rates include St John’s, Nassau, Flagler, and Clay. The counties with the lowest poverty rates also had some of the highest median household incomes.



DISABILITY STATUS

Disability status is another social determinant of health measured by the US Census Bureau. Data in [Figure 13](#) below was collected between 2018-2022 on people living with a disability, under age 65, per US county. Counties in Northeast Florida had an average of 12.4% of residents under 65 reporting disability, this is approximately 35% higher than the state average of 8.7%. Dixie, Bradford, Suwannee, and Lafayette counties had the higher percentages of residents under 65 with a disability.

FIGURE 13: PEOPLE LIVING WITH A DISABILITY IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA BY COUNTY, UNDER AGE 65 YEARS, 2018-2022

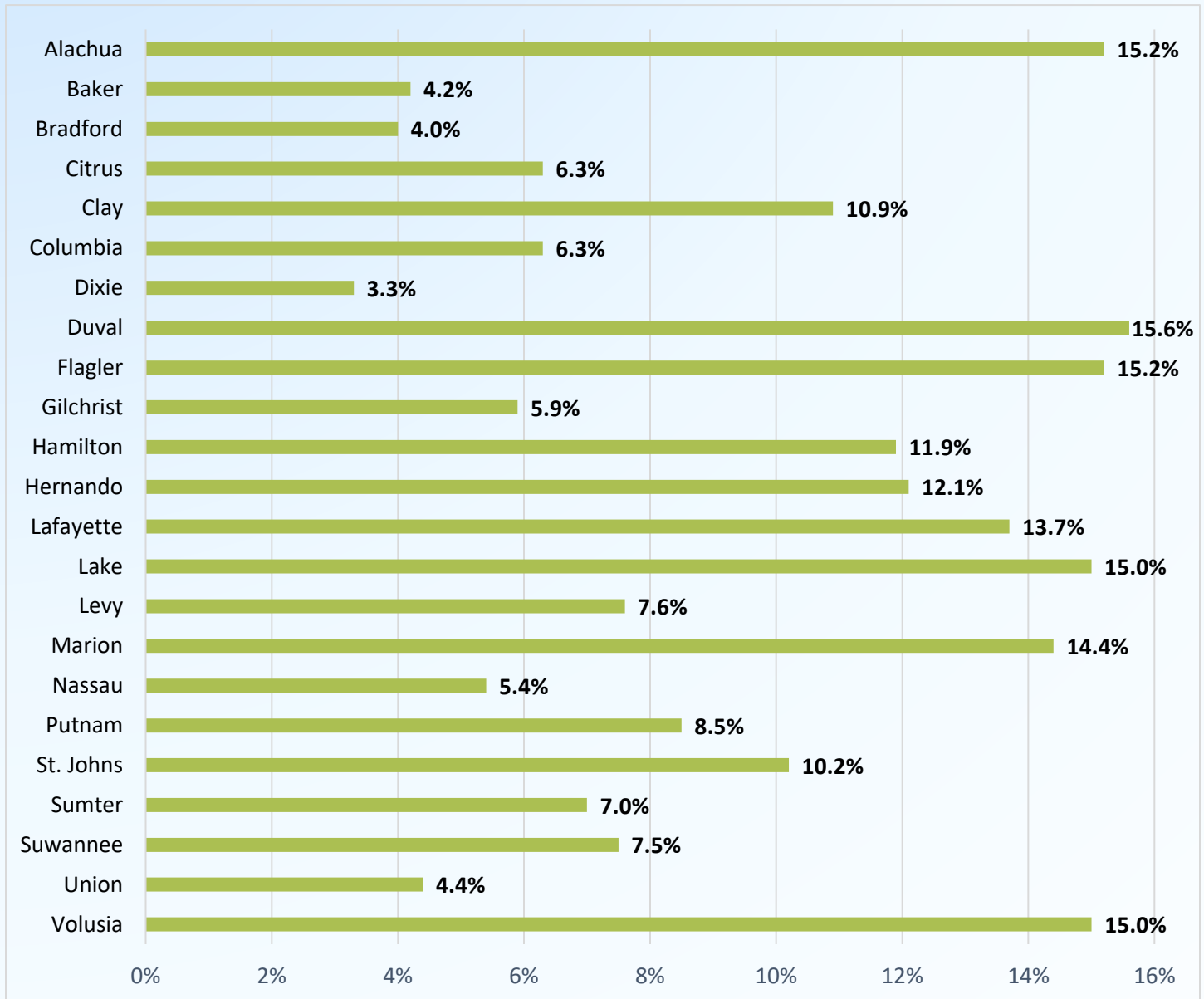


(SOURCE: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU V2023)

LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME

Linguistics can contribute to poor health literacy levels which contribute to social disparities if resources are not available in necessary languages to parents and other guardians in the home. The Figure below [Figure 14](#) examines languages other than English spoken at home between 2018-2022 as recorded in the most recent US Census. According to this data, 9.5% of persons over the age of 5 live in a household with a language other than English spoken in the home, this is lower than the state average of 29.9%.

FIGURE 14: LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH SPOKEN AT HOME BY COUNTY, PERSONS AGE 5+ YEARS, 2018-2022



(SOURCE: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU V2023)

Alachua, Duval, Flagler, Lake, and Volusia counties had the highest percentages of persons reporting a language other than English being spoken at home.

EDUCATION

Education levels also contribute to social disparities and are considered social determinants of health. Higher education levels contribute to higher levels of health literacy and lower levels of negative health behaviors. In Northeast Florida, as reported to the US Census between 2018-2022, on average 87.3% of persons 25 years and older were a high school graduate or higher.

This is slightly lower than the state average of 89.3%. Persons who reported having received a bachelor’s or higher in Northeast Florida accounted for 21.7% of the total population, while this is even less comparable to the state average of 32.3%.

Figure 15 to the right shows high school graduate percentages across Northeast Florida counties, and Figure 16 below shows those who have obtained bachelor’s degrees or higher living in each county during the 2018-2022 timeframe.

Figure 15: High School Graduate or Higher, Percent of Persons Age 25 Years+, 2018-2022 (CENSUS V2023)

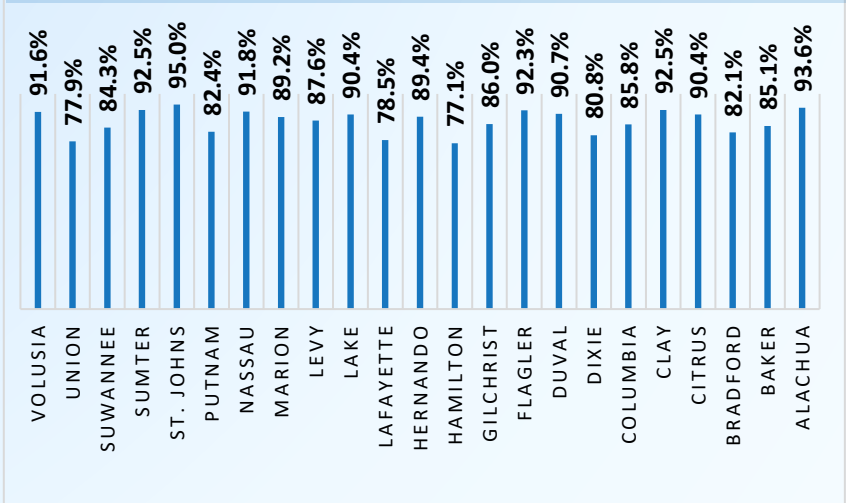
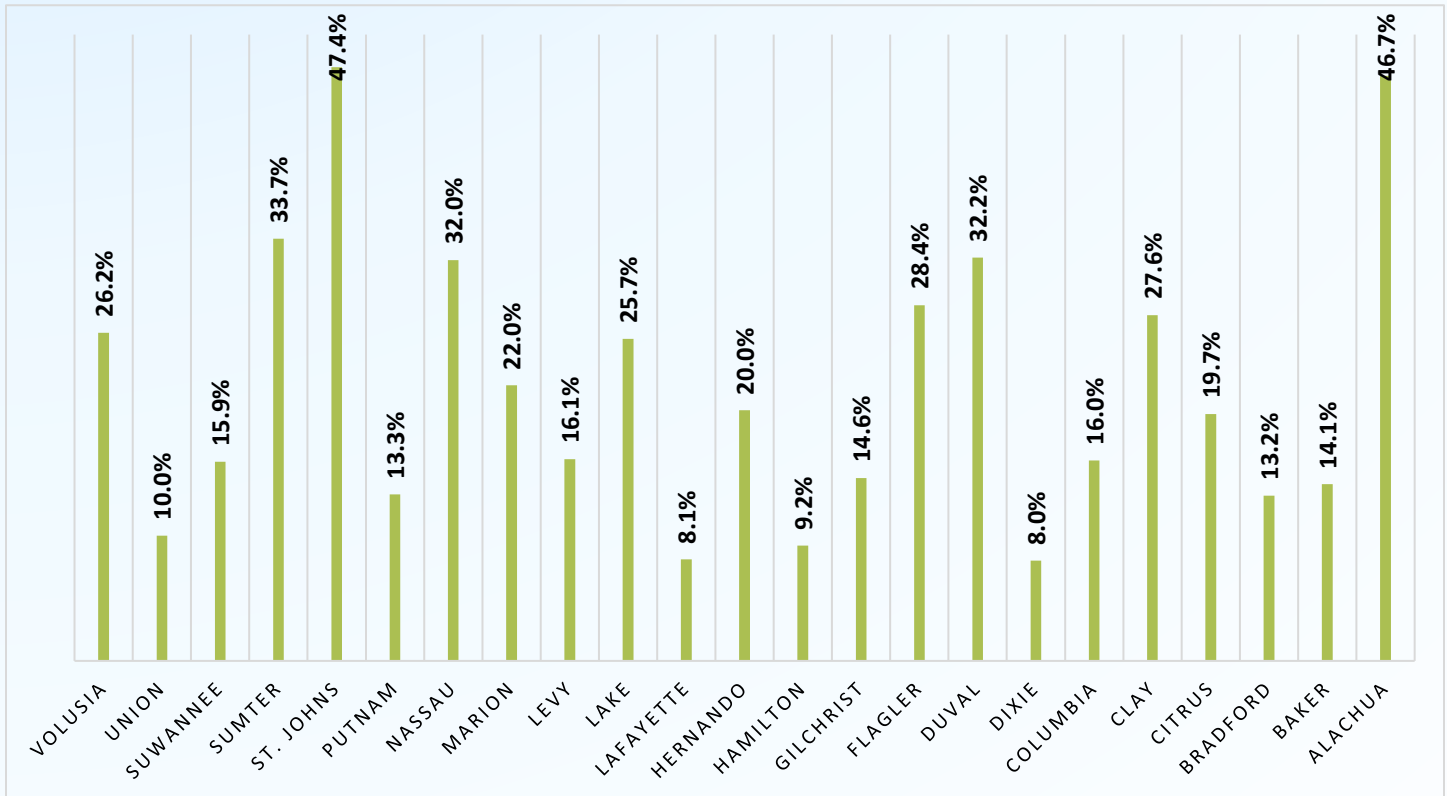


FIGURE 16: BACHELOR’S DEGREE OR HIGHER BY COUNTY, PERSONS AGE 25 YEARS+, 2018-2022



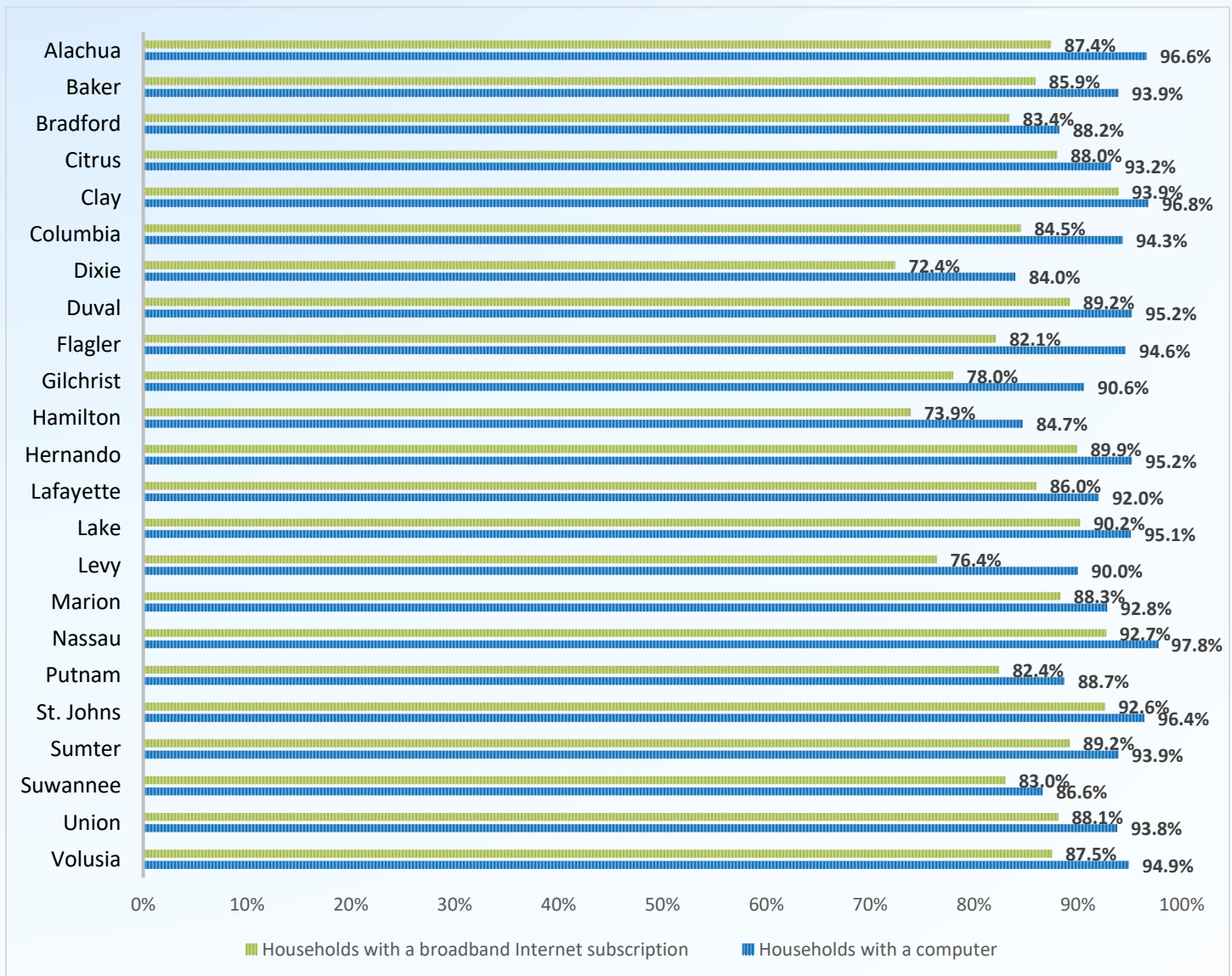
(SOURCE: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU V2023)

ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY

Access to technology also contributes to social disparities and is a social determinant of health which can improve or limit access to health resources. According to the most recent Census data, between 2018-2022, 92.6% of households in Northeast Florida had a computer, and 85.4% had a broadband internet subscription. These percentages are slightly lower than state averages of 95.2% and 88.8% respectively, following the same pattern that although most households own a computer, they may not have broadband internet.

Figure 17 below shows access to technology by county in Northeast Florida. All counties reported over 80% of households having access to computers between 2018-2022, and most had a broadband internet subscription. No county had 100% of households who had a computer or broadband internet subscription.

FIGURE 17: ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY BY NORTHEAST FLORIDA COUNTY, 2018-2022

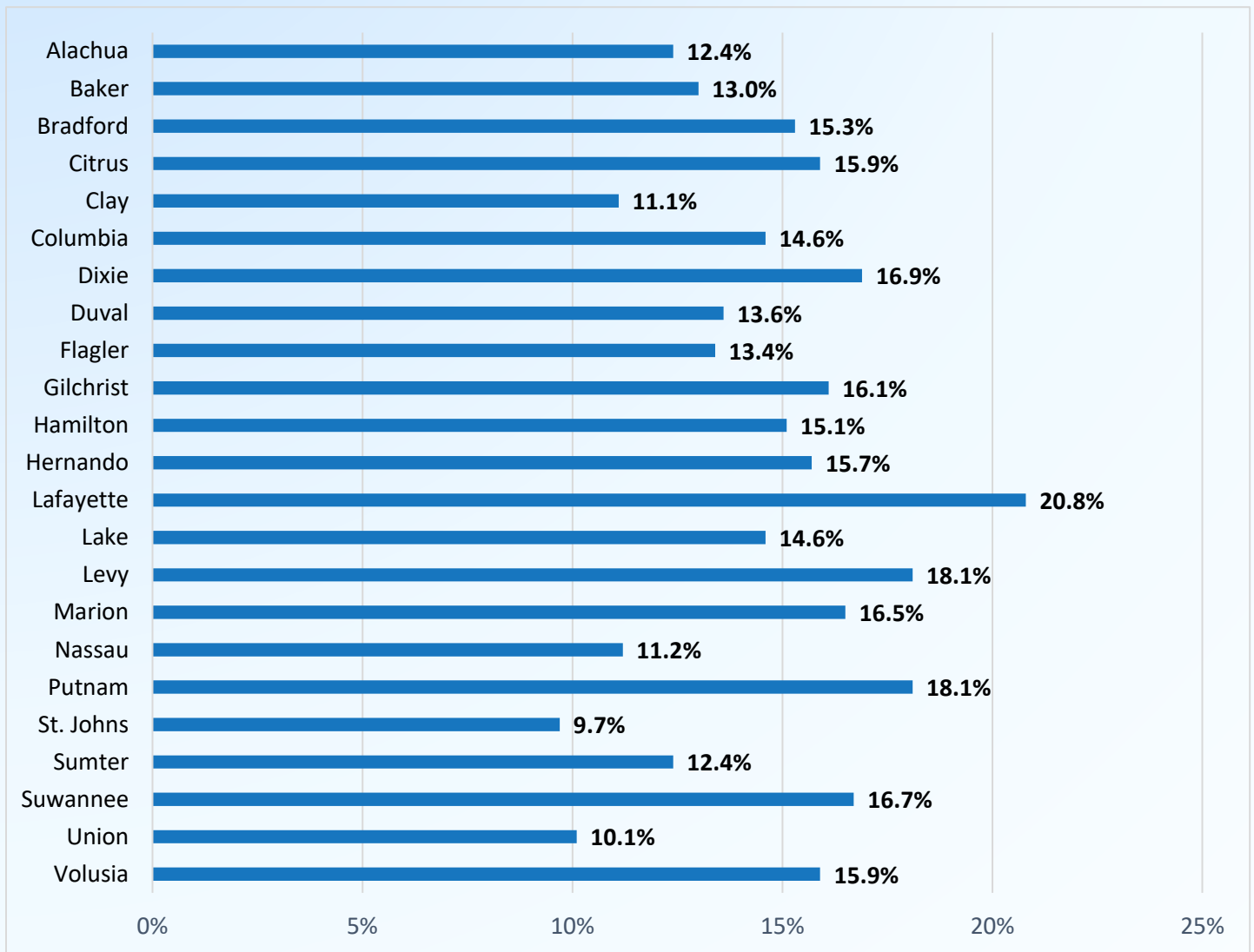


(SOURCE: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU V2023)

HEALTH INSURANCE

Access to care is also a concern among people without health insurance. Lack of access to care can prevent individuals from obtaining the help they need when it comes to proper pain management, medications, addiction resources, and other necessary medical care. Figure 18 examines the percentage of persons without health insurance among Northeast Florida counties.

FIGURE 18: PERSONS WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE, UNDER AGE 65 YEARS, BY NORTHEAST FLORIDA COUNTY



(SOURCE: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU V2023)

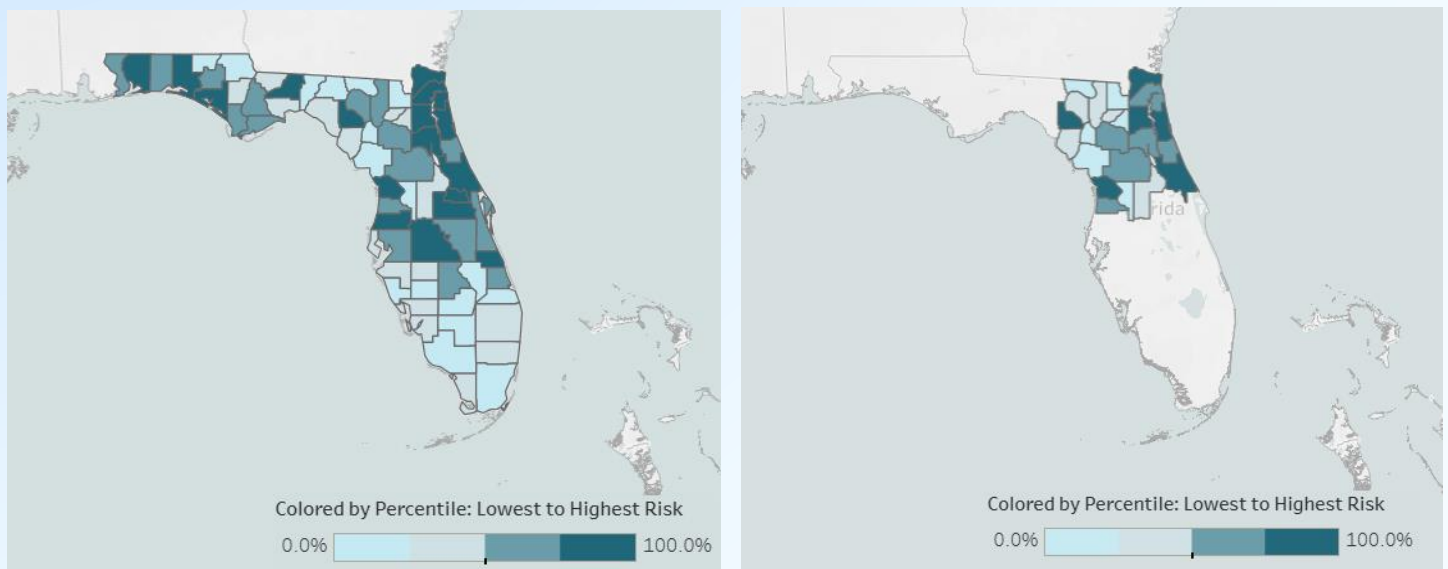
According to the above data released in the most recent Census report (2023), most counties have less than 20% of residents who do not have health insurance under the age of 65 years. In all counties 9 out of 10 individuals have access to health insurance. Wraparound and other assistance programs may be beneficial to help those who still do not have access to health insurance, especially in counties such as Dixie, Gilchrist, Lafayette, Levy, Marion, Putnam, and Suwannee who have the highest reported number of uninsured individuals in their counties (>16%).

MENTAL HEALTH

NORTHEAST FLORIDA STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH

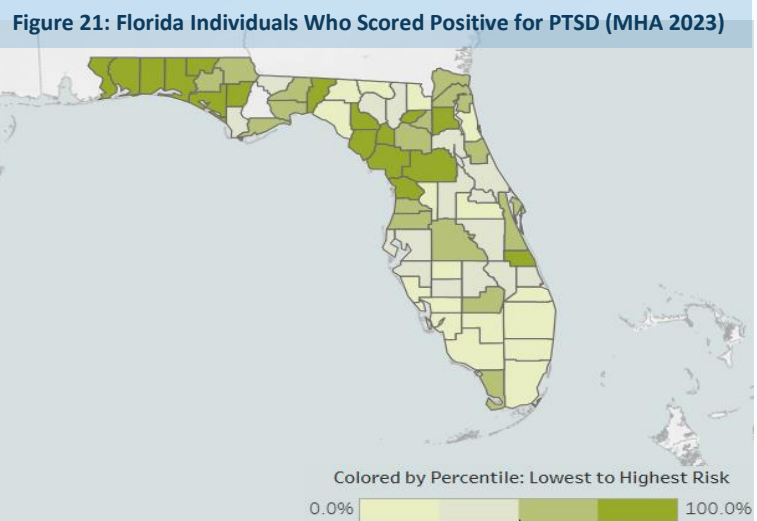
According to Mental Health America (2024), in the United States 542,154 individuals between 2020-2023 scored for severe depression with a rate of 40.7 per 100,000. Florida accounts for 31,714 or 6.0% of these individuals. Of those in Florida who screened for severe depression. The following maps (Figures 19 & 20) highlight Florida and Northeast Florida counties with the lowest to highest risk for severe depression according to this data.

FIGURE 19 AND FIGURE 20: ALL FLORIDA COUNTIES COMPARED TO NORTHEAST FLORIDA COUNTIES FOR LOWEST TO HIGHEST RISK FOR SEVERE DEPRESSION



When compared to Florida as a whole, the Northeast region had a much higher risk than most of the state. The Northeast Florida map to the right reveals that when compared to itself it is typically those counties towards the east coast which have higher risk of severe depression. Counties at the highest risk in the Northeast Region include Nassau, St. John’s Clay, and Volusia on the east coast, with Citrus and Lafayette having the highest risk of the west coast.

Northeast Florida also has a high percentage of individuals reporting PTSD. The map to the right (Figure 21) from Mental Health America (2023), highlights counties by their lowest to highest risk of individuals scoring positive for PTSD. Northeast Florida counties with the highest number of individuals scoring positive for PTSD (dark green) are Lafayette, Union, Dixie, Gilchrist, Clay, Levy, Marion, and Citrus Counties.



(SOURCE: MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA 2024)

Northeast Florida also had a high number of individuals reporting suicidal ideation during this timeframe (2020-2023) when compared to the rest of the state. Counties with the highest scores included Nassau, Duval, Clay, St. John’s, Flagler, Volusia, Alachua, Citrus, and Lafayette.

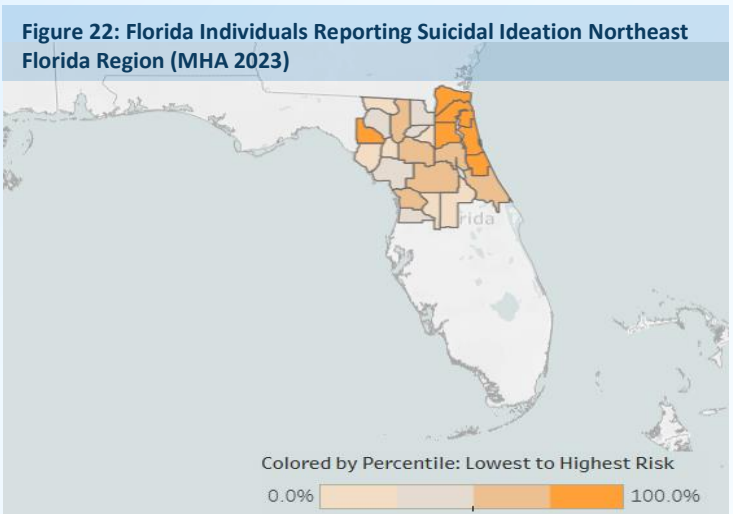
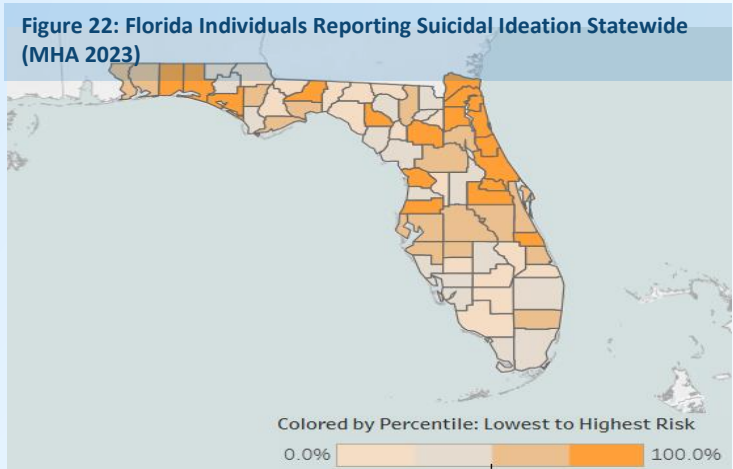
When compared to itself Northeast Florida counties with the highest risk for suicidal ideation included Nassau, Duval, Clay, St. John’s, Flagler, and Lafayette. See Figures 22 & 23 to the right for a visual map of these comparisons.

Mental Health America also recently released their annual report *The State of Mental Health in America* for 2023. Some data utilized in this report has a cautionary reminder that due to methodological and societal changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic between 2019-2020 data from the *National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)* may be misleading. Twelve of the fifteen indicators used to rank states in 2023 were from this data set, see below.

**These measures include:**

1. Adults with Any Mental Illness (AMI)
2. Adults with Substance Use Disorder in the Past Year
3. Adults with Serious Thoughts of Suicide
4. Youth with at Least One Major Depressive Episode (MDE) in the Past Year
5. Youth with Substance Use Disorder in the Past Year
6. Youth with Severe MDE
7. Adults with AMI Who Did Not Receive Treatment
8. Adults with AMI Reporting Unmet Need
9. Adults with AMI Who Are Uninsured
10. Adults Reporting 14+ Mentally Unhealthy Days a Month Who Could Not See a Doctor Due to Costs
11. Youth with MDE Who Did Not Receive Mental Health Services
12. Youth with Severe MDE Who Received Some Consistent Treatment
13. Youth with Private Insurance That Did Not Cover Mental or Emotional Problems
14. Students (Grades K+) Identified with Emotional Disturbance for an Individualized Education Program
15. Mental Health Workforce Availability

(SOURCE: MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA 2024)



In 2023, according to Mental Health America (2024), Florida was ranked **35 out of 51** of states for prevalence of mental illness and access to care, putting it on the higher risk end of the spectrum. Mental Health America also examined the differences between youth and adult prevalence and access to care.

Florida ranked **25** among the states for adults, and **33** for youth. These scores mean Florida has a lower prevalence of mental illness and a higher prevalence for services among adults compared to youth.

#### THE SEVEN MEASURES THAT MAKE UP THE ADULT RANKING INCLUDE:

---

1. Adults with Any Mental Illness (AMI)
2. Adults with Substance Use Disorder in the Past Year
3. Adults with Serious Thoughts of Suicide
4. Adults with AMI Who Did Not Receive Treatment
5. Adults with AMI Reporting Unmet Need
6. Adults with AMI Who Are Uninsured
7. Adults Reporting 14+ Mentally Unhealthy Days a Month Who Could Not See a Doctor Due to Cost

#### THE SEVEN MEASURES THAT MAKE UP THE YOUTH RANKING INCLUDE:

---

1. Youth with at Least One Major Depressive Episode (MDE) in the Past Year
2. Youth with Substance Use Disorder in the Past Year
3. Youth with Severe MDE
4. Youth with MDE Who Did Not Receive Mental Health Services
5. Youth with Severe MDE Who Received Some Consistent Treatment
6. Youth with Private Insurance That Did Not Cover Mental or Emotional Problems
7. Students (K+) Identified with Emotional Disturbance for an Individualized Education Program

#### FLORIDA OVERALL RANKED 46 OUT OF 51 FOR ACCESS TO CARE. THESE NINE MEASURES THAT MAKE UP THE ACCESS RANKING INCLUDE:

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1. Adults with AMI Who Did Not Receive Treatment
2. Adults with AMI Reporting Unmet Need
3. Adults with AMI Who Are Uninsured
4. Adults Reporting 14+ Mentally Unhealthy Days a Month Who Could Not See a Doctor Due to Costs
5. Youth with MDE Who Did Not Receive Mental Health Services
6. Youth with Severe MDE Who Received Some Consistent Treatment
7. Youth with Private Insurance That Did Not Cover Mental or Emotional Problems
8. Students (K+) Identified with Emotional Disturbance for an Individualized Education Program
9. Mental Health Workforce Availability

(SOURCE: MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA 2024)

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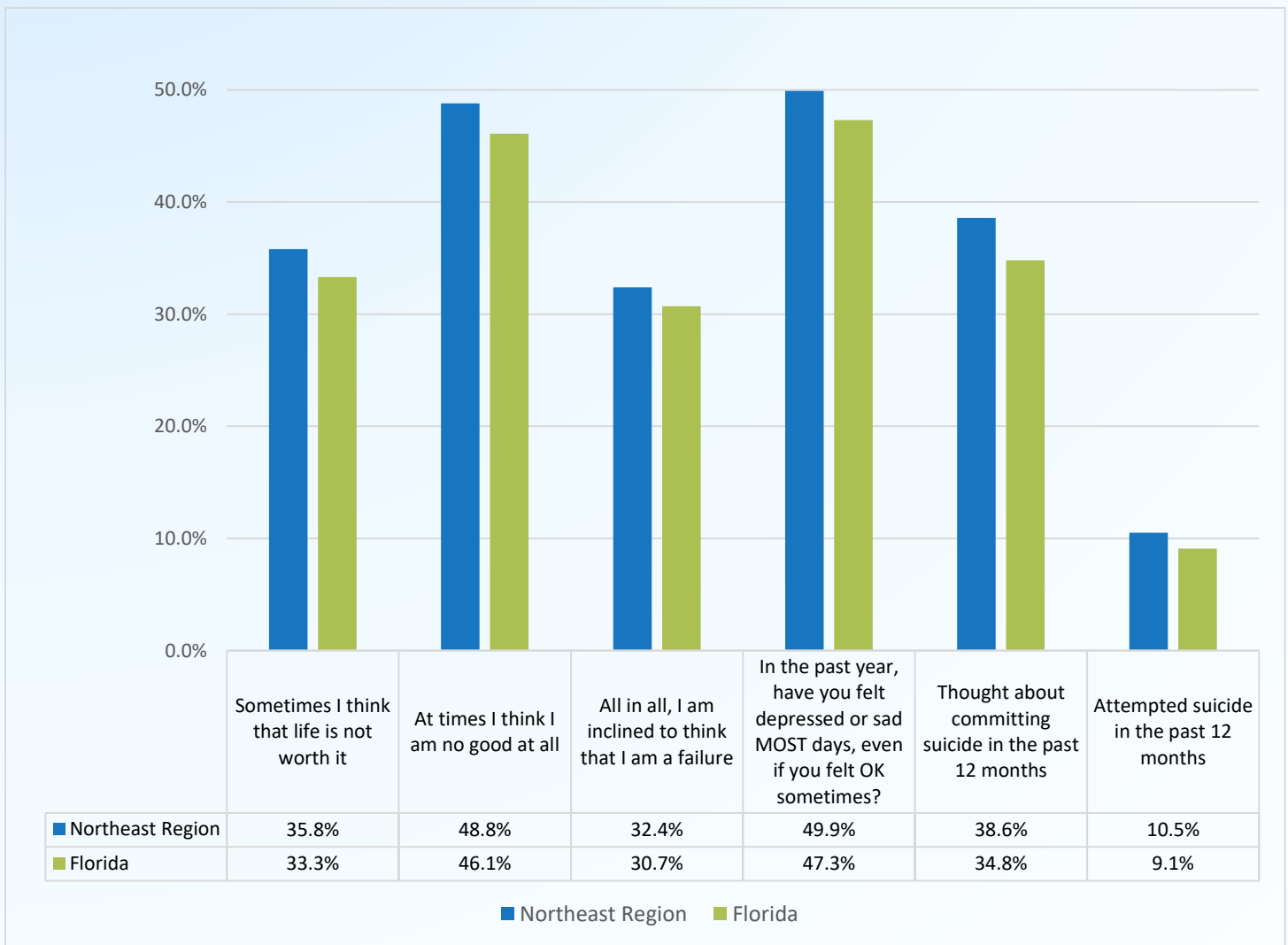


YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

The Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) collects data on youth substance use and mental health and provides regional and county level data to the public every two years. The most recent data release at the regional and county level was in 2022. In 2022, data from this report revealed that overall, 35.8% of youth sometimes feel life is not worth it, 48.8% sometimes felt they are no good at all, 32.4% are inclined to think they are a failure, and 49.9% reported feeling depressed or sad most days, even if they felt OK sometimes in the past year. Youth also reported on suicidal ideation and behaviors which included 38.6% reporting thoughts about committing suicide in the past 12 months, and 10.5% reporting having attempted suicide in the past 12 months.

When compared to the state in 2022, this revealed that Northeast Florida students ranked higher in all reported categories for depression, and suicidal ideation or behaviors. See [Figure 24](#) below.

FIGURE 24: PERCENTAGES OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA AND FLORIDA STATEWIDE YOUTH WHO REPORTED SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION, OR SUICIDAL IDEATION AND BEHAVIOR



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

The following Figure 25 compares symptoms of depression among middle and high school youth. According to the data middle school students were higher in all categories, except thinking life is not worth it, for reported symptoms of depression, or suicide ideation and behavior in 2022.

FIGURE 25: SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION REPORTED BY MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE NORTHEAST REGION OF FLORIDA

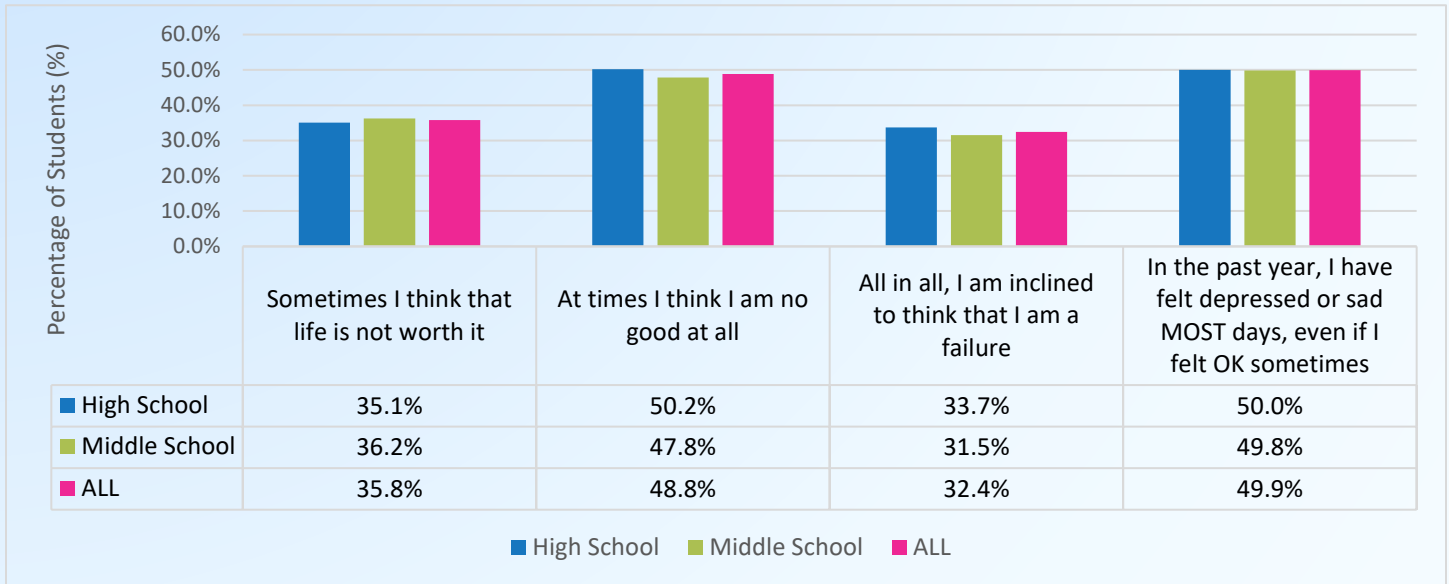
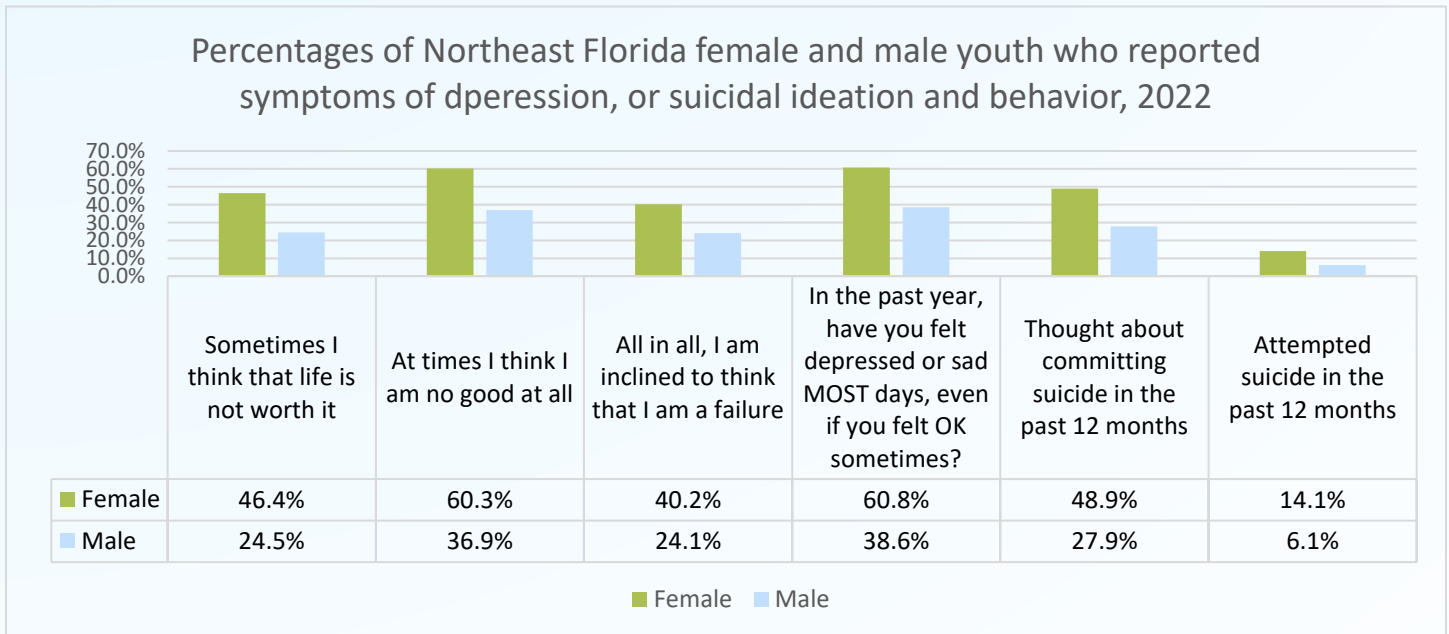


Figure 26 compares these indicators as well as suicidal ideation and behaviors among female and male students. Female students reported 40% to 80% higher in all categories when compared to their male counterparts.

FIGURE 26: PERCENTAGES OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA YOUTH WHO REPORTED SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION, OR SUICIDAL IDEATION AND BEHAVIOR, GENDER COMPARISON

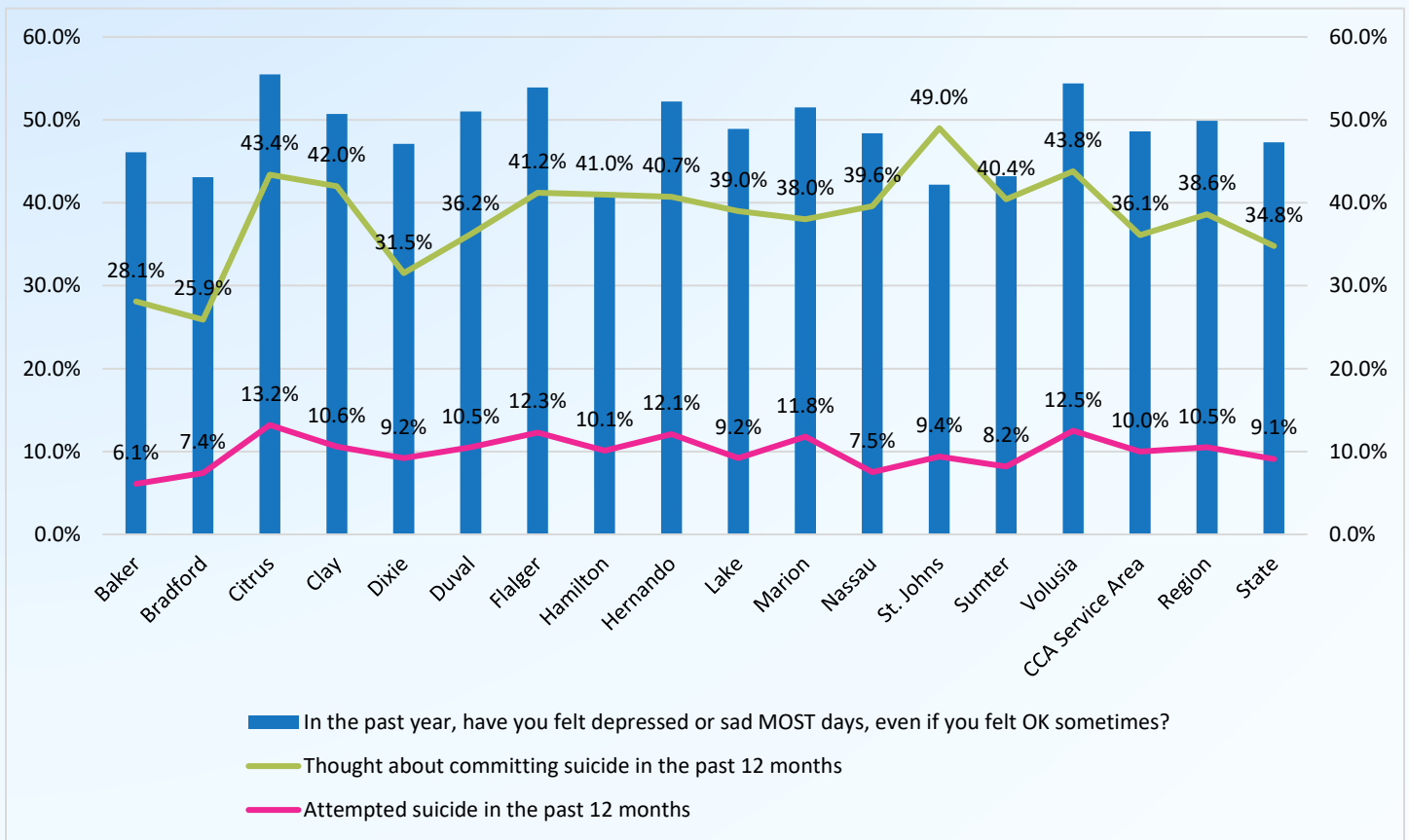


(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

Figure 27 below examines correlations between students in selected counties in the CCA Service Area compared to the region and the state for students who reported having felt depressed or sad most days and thoughts about committing suicide or attempting suicide in the past 12 months. The blue bars represent students’ reports on depression, while the green and pink lines represent thoughts and attempts of suicide.

Though attempts are much lower, both thoughts and attempts follow a similar trend with regards to the percentage of students who reported having felt depressed or sad most days in the past year showing that depression is correlated with suicide risk.

FIGURE 27: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN STUDENT REPORTS OF DEPRESSION AND THOUGHTS OR ATTEMPTS OF SUICIDE IN THE PAST YEAR BY SELECTED NORTHEAST FLORIDA COUNTIES



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

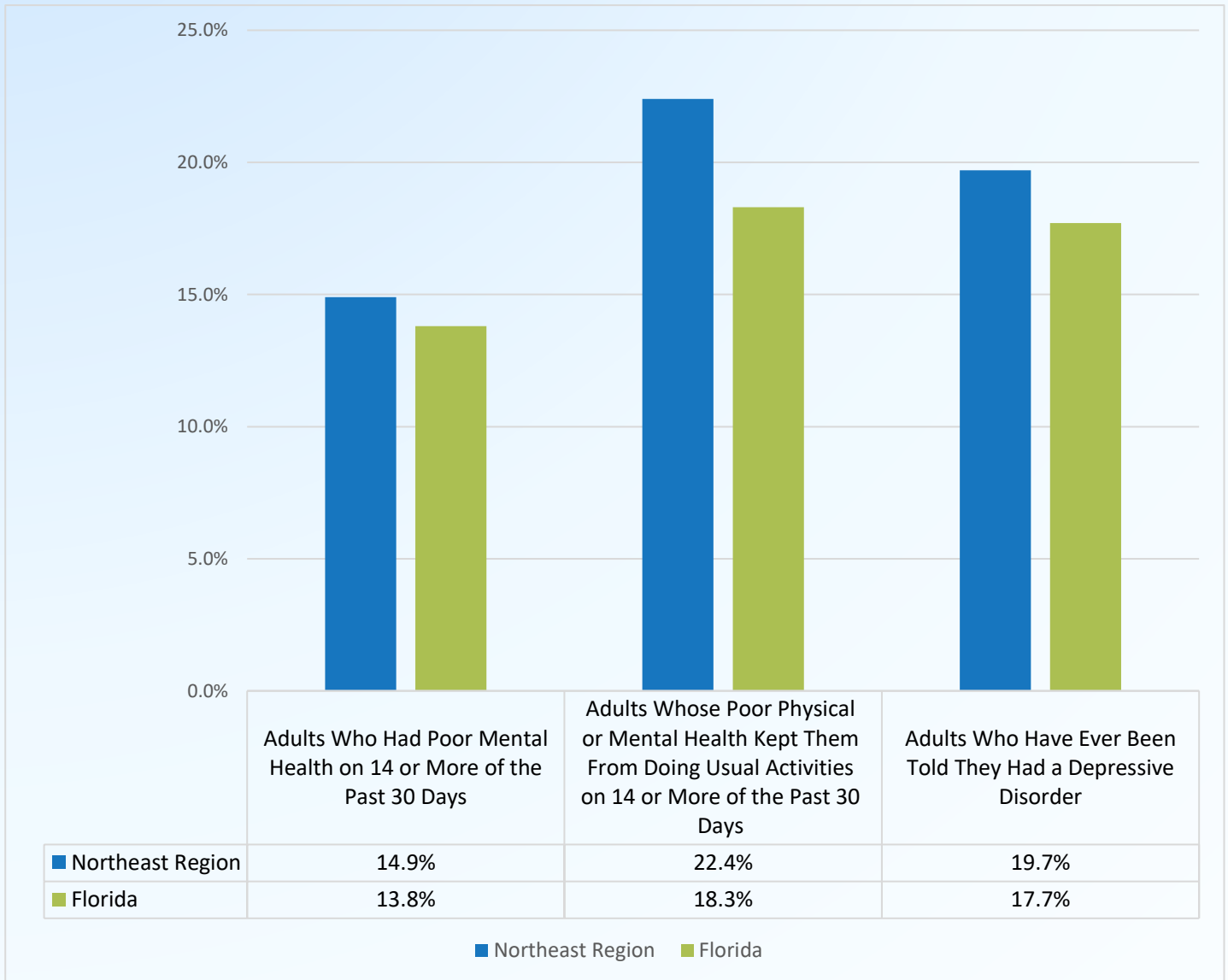
Counties with the highest percentages of feeling depressed most days include Citrus, Volusia, Flagler. While it is also important to note when the gap between the blue bar and the green line is smallest this means that most people who feel depressed consider suicide. For example, see St. Johns and Clay in Figure 27.

Data from the recent state-level Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey conducted in 2023 included a new question on whether students were likely to use the new 988 crisis line launched by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) if they were in crisis and needed emotional support. When asked only 16% of students said yes - 12.5% of female students and 19.6% of male students.

ADULT MENTAL HEALTH

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) collects yearly state-level adult data on risk and protective factors related to health. Every three years the system releases a county-level view of this data; the last release was in 2019 for the years 2016-2018. The following figures will examine the 2019 county-level comparison data for Northeast Florida counties. Figure 28 below compares adult mental health at the regional level to the state level.

FIGURE 28: ADULT MENTAL HEALTH IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA AND FLORIDA STATEWIDE COMPARISON, 2016-2018

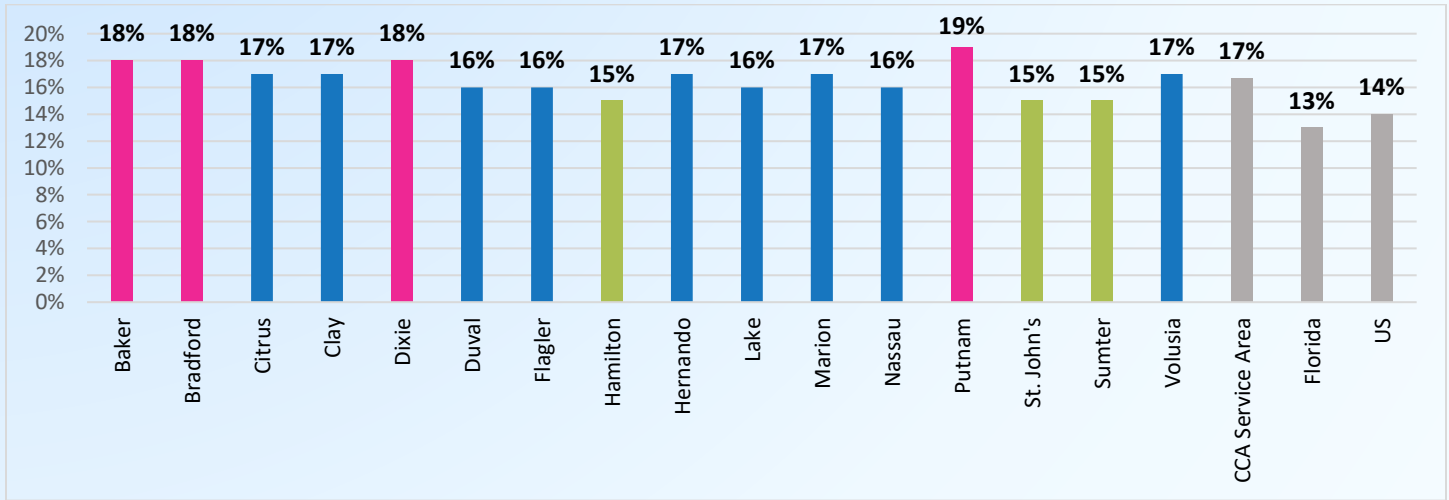


(SOURCE: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION – BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM 2019)

In all categories adults in Northeast Florida had higher reports of poor mental health. On average, adults in Northeast Florida also reported 4.57 unhealthy mental days in the past 30 days, compared to the Florida average of 4. State level data from 2022 reveals an overall 8.9% increase in adults who had poor mental health on 14 or more of the past 30 days.

Figure 29 compares selected counties in the CCA service area to the state and nation for adult reports of frequent mental distress. In this figure the top 4 highest counties are highlighted in pink, and the top 3 lowest are highlighted in green. All counties in the CCA service area reported higher percentages of adult frequent mental distress as compared to the state and nation with Baker, Bradford, Dixie, and Putnam counties reporting the highest.

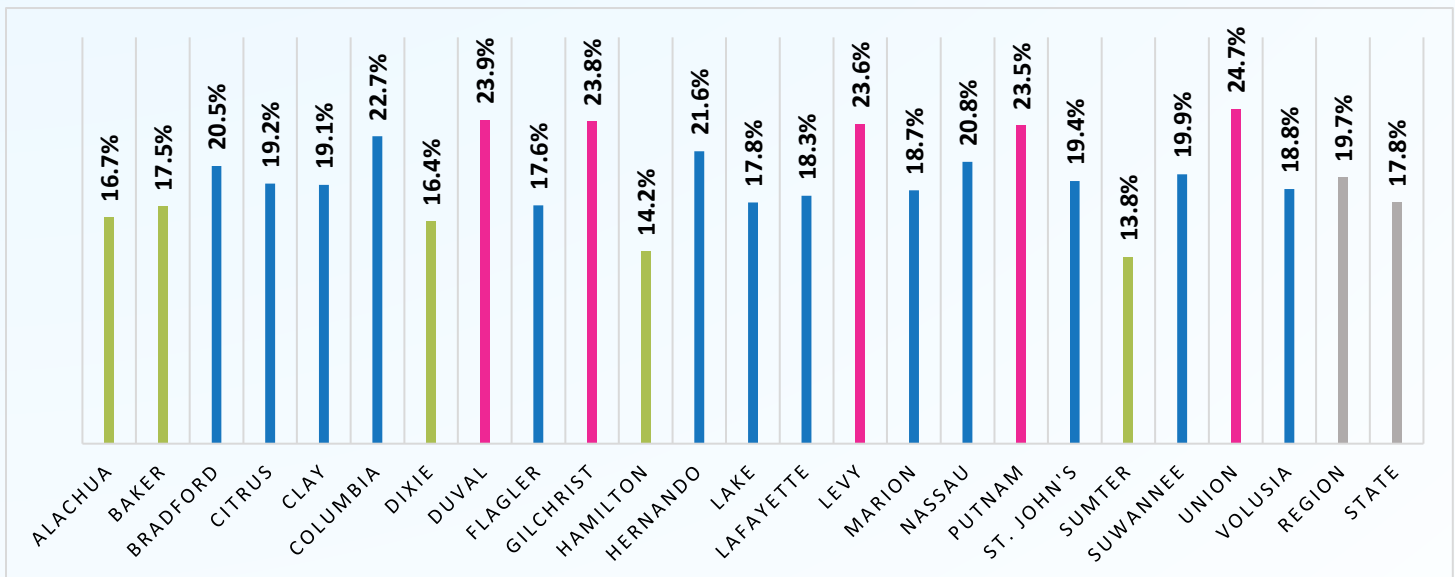
FIGURE 29: ADULT FREQUENT MENTAL DISTRESS BY COUNTY



(SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN POPULATION HEALTH INSTITUTE - COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS 2024)

The following figure (Figure 30) compares all counties in Northeast Florida to the region and state for percentages of adults who have ever been told they have a depressive disorder with the top 5 highest in pink and top 5 lowest in green. In both figures Putnam County had the highest rates and percentages for reported mental health concerns, Hamilton and Sumter counties had the best outcomes in these categories.

FIGURE 30: ADULTS WHO HAVE EVER BEEN TOLD THEY HAVE A DEPRESSIVE DISORDER (%) 18 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER



(SOURCE: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION – BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM 2019)

INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

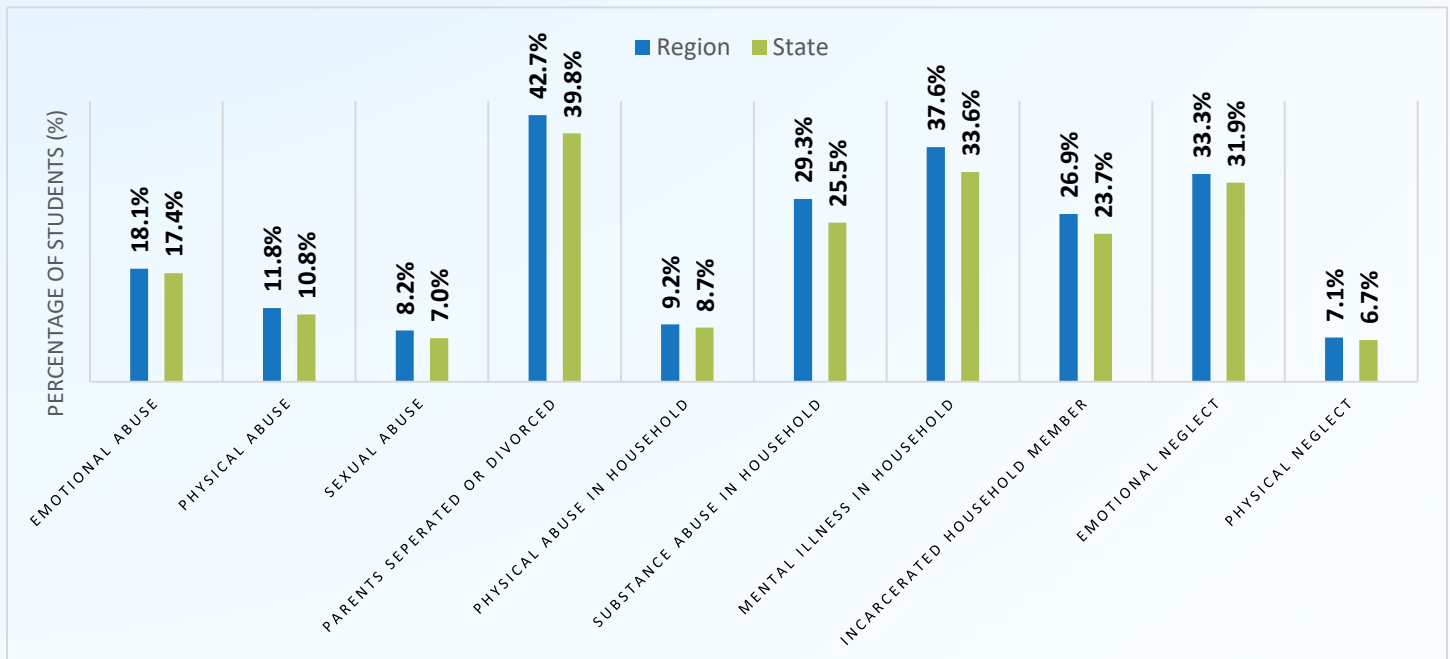
This section will discuss individual and community-level risk and protective factors for substance use. A **risk factor** is an internal or external control factor which increases the likelihood of someone engaging in negative behavior or having a poor health outcome. A **protective factor** is preventative of negative behaviors and poor outcomes. Behavior, knowledge, attitudes, experiences, and perceptions are all things that can be considered as risk and protective factors.

NORTHEAST FLORIDA INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2024), Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are defined as potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood. ACEs can include violence, abuse, and growing up in a family with mental health or substance use problems. ACEs included in the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) which are recognized as risk factors for youth substance use, as well as poor behavioral and mental health outcomes, include emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, parents separated or divorced, physical abuse in household, substance abuse in household, mental illness in household, incarcerated household member, emotional neglect, physical neglect, bullying. The following figure (Figure 31) examines the ACEs included in FYSAS comparing Northeast Florida to the state.

FIGURE 31: REGIONAL YOUTH REPORTING LIFETIME ACES \*Only Collected for Ages 15-17 (FYSAS 2022)



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

When compared to the state, the Northeast region of Florida has a slightly greater percentage of students reporting ACEs in all categories with the most common being divorce or separation, mental illness in the household, and emotional neglect.

According to Oklahoma State University (2020), based on results from the 1990s ACE study (Adna et al., 2006) which examined self-reported data from more than 17,000 adult patients, adults who experienced adverse childhood events were more likely to experience poor health outcomes. Adult alcoholism, illegal drug use, depression, suicide, and intimate partner violence are a few of the common risks related to these experiences in childhood. On average, individuals with 6 or more ACE scores are likely to experience premature death 20 years earlier than persons with no ACEs.

The following figure (Figure 33) was developed by the CDC based of results from the 2017 BRFSS to examine the relationship between ACEs and negative health behaviors and outcomes. The figure presents potential reductions of negative outcomes in adulthood. A reduction in ACEs in childhood could potentially reduce adult depressive disorders by 44%, smoking by 33%, and heavy drinking by 24%.

Figure 32: The ACEs Model developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018)

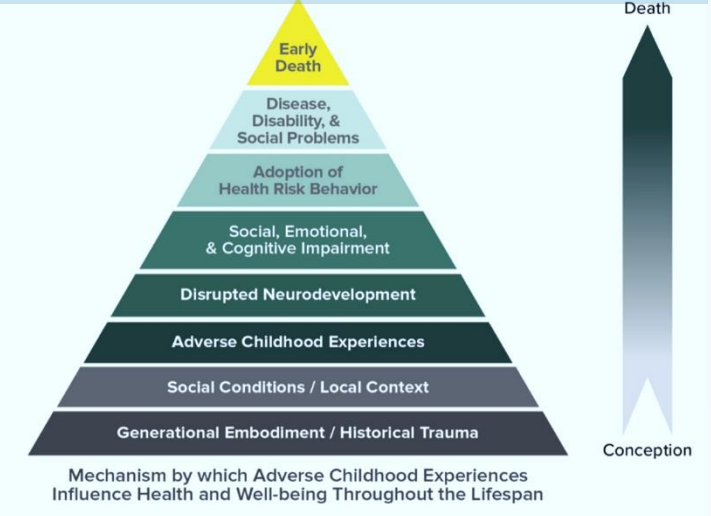
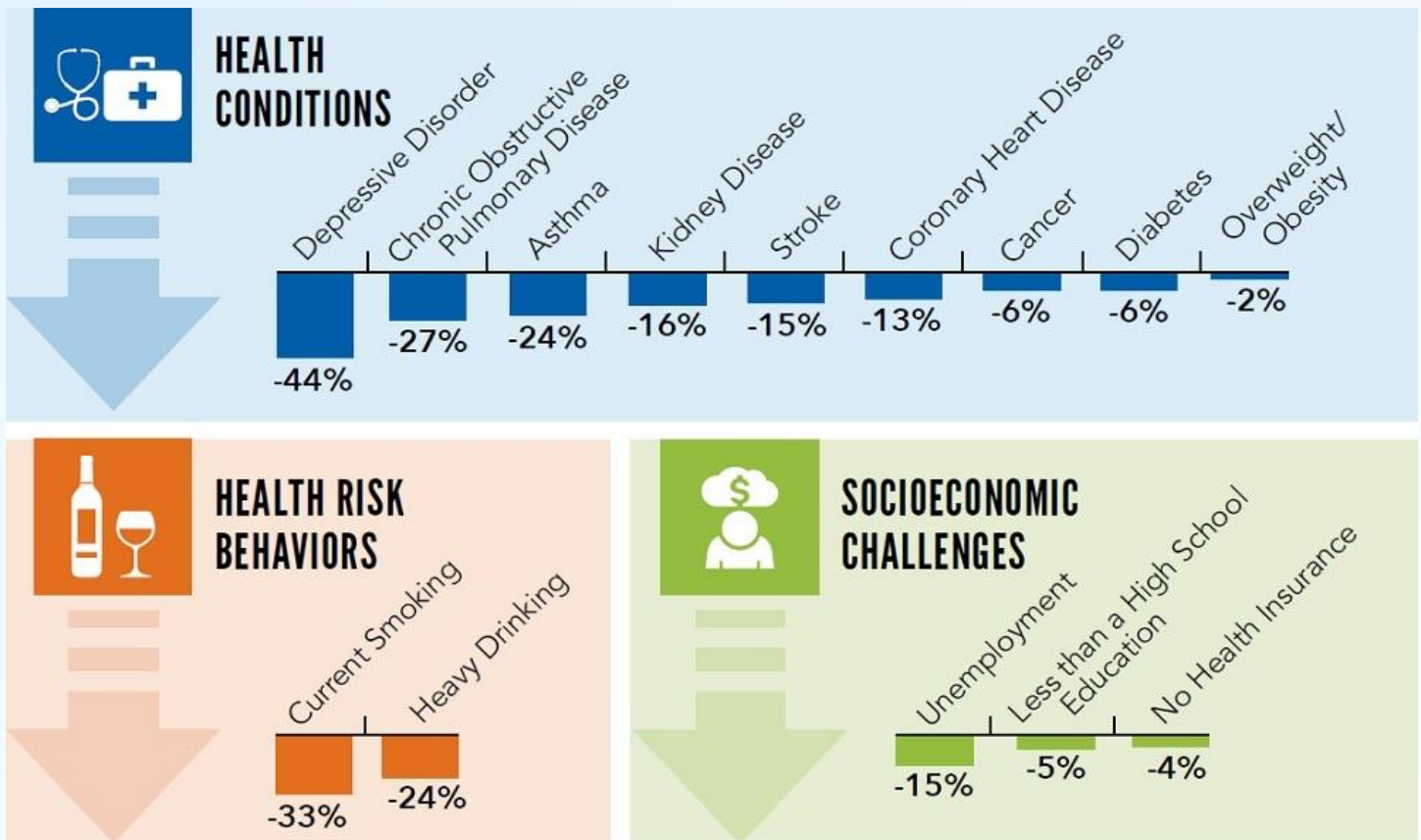


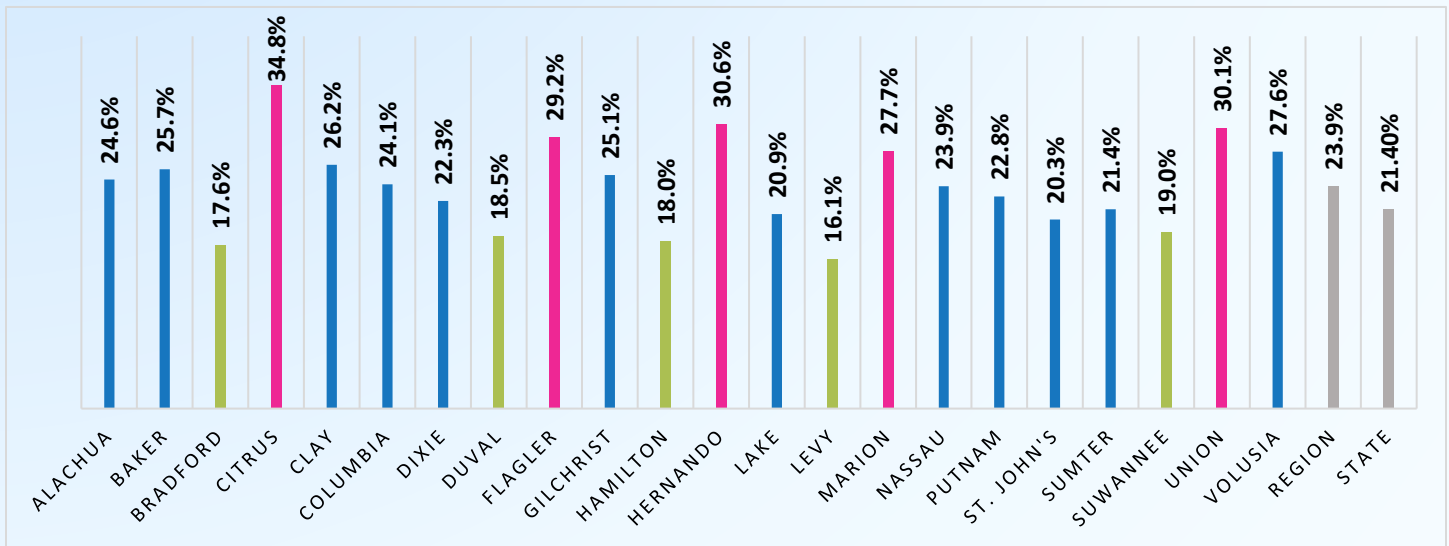
FIGURE 33: PREVENTING ACEs COULD REDUCE A LARGE NUMBER OF HEALTH CONDITIONS (CDC 2019, BRFSS 2017)



(SOURCE: OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION 2020)

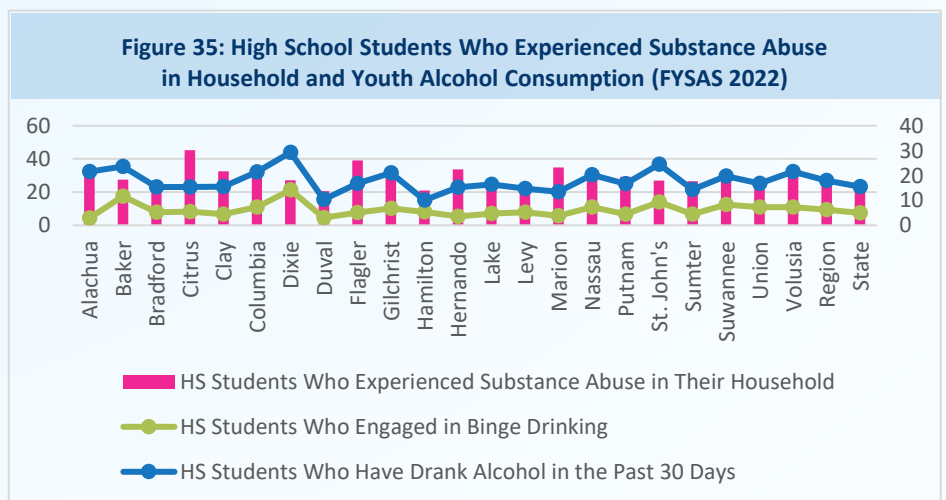
According to the most recent FYSAS survey conducted at the county level, the Northeast region of Florida has a higher overall average for students (15 to 17 years of age) reporting lifetime ACEs. The following Figure 34 provides the percentage for each county in Northeast Florida who reported ACE scores during the last data collecting in 2022. Lafayette county did not participate. The top 5 counties with the highest percentage of students reporting 4 or more ACEs, highlighted in pink, include Citrus, Flagler, Hernando, Marion, and Union counties. The 5 counties in 2022 presenting the lowest ACE scores are highlighted in green, these included Bradford, Duval, Hamilton, Levy, and Suwannee.

FIGURE 34: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA COMPARED TO THE STATE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED FOUR OR MORE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES \*No data for Lafayette County in 2022



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

Figure 35 to the right examines high school youth reports of alcohol use, past 30-day and binge drinking, in comparison to the percent of students reporting substance use in the household as an ACE. The data presented reveals that there is some correlation between substance use in the household and youth substance use.



Data presented in this chart reveals that it is likely in some instances students who experience substance abuse in their household will be more likely to engage in alcohol use or binge drinking. The correlation varied from county to county so there is no clear case of causation. Nevertheless, the Northeast region of Florida is also higher than the state for overall likelihood of students reporting substance abuse in the household, past 30-day use of alcohol, and engagement in binge drinking.

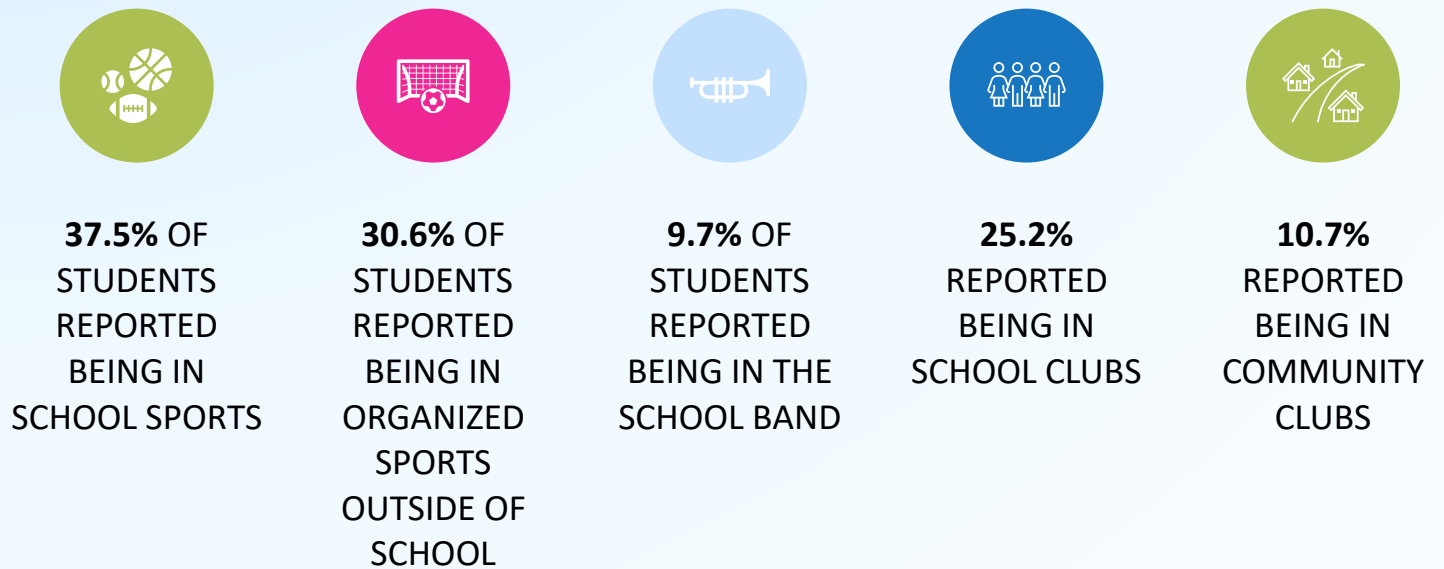


PROSOCIAL ACTIVITIES & POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (PCEs)

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) are defined as childhood experiences which stem from safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments, and have the power to prevent or protect children from traumatic events, toxic stress, or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) (CDC, 2024). Those included in FYSAS are school sports, organized sports outside of school, school band, school clubs, community clubs, family opportunities for prosocial involvement, family rewards for prosocial involvement, school opportunities for prosocial involvement, school rewards for prosocial involvement, religiosity.

According to the most recent FYSAS data, in 2022, the Northeast region of Florida reported lower protective factor prevalence when it comes to school opportunities and rewards for prosocial involvement, but has comparable rates of opportunities for family, peer, and individual prosocial involvement when compared to the state. The following graphic (Figure 36) shows percentages of students in Northeast Florida who reported engaging in prosocial or PCE opportunities.

FIGURE 36: NORTHEAST FLORIDA STUDENT REPORTS OF ENGAGING IN PROSOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES



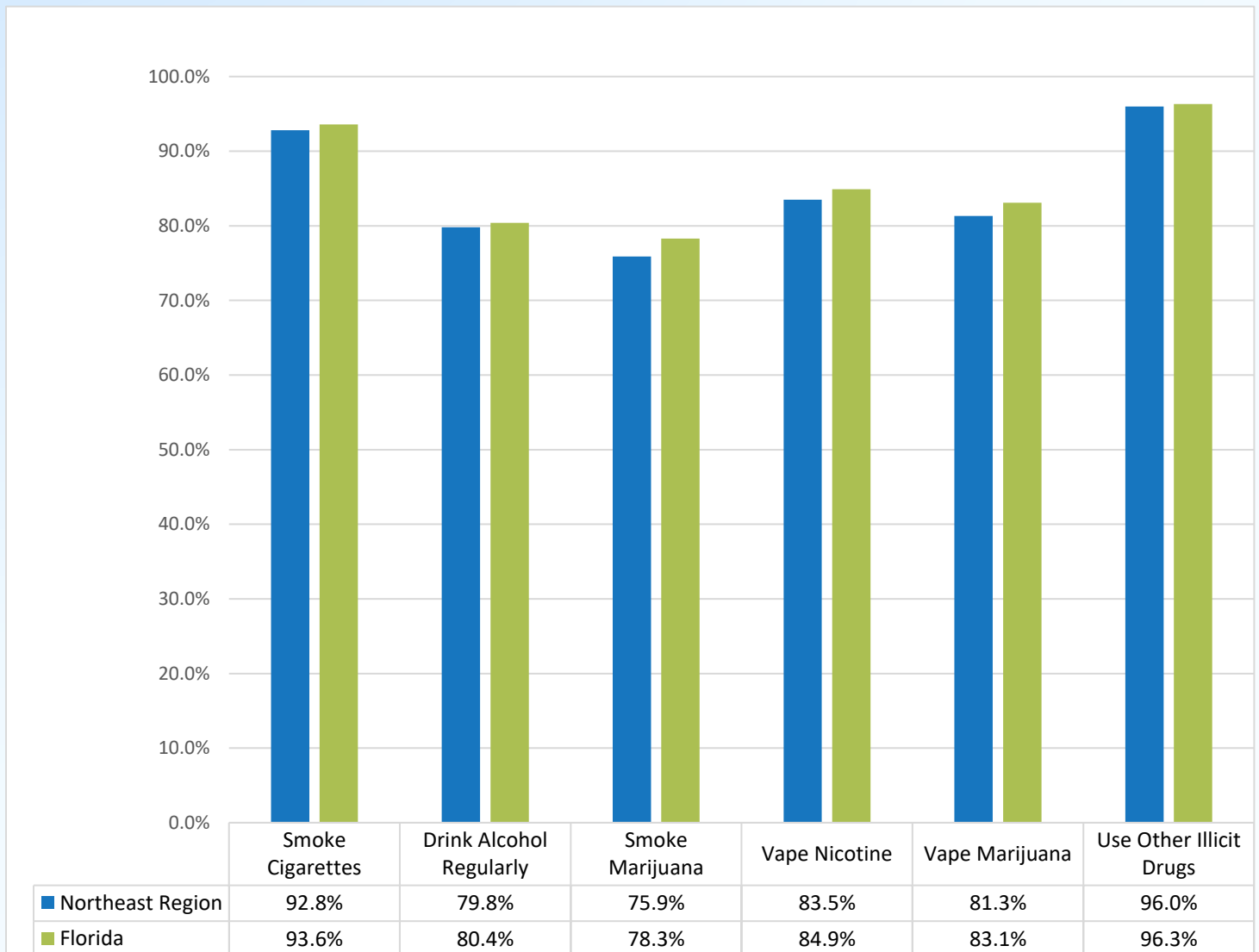
(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

From the data above it can be seen that many students are currently involved in prosocial activities in school and in the community. Since prosocial activities are protective when it comes to poor mental health outcomes and substance use in youth it is pivotal that we focus efforts on engaging students in these types of activities. Creating these types of opportunities is essential to the protection of our youth.

YOUTH PERCEPTIONS

The Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) collects student perceptions regarding alcohol use and other substances among students in the Northeast Region. Perceptions can be considered risk or protective factors depending on if they would promote or restrict a negative behavior from occurring. The figure below (Figure 37) compares student perceptions in Northeast Florida to the state on whether they think it would be wrong to engage in substance use activities.

FIGURE 37: STUDENTS AT THE REGIONAL AND STATE-LEVEL WHO "THINK IT WOULD BE WRONG TO" USE VARIOUS SUBSTANCES

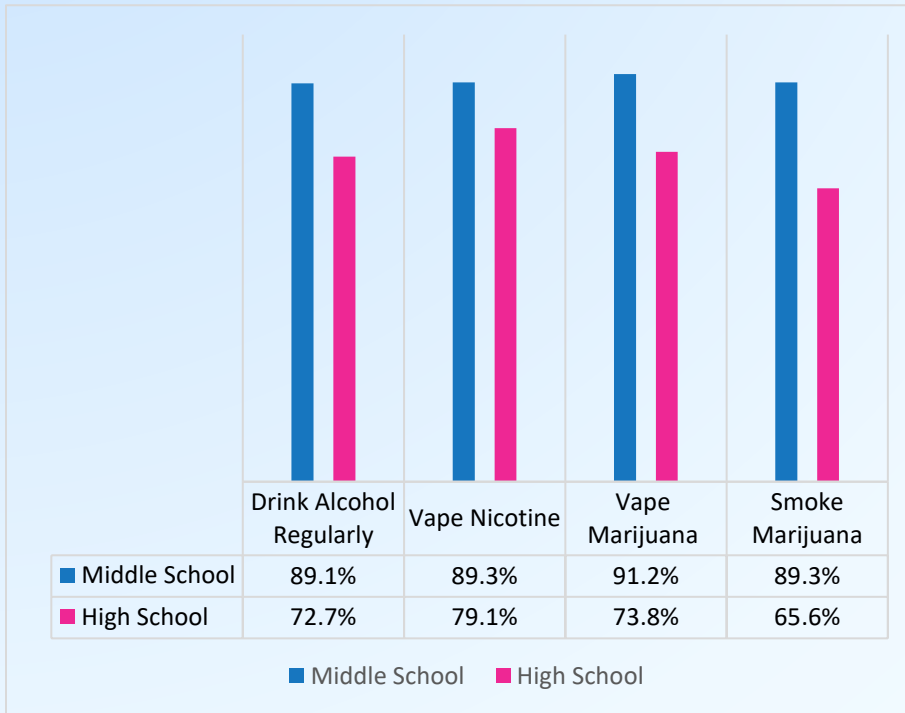


(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

For perceptions of thinking it would be wrong to use various substances the Northeast Region of Florida was slightly lower in all categories. A lower percentage indicates a lower negative perception and a higher risk for negative behavioral outcomes. The largest differences can be seen in vaping and smoking marijuana.

Figure 38 below examines middle and high school data related to perceptions of whether they think it would be wrong to engage in use of various substances including drinking alcohol regularly, vaping nicotine, vaping marijuana, and smoking marijuana.

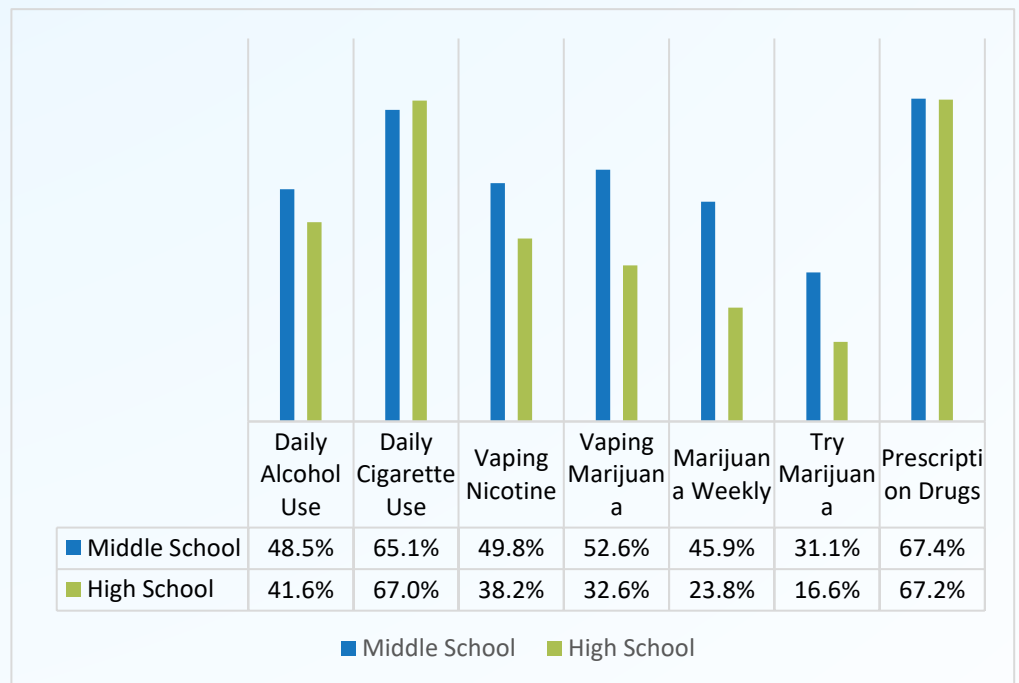
FIGURE 38: NORTHEAST FLORIDA MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORTED "THINKING IT WOULD BE WRONG TO" USE VARIOUS SUBSTANCES



The data presented here indicates that more middle school students tend to feel that it is wrong to use alcohol and other drugs compared to high school students. When it comes to drinking alcohol regularly there was a 20.3% decrease for students who think it would be wrong from middle school to high school, for vaping nicotine there was a 12.1% decrease, a 21.1% decrease for vaping marijuana, and 30.6% decrease for smoking marijuana. This indicates there are significant decreases in protective perceptions for students once they reach high school.

FIGURE 39: NORTHEAST FLORIDA MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORTED "A GREAT RISK OF HARM" ASSOCIATED WITH USING VARIOUS SUBSTANCES

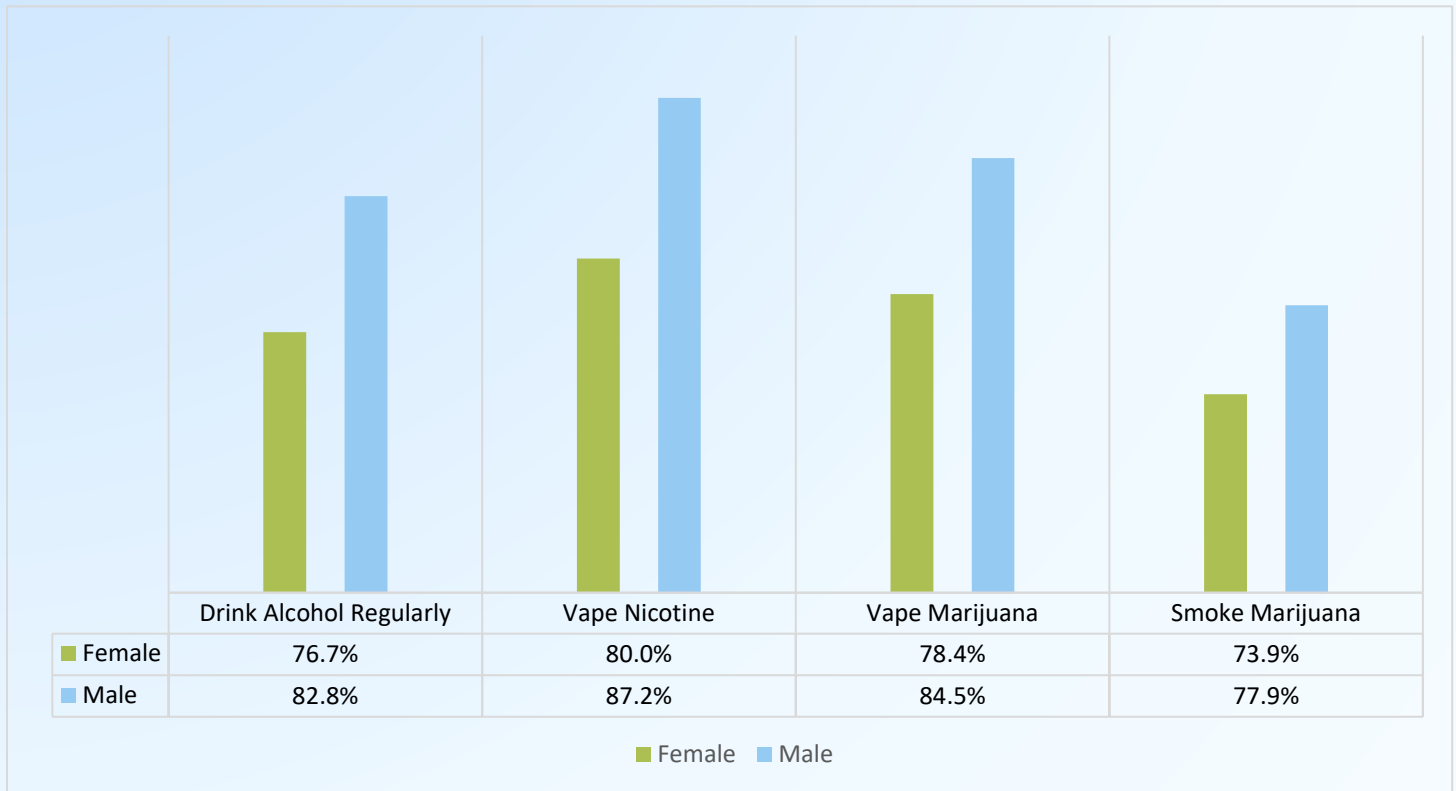
The same was true when it came to whether students perceived a great risk of harm and whether they think friends would think it is wrong. For perceived risk of harm high school was comparable to middle school for daily cigarette use and prescription drug. See Figure 39 to the right.



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

There are also key differences between female and male students. [Figure 40](#) below highlights the differences in perceptions between middle and high school students as well as male and female students.

FIGURE 40: FEMALE AND MALE STUDENTS WHO REPORTED "THINKING IT WOULD BE WRONG TO" USE VARIOUS SUBSTANCES



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

Female students tended to report lower negative perceptions than male students in all categories. Later in the report it is noted female students also report higher rates of substance use in most categories compared to males, see [Figure 52](#) in the youth substance use section.

Additional data from the 2022 Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS) helps the community better understand the youths’ perceptions regarding substance use, specifically, cigarette, cigar, and electronic vapor use. In reference to thoughts on cigarette usage, 10.3% of middle and high school students in the Northeast region do not believe that people can become addicted to cigarettes while 12.2% think it would be easy to quit smoking cigarettes. Furthermore, 29.8% of students think that cigarettes help people feel more comfortable in social situations and 49.3% believe cigarettes help people relieve stress.

Regarding electronic vapor products, 10.7% of students do not think electronic vapor products are addictive, 54.0% of students believe that using these products help people relieve stress, 44.9% believe they help people feel more comfortable at social gatherings/parties, 16.0% believe they make young people “look cool” or “fit in”, and 34.6% believe that people who use these products have more friends.

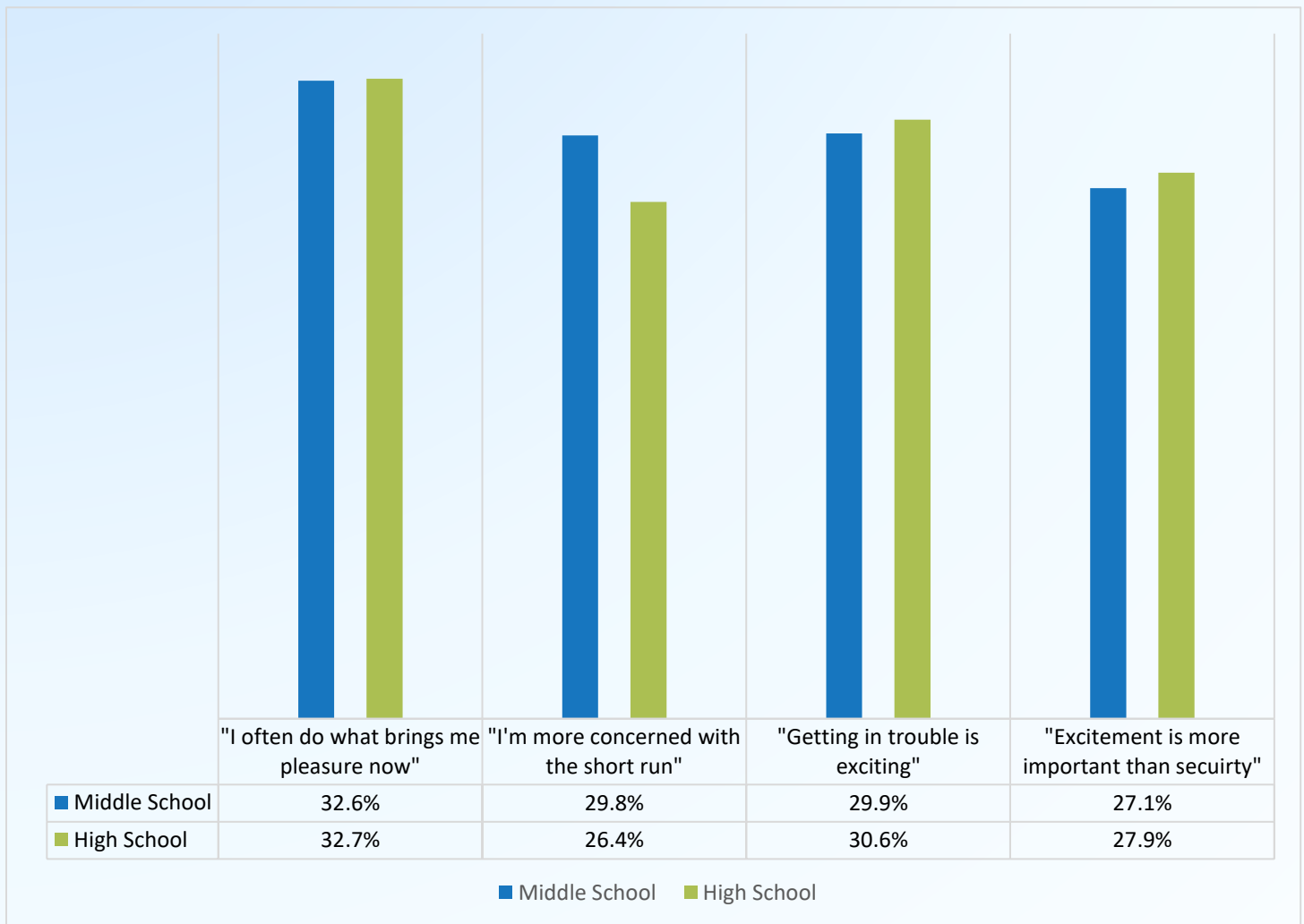


OTHER RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

Other risk and protective factors examined in this section include student self-reported lack of self-control and impulsiveness, bullying, and social norms at various levels of the socio-ecological model.

The following figure (Figure 41) examines middle and high school students' feelings about impulsiveness and lack of self-control.

FIGURE 41: NORTHEAST FLORIDA MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO RESPONDED "AGREE" OR "STRONGLY AGREE" TO QUESTIONS ABOUT IMPULSIVITY

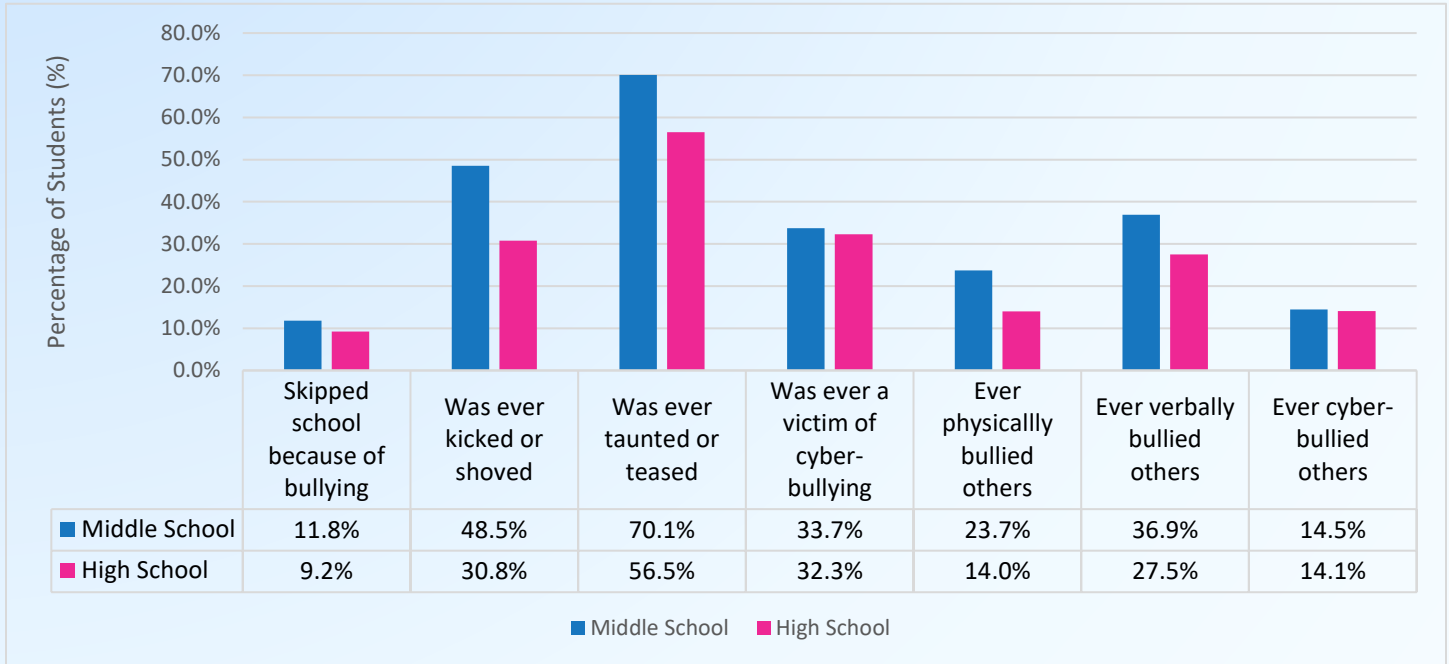


(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

In reference to the figure above, middle and high school students reported comparable rates of impulsivity with approximately 33% reporting they often do what brings them pleasure now, 30% believing getting in trouble is exciting, and 27% stating excitement is more important than security. Middle school students reported higher rates of being more concerned with the short run or lack of thoughts for the future when compared to high school students. When compared by gender, females were again higher in all categories as compared to males.

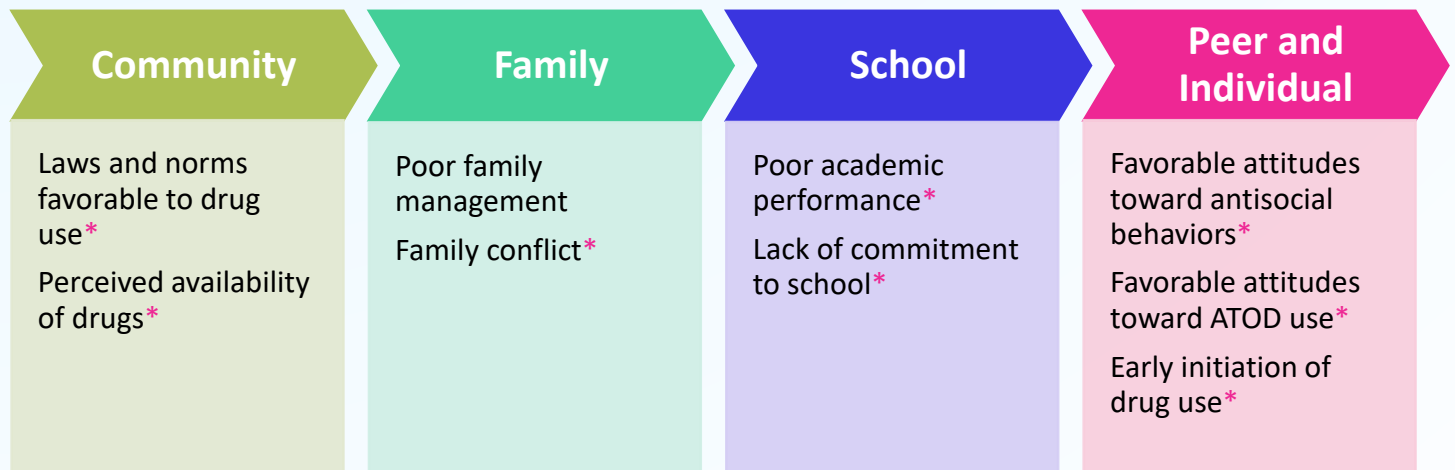
Bullying is another risk factor in Northeast Florida and across the nation as students may feel uncomfortable participating in prosocial activities or may even miss school due to bullying incidents. The figure below (Figure 42) examines different types of bullying among middle and high school students in the region. The most reported bullying behaviors were kicking, shoving, teasing, taunting, and cyber-bullying.

FIGURE 42: NORTHEAST FLORIDA MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO REPORTED BULLYING BEHAVIORS



The following graphic (Figure 43) examines socio-ecological levels in Northeast Florida and youth perceptions of enablers that may explain higher rates of youth substance use in Northeast Florida which will be discussed in the next section. All areas with a pink asterisk \*are perceived by youth at a higher level than the state.

FIGURE 43: YOUTH PERCEIVED ENABLERS AT VARIOUS SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL LEVELS



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

YOUTH AND ADULT CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

NORTHEAST FLORIDA YOUTH CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

This section will examine the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) and the Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), two of four surveys included among the Florida Youth Survey (FYS) conducted by the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) and the Florida Department of Children and Families.

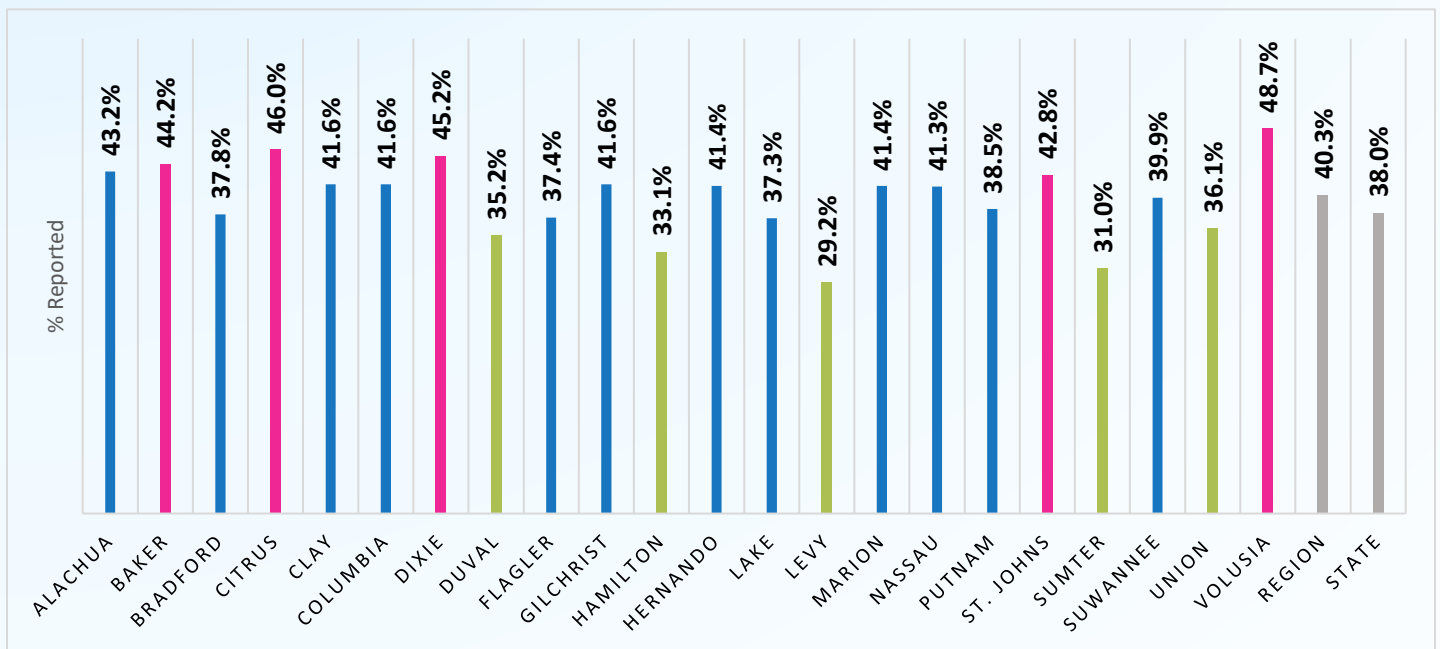
FYSAS captures middle school and high school (ages 11-18) data annually at the state level and biannually at the state, regional, and county levels. To ensure validity in our assessment we will be using data from the 2022 release for the county, region, and state level comparisons. 2022 is the most recent county-level analysis as of July 2024, the next data release at this level is expected to come out later this year.

The FYTS is conducted yearly among middle and high-school students (ages 11-18) within Florida public schools. The FYTS collects data on various indicators including tobacco use, feelings toward tobacco use, second-hand smoke exposure, mental health, physical activity, health care access, and electronic vapor product use.

YOUTH REPORTED LIFETIME USE

Figure 44 below shares percentages of youth reported lifetime use of alcohol or any illicit drug at the county, region, and state level in 2022. The top 5 highest reported in this category are highlighted in pink, the top 5 lowest are highlighted in green. Lafayette county did not participate in 2022.

FIGURE 44: YOUTH LIFETIME USE OF ALCOHOL OR ANY ILLICIT DRUG AT VARIOUS GEOGRAPHIC LEVELS



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

According to this data, Northeast Florida has an overall higher average than the state for youth lifetime use. Of the counties in Northeast Florida, 12 out of 23 are higher than the regional average for youth reporting lifetime use of alcohol or any illicit drug, 14 are higher than the state average.

Trends in youth lifetime use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs from 2012 to 2022 in the 23-county Northeast Region of Florida, reveal that since 2012 there has been an overall decrease in use. When it comes to alcohol or any illicit drug lifetime use, we have seen a continued decline in students from 53.1% in 2012 to 40.3% of students in 2022, with one small spike in 2020. Since this increase in 2020 we see a decline again in 2022 for all categories except any illicit drug, but no alcohol which continues to follow an increasing trend since 2012. See Figure 45 below for a visual of these trends.

FIGURE 45: TRENDS IN YOUTH LIFETIME USE IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA 2012-2022

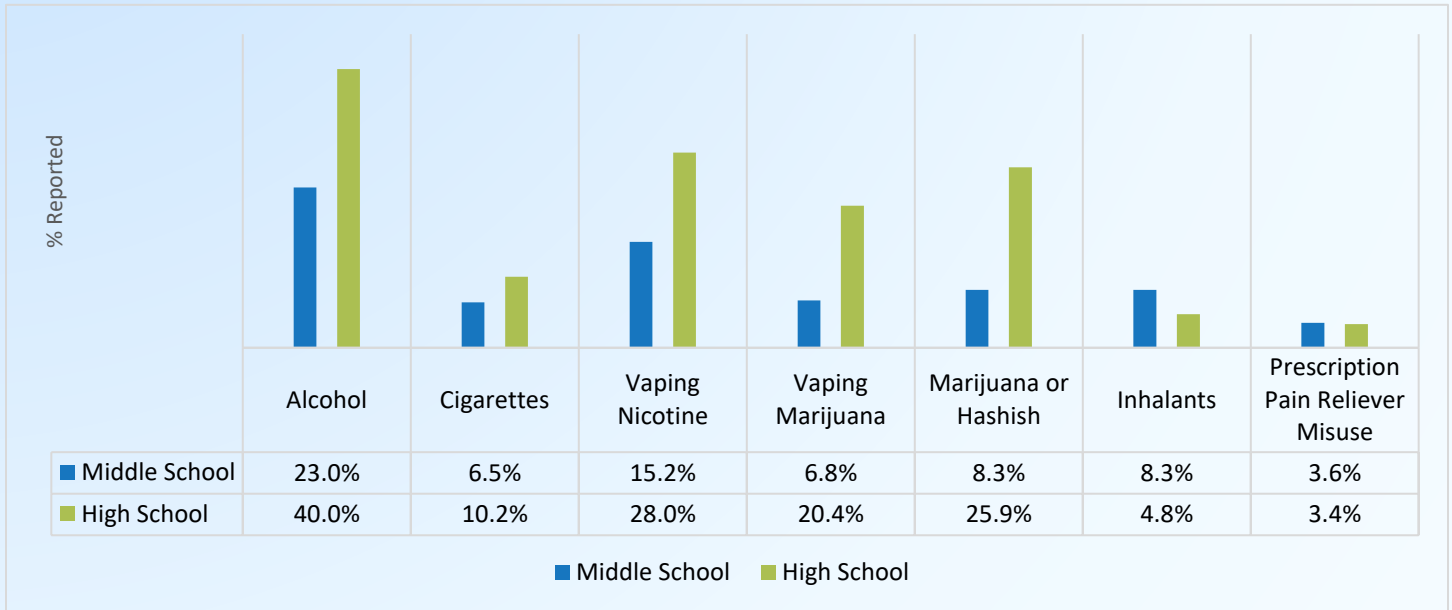


(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)



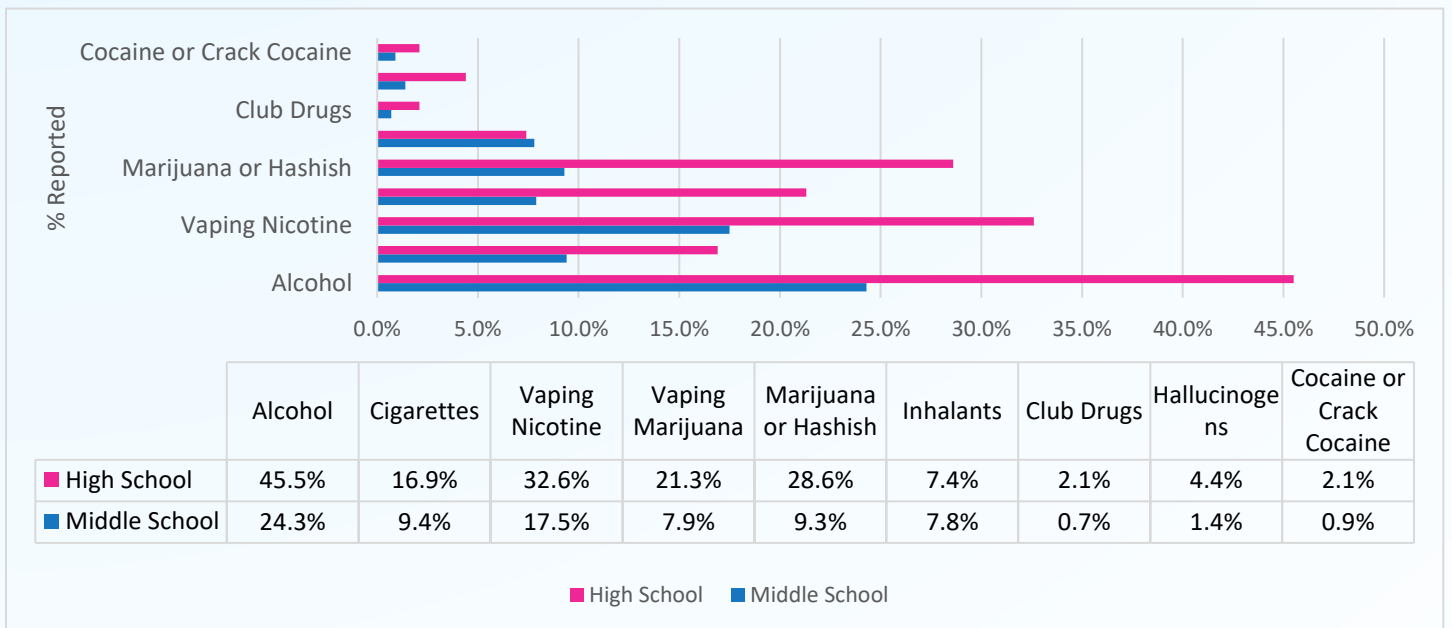
Figure 46 below reveals high school students tended to have higher levels of alcohol, nicotine, and marijuana lifetime use overall in 2022, while middle school students reported higher rates of inhalant (8.3% vs 4.8%) and prescription pain reliever lifetime misuse (3.6% vs 3.4%).

FIGURE 46: NORTHEAST FLORIDA MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL LIFETIME USE COMPARISON



Similarly, 5-year averages (2018-2022) as seen in Figure 47 below reveals the same trend is true of inhalant use in middle school students over the past five years. Different from data presented in Figure 46, Figure 48 on the next page reveals prescription misuse (2018-2022) has been higher among high school students.

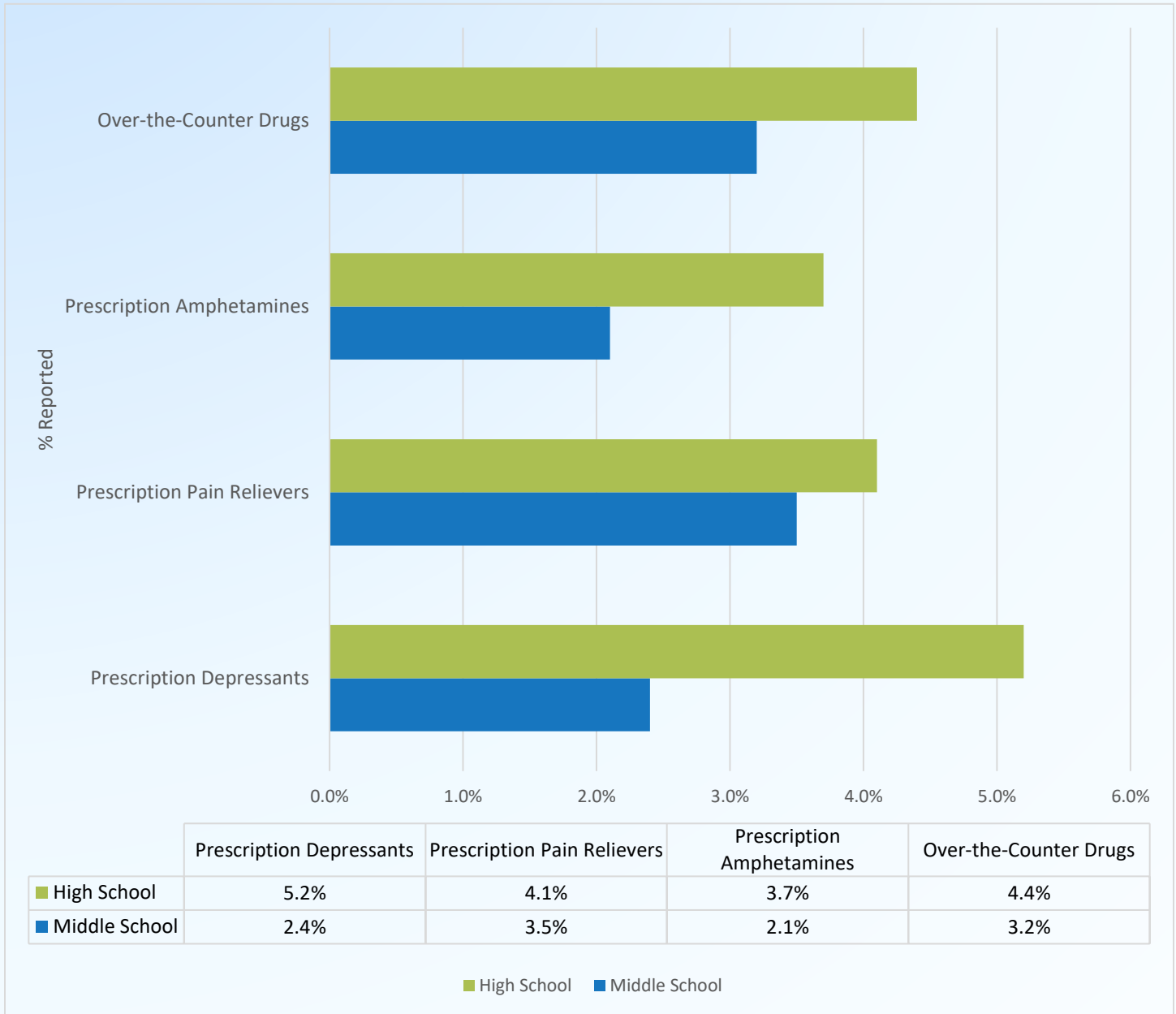
FIGURE 47: 5-YEAR REGIONAL AVERAGE YOUTH LIFETIME USE OF VARIOUS SUBSTANCES, 2018-2022



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

In relation to medication misuse, [Figure 48](#) below reveals that from 2018-2022 middle school and high school students have on average had similar lifetime medication misuse across medication types with high school students reporting higher lifetime misuse.

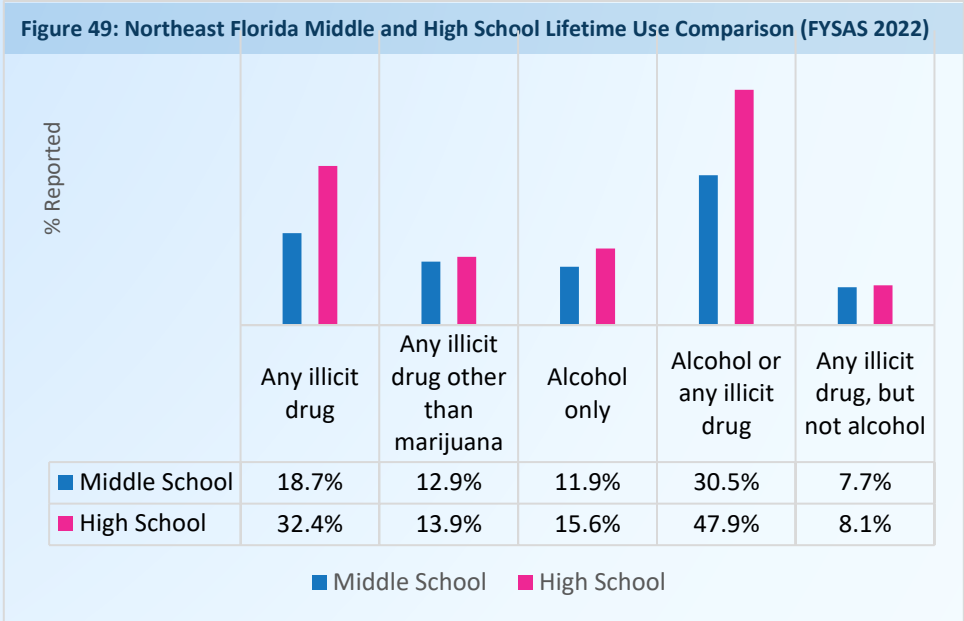
FIGURE 48: 5-YEAR REGIONAL AVERAGE YOUTH LIFETIME MEDICATION MISUSE (FYSAS 2022)



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

Among high school students, depressants are the most misused, followed by over-the-counter drugs, then pain relievers, and least misused are prescription amphetamines. Middle school students were less likely to misuse prescription depressants, instead most commonly misusing prescription pain relievers, followed by over-the-counter drugs, prescription depressants, and prescription amphetamines. As seen in [Figure 46](#), in 2022, middle school students reported at a higher rate than high school students for prescription pain reliever misuse.

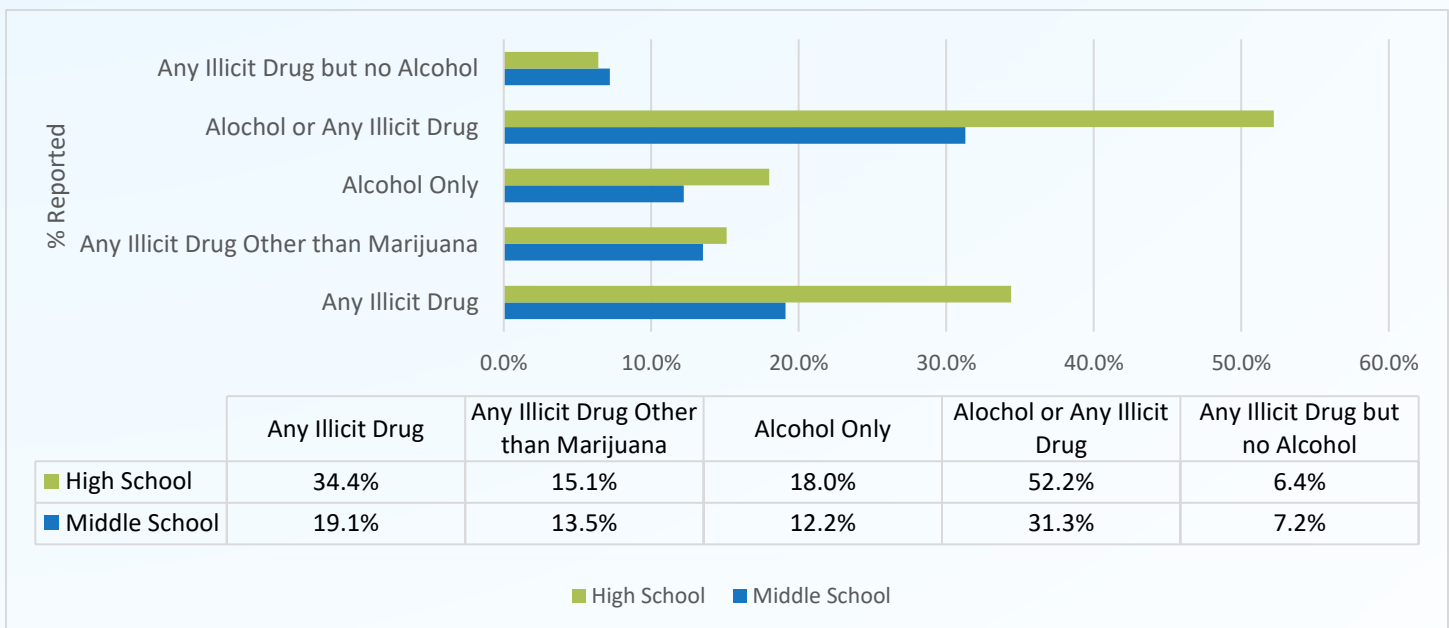
Figure 49 to the right examines multiple substance use categories and youth reported percentages of engagement with that type of substance use category. According to this data, overall, 18.7% of middle school students reported using any illicit drug as compared to 34.4% of high school students in their lifetime. Middle school student data of lifetime use of any illicit drug other than marijuana is reported at similar levels to high school students (12.9% vs 13.9%),



and the same pattern is seen with use of any illicit drug but no alcohol (7.7% vs 8.1%). While alcohol or any illicit drug use was 30.5% for middle school students and 47.9% for high school students in 2022. Alcohol only lifetime use was reported as 11.9% for middle school and 15.6% for high school.

Figure 50 below further reviews the youth lifetime use data from Figure 49 as a 5-year regional average (2018-2022). In this comparison middle school students were more likely to report any illicit drug use but no alcohol (7.2% vs 6.4%) in their lifetimes and had comparable percentages of students reporting any illicit drug use other than marijuana as compared to high school students (13.5% vs 15.1%).

FIGURE 50: 5-YEAR REGIONAL AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL LIFETIME USE COMPARISON, 2018-2022



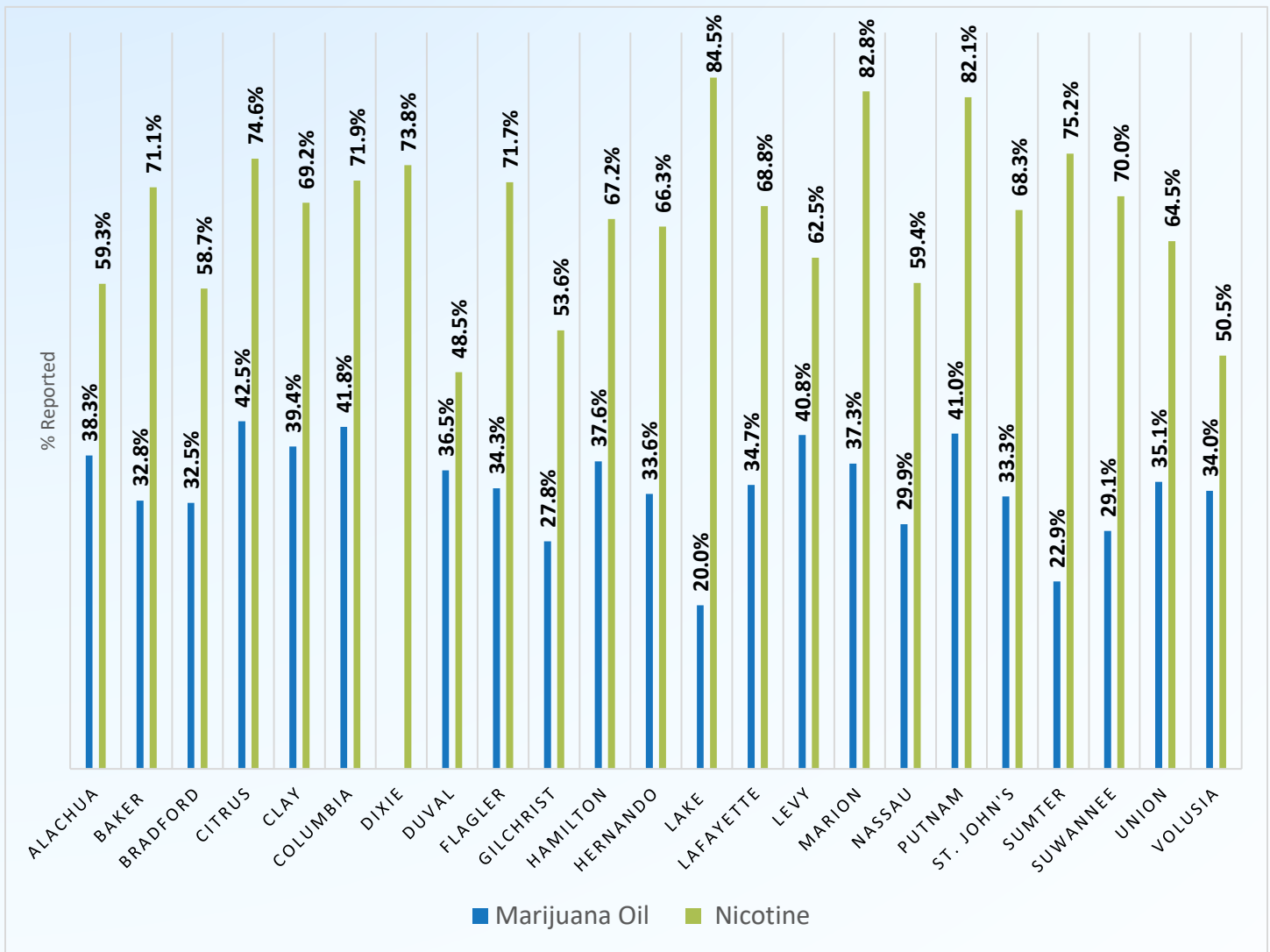
(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

In 2022, 17.7% of middle and high school students in the Northeast region reported ever trying cigarettes, cigars, or smokeless tobacco. Furthermore, 12.6% reported ever trying smoking cigarettes, 6.3% reported ever trying smoking cigars, 17.7% reported ever trying flavored smokeless tobacco, and 6.1% reported ever trying smokeless tobacco (including chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip). Other substances including hookah had very lower reports of usage with 3.8% of students ever trying hookah.

Additional data from the 2022 FYTS indicates that in Northeast region 30.7% of middle and high school students reported ever using an electronic vapor product. Of these students, 34.3% have reported using electronic vapor products with marijuana oil and 67.6% have reported using electronic vapor products with nicotine. Figure 51 below shares county level data related to these behaviors.

FIGURE 51: LIFETIME STUDENT USE OF ELECTRONIC VAPOR PRODUCTS BY NORTHEAST FLORIDA COUNTY

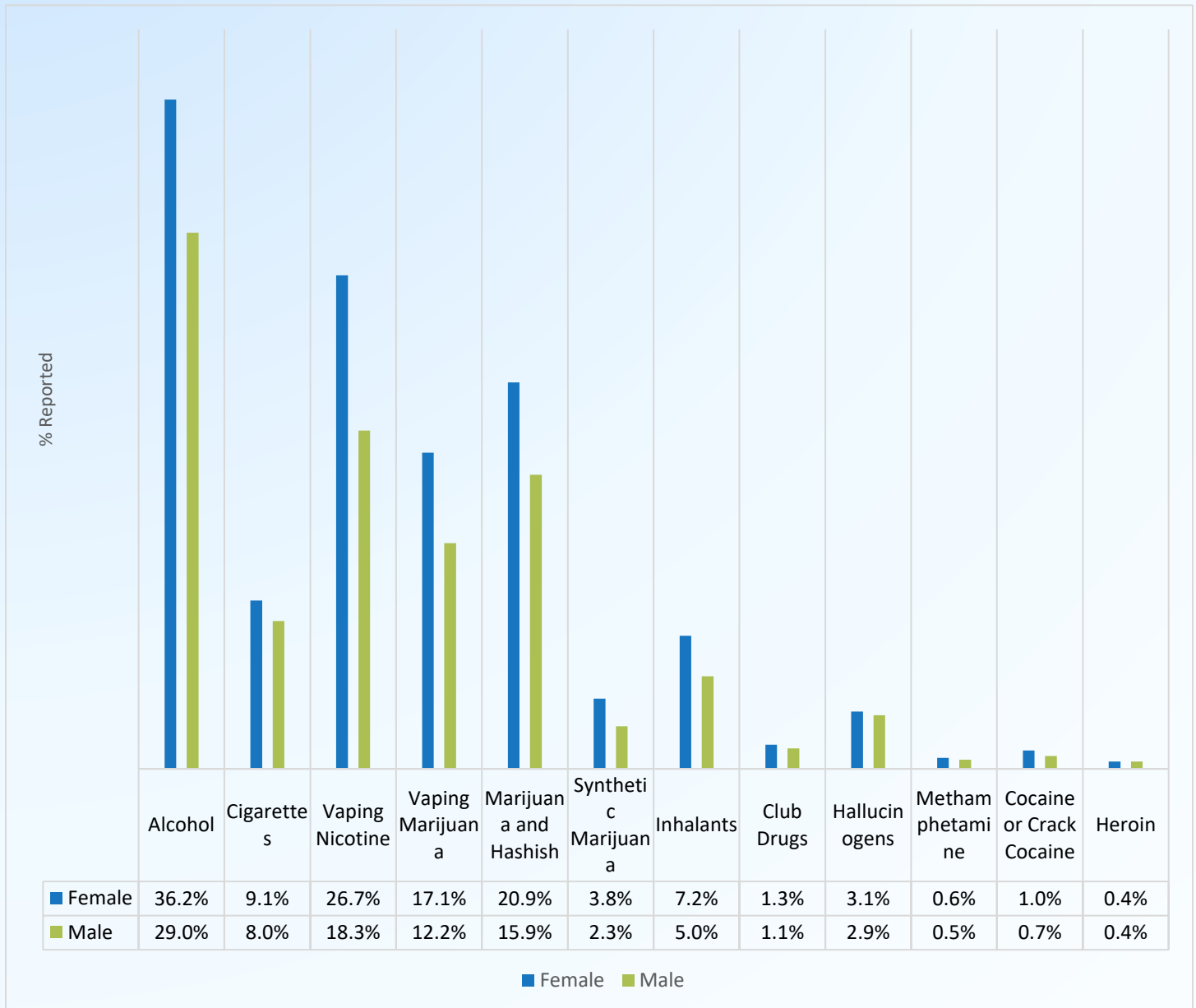
\*NO DATA FOR LIFETIME USE OF ELECTRONIC VAPOR PRODUCTS WITH MARIJUANA OIL FOR DIXIE COUNTY IN 2022



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH TOBACCO SURVEY 2022)

With respect to gender, female students reported higher rates of lifetime use in all categories as compared to males even though slightly more males in the Northeast Region completed the survey. Females were significantly higher than males in alcohol use (36.2% vs 29.0%), blacking out (14.4% vs. 10.2%), vaping nicotine (26.7% vs. 18.3%), vaping marijuana (17.1 vs. 12.2%), and marijuana use (20.9% vs. 15.9%). This is comparable to what is being seen at the state level. See Figure 52 below for a visualization of these comparisons.

FIGURE 52: NORTHEAST FLORIDA LIFETIME USE BY GENDER



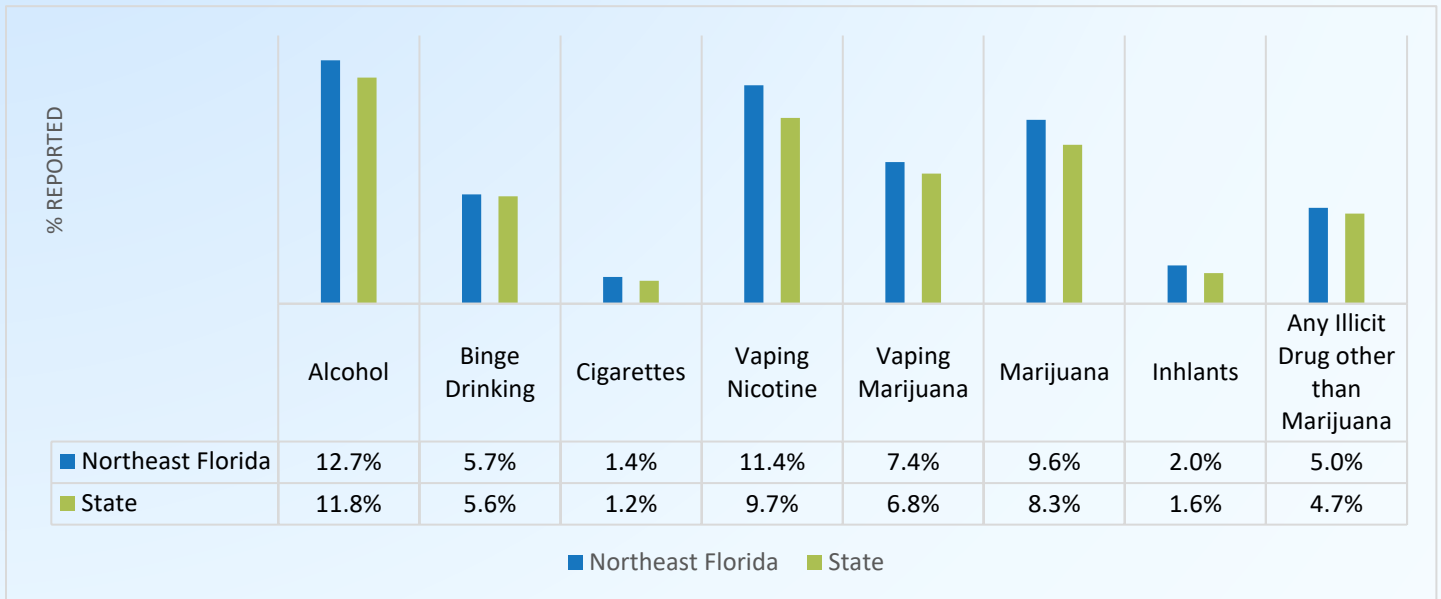
(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

As with lifetime use females tended to report high rates of use in all past 30-day use categories. The only individual substances in which males were comparable or slightly higher were cigarette use (0.1% higher), methamphetamine (both 3.0%), cocaine (0.3% higher), and over-the-counter drugs (0.1% higher).

YOUTH REPORTED PAST 30-DAY USE

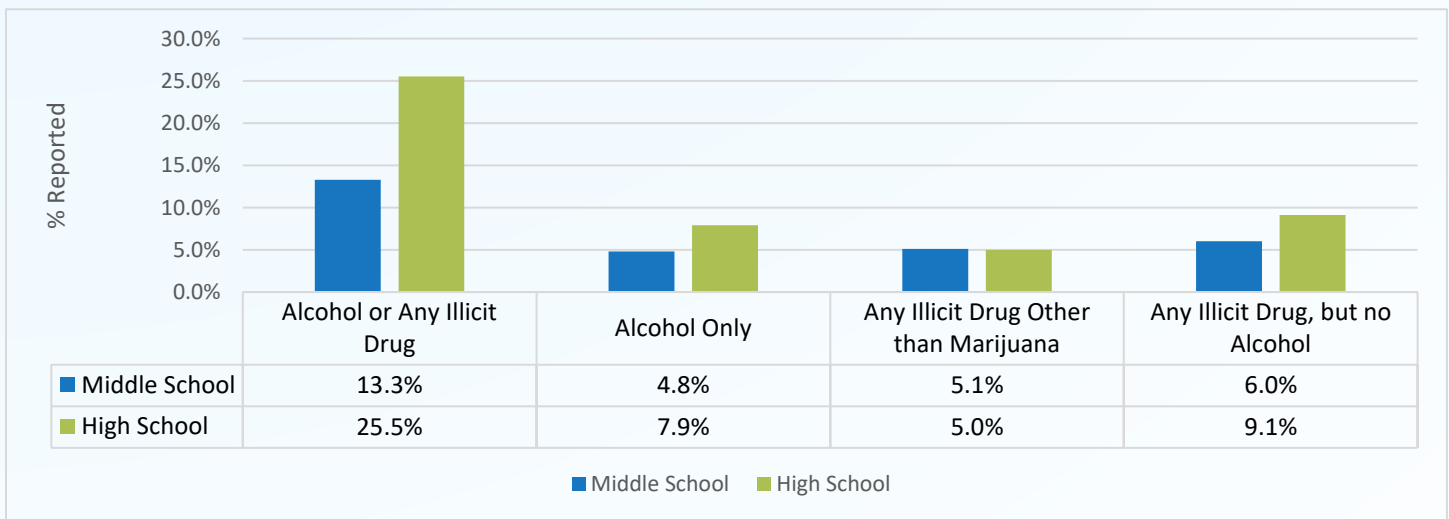
In comparison to the state, in 2022, Northeast Florida also had higher rates of past 30-day use in most categories. See Figure 53 below for comparisons of reported past 30-day use of various substances among students in the Northeast region to the state. Alcohol remains the highest used substance by youth in the past 30-days, followed by vaping nicotine and marijuana use.

FIGURE 53: NORTHEAST REGION AND STATE PAST 30-DAY USE



In 2022, 20.2% of students overall reported using alcohol or any illicit drug in the past 30 days, with 6.6% reporting alcohol only, 7.8% reporting any illicit drug, but no alcohol, and 5.0% reporting the use of any illicit drug other than marijuana. See Figure 54 below for middle and high school comparisons of these categories.

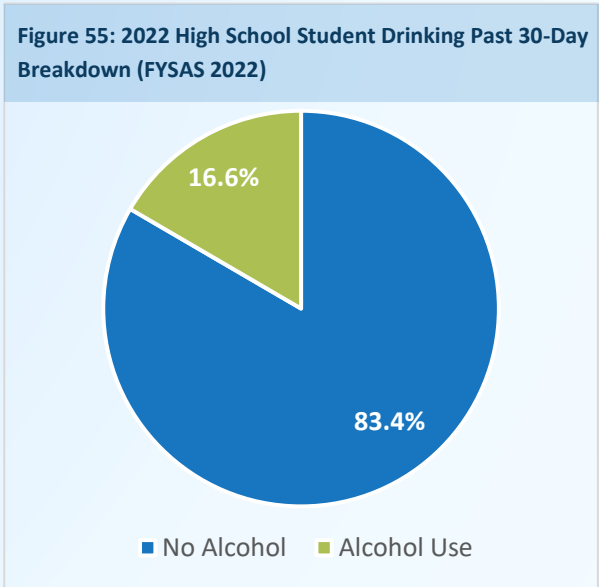
FIGURE 54: 2022 NORTHEAST FLORIDA MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL PAST 30-DAY USE COMPARISONS



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

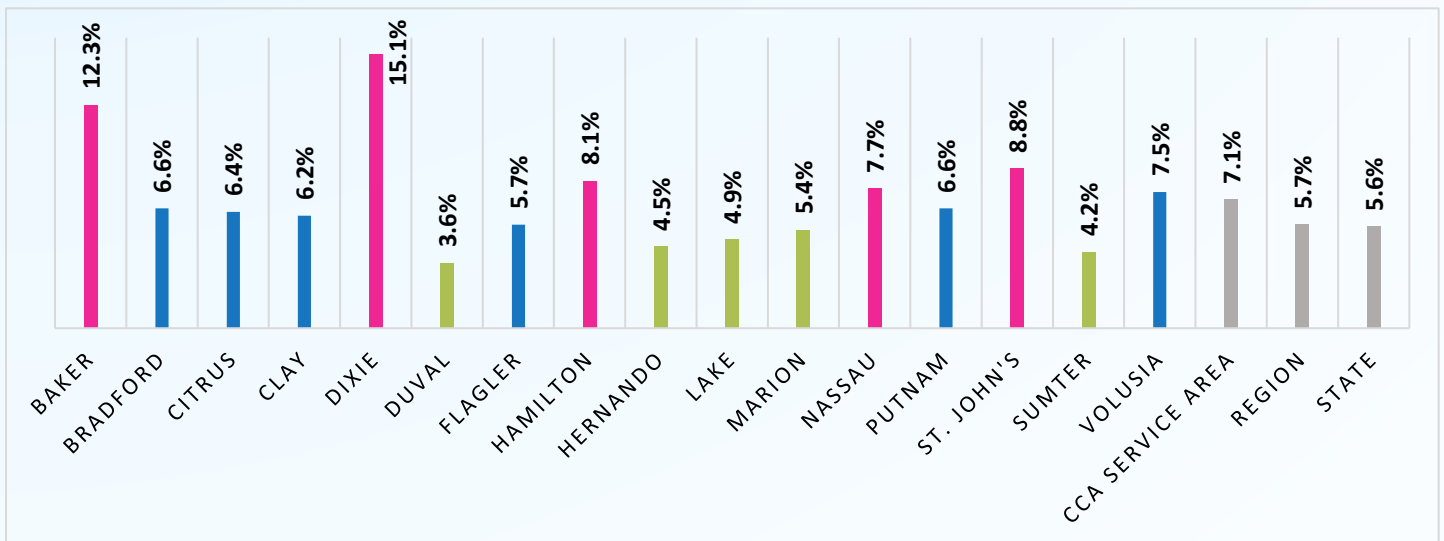
According to the data presented in Figure 54 on the previous page high school students reported higher among 3 of the four overall past 30-day use categories for past 30-day use, these included alcohol or any illicit drug, alcohol only, and any illicit drug, but no alcohol. Middle school students were 0.1% higher than high schoolers for any illicit drug other than marijuana use in the past-30 days.

Data from this release also revealed that 16.6% of high school students had engaged in alcohol use in the past 30 days, with 7.7% reporting **binge drinking**<sup>1</sup>. Figure 55 to the right highlights the number of students reporting alcohol use compared to students who do not. It is still clear most students do not engage in alcohol use underage, although approximately 2 in 10 will most likely engage in underage drinking, with 1 in 10 of those engaging in binge drinking according to this data.



Of these it was also revealed that 21.3% reported having consumed 5 or more drinks on the days they had drank, a much higher percentage than those who reported binge drinking. See Figure 56 below for selected counties in the CCA service area percentages of students self-reporting consuming 5 or more drinks on the days they had drank in the past 30 days. The top 5 highest counties are highlighted in pink, the counties with the lowest reported are in green.

FIGURE 56: SELF-REPORTED 5 OR MORE DRINKS WHEN DRINKING IN THE PAST 30-DAYS AMONG STUDENTS AT VARIOUS GEOGRAPHIC LEVELS



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

<sup>1</sup> According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), binge drinking is a pattern of drinking that brings the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08%, or the legal driving limit in America. Typically binge drinking occurs is when a woman has 4 or more drinks, or a man has 5 or more drinks, within a 2-hour timeframe.

Of countries in the CCA service area, 10 reported higher rates of binge drinking 5 or more beverages, binge drinking, on a single drinking occasion in the past 30-days. Baker, Dixie, Hamilton, Nassau, and St. John’s reported the highest percentage of these occurrences according to Figure 56. The CCA service area overall was higher than the region and the state on average, and the region itself was higher than the state as well in 2022.

The most common location where high school students reported drinking in the past 30 days was at home (48.2%) or another person’s home (29.7%). Other places where high school students reported drinking were cars, restaurants, bars, clubs, public places, public events, and school property. This data is only collected at the high school level, students ages 15-17.

The following chart (Figure 57) presents the reported percentages of drinking at home in the CCA service area counties as compared to the region and state. The top 5 highest counties for drinking at home are highlighted in pink, the counties with the lowest youth reporting drinking at home are in green.

FIGURE 57: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS REPORTING DRINKING AT HOME GEOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

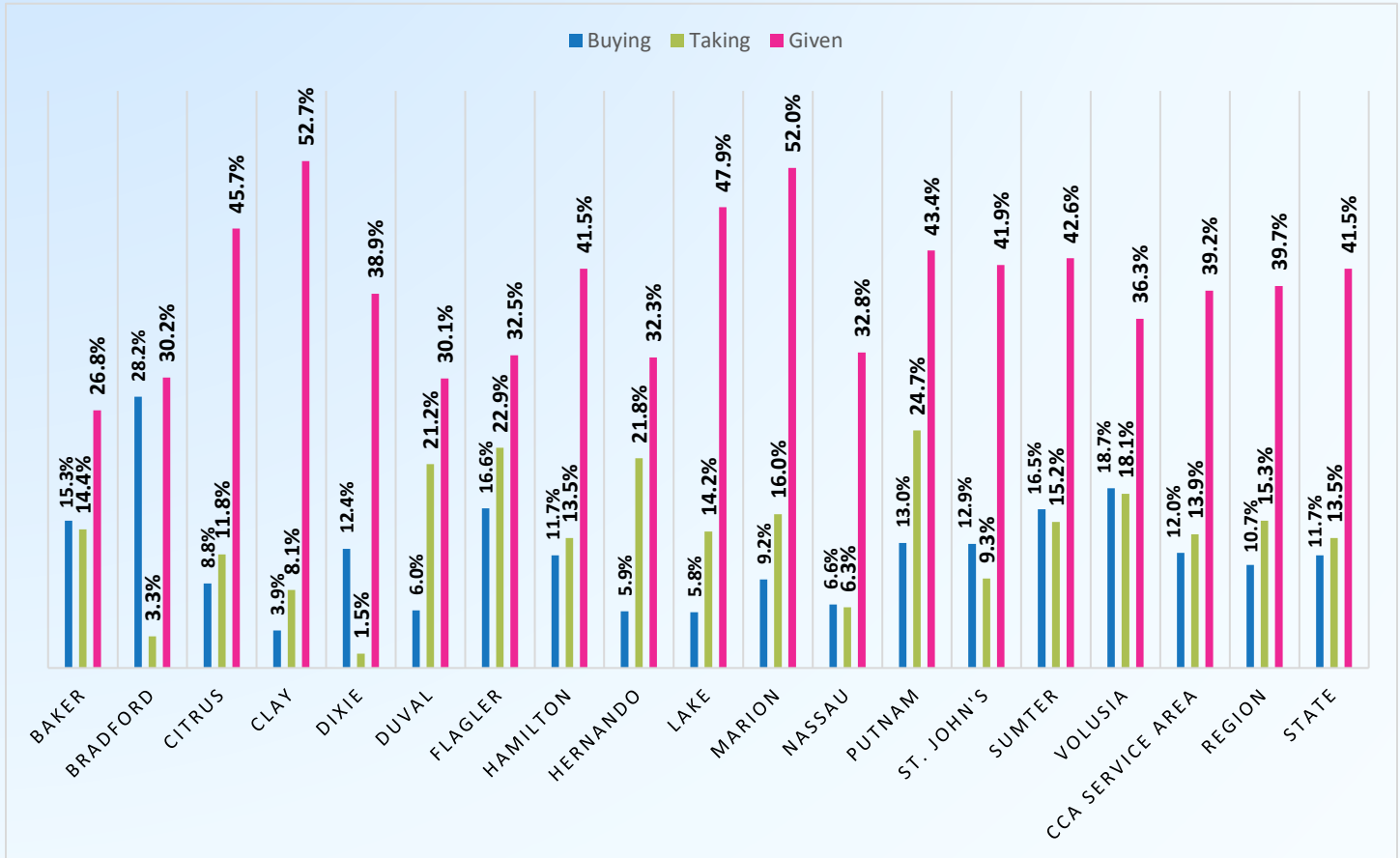
Bradford, Duval, Flagler, Marion, and Putnum counties had the highest percentages of high school students reporting drinking at home. Baker, Dixie, Lake, Nassau, and St. John’s have the lowest. In comparison to the region and the state, 7 counties reported higher percentages than the region and 10 higher percentages than the state. The CCA service area on average reported the same percentages as the region, but higher than the state.

Figure 58 on the next page examines youth-reported data on how alcohol was obtained among high school drinkers only. The selected categories for this data were whether they bought the alcohol in a store (bought), someone gave it to them (given), or they took it from a family member (taking).



The most common way of a youth obtaining alcohol in Florida was by being given the alcohol in some way, followed by taking the alcohol, and then buying the alcohol themselves. In the Northeast region, 39.7% of high school students who engaged in drinking stated they obtained the alcohol by it being given to them; this is lower than the state at 41.5%, but higher than the CCA service area at 39.2%.

FIGURE 58: METHODS OF ALCOHOL OBTAINMENT REPORTED BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

Other methods highlighted in the above graphic (Figure 58) included buying and taking alcohol, these methods were significantly lower than being given alcohol. When it came to taking alcohol, the region (15.3%) was higher than the state (13.5%), with the CCA service area (13.9%) being higher than the state but lower than the region. The CCA service area also had higher reports of youth purchasing alcohol than the region or the state.

Of the selected counties, 8 had a higher percentage reporting being given alcohol than the region or the state, 6 were higher than the region or state for taking alcohol, and 8 were higher than the region or state for buying alcohol. Citrus, Clay, Lake, Marion, and Putnam counties had the highest percentage of high school drinkers being given alcohol. Duval, Flagler, Hernando, Putnam, and Volusia counties had the highest percentages of students taking alcohol. When it came to buying alcohol Baker, Bradford, Flagler, Sumter, Putnam and Volusia counties were the highest. This information can be used to target education to store clerks or families depending on the disparities.

YOUTH REPORTED EARLY ATOD USE

In 2022, 14.1% of high school students in Florida reported they started using alcohol at age 13 or younger, with 2.2% reporting drinking at least once a month. When it comes to cigarette use 4.9% of high school students report starting by the age of 13, with 6.5% reporting marijuana use by the age of 13. See Figure 59 below.

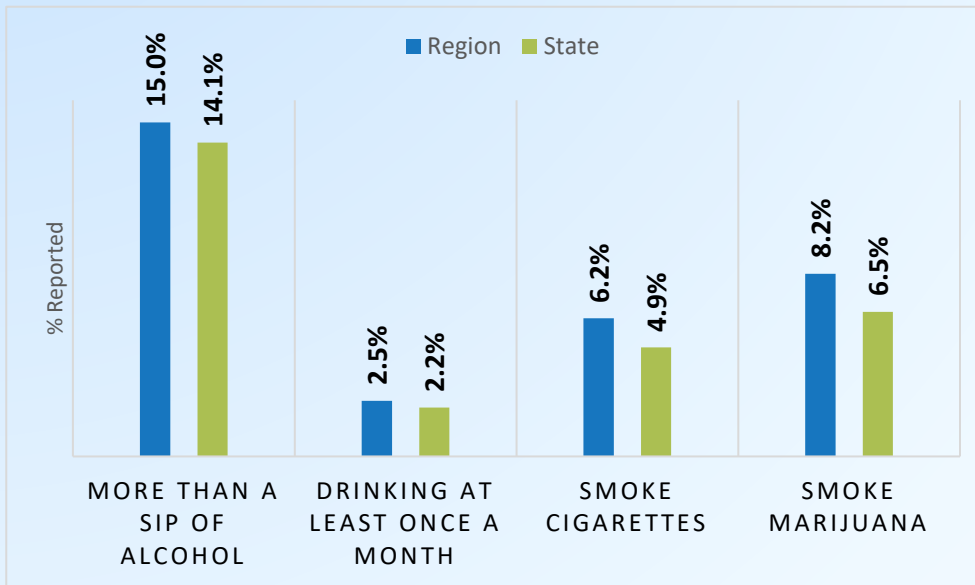


FIGURE 59: NORTHEAST FLORIDA EARLY ATOD USE (BEFORE THE AGE OF 13)

This data is only collected among high school students ages 15-17. When compared to the region, high schoolers reported slightly higher rates of early use when it came to using alcohol at 15.0%, drinking at least once per month at 2.5%, smoking cigarettes at 6.2%, and smoking marijuana at 8.2% by the age of 13.

(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

NEW FYSAS QUESTIONS (STATE LEVEL 2023 DATA)

Two new questions were added to the 2023 FYSAS state-level survey for high school students. These questions focused on Delta products<sup>2</sup> and Kratom<sup>3</sup> use.

When asked whether they had heard of delta 8 or 10 THC products, 29% of high schoolers said “YES”; while 9.5% Students reported using Delta 8 or Delta 10 products to get high in their lifetime. Meaning 1 in 10 students of those asked had used Delta products before.

A second new question asked high school students if they had heard of Kratom, 8.8% said “YES” and 1.5% of students reported using Kratom in their lifetime.

<sup>2</sup> According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) (2022), Delta products are derivative forms of THC found in the *Cannabis sativa* plant. These products commonly come in the forms of Delta 8 and 10, two of over 100 cannabinoids produced naturally by the cannabis plant, which are not currently regulated or approved by the FDA for safe use in any context. Delta-8 products specifically have been linked to adverse events in persons who consumed these products, including accidental pediatric exposure. These products may often be marketed to look like candy resulting in accidental use by children. Delta products have the same psychoactive and intoxicating effects as common marijuana.

<sup>3</sup> Kratom, or *Mitragyna speciosa*, is a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia. Kratom is sold throughout the U.S. through internet and stores as an over-the-counter option for pain, coughing, diarrhea, anxiety, depression, opioid use disorder and withdrawal. The FDA has not approved any prescription or over-the-counter drug products containing kratom or its main two chemical components, mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH-mitragynine). Kratom-related substance use disorder has been observed, and the FDA (2024) has warned consumers not to use kratom because of the risk of liver toxicity and seizures.

NORTHEAST FLORIDA ADULT CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

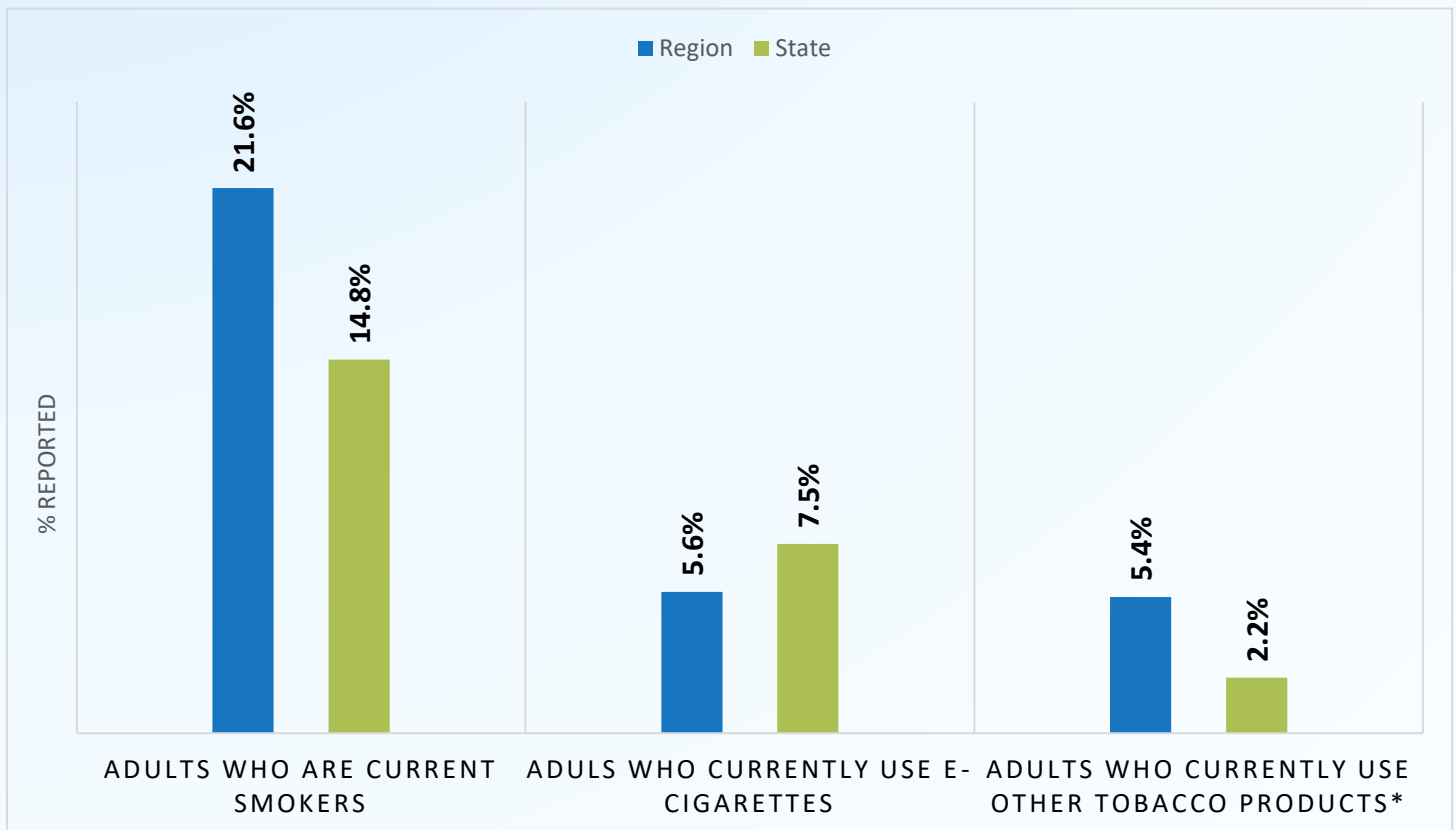
Data in this section comes from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), implemented by the CDC, an annual survey to collect data on health-related risk behaviors in Americans. Data is collected among adults 18 years or older in all 50 states and U.S. territories. Data is typically limited to state-level, but in 2019 and 2016 county level data was released.

Data will also be reviewed from the most recent National Survey on Drug Use and Health conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in 2021.

ADULT SMOKING

In 2019, county-level data revealed 21.6% of adults in Northeast Florida reporting that they are current smokers (cigarettes), this was higher than the state average of 14.8%. Moreover, 5.6% reported they are current e-cigarette users, 5.4% of adults reported that they currently use other tobacco products, i.e., chewing tobacco, snuff, or snus some days or every day. Figure 60 below illustrates the comparison of the state versus the regional average in 2019 for these behaviors.

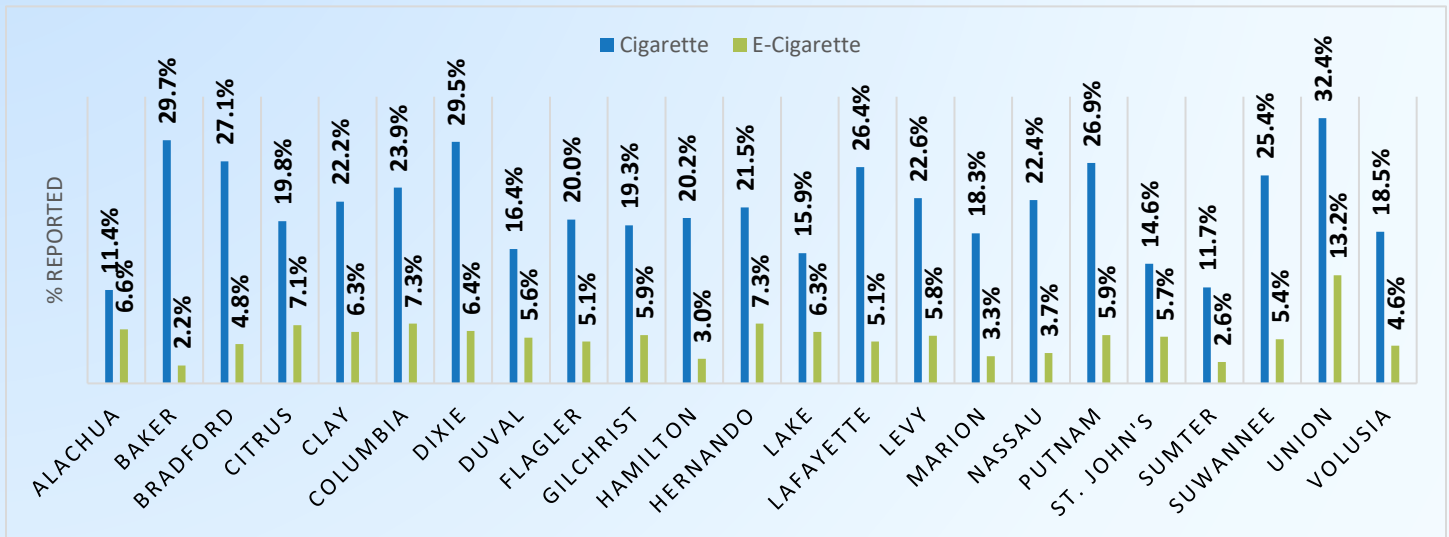
FIGURE 60: NORTHEAST FLORIDA CURRENT USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS AMONG ADULTS



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS – BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM 2019)

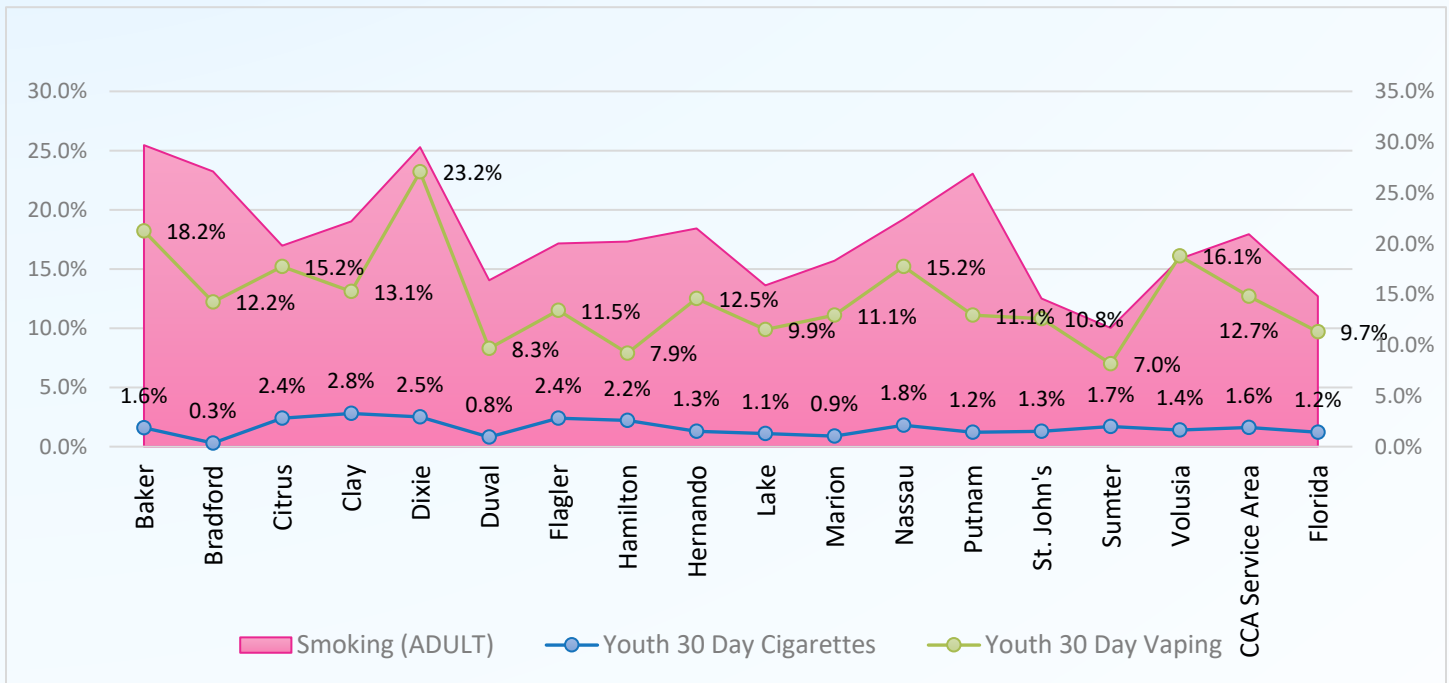
Cigarette usage is much higher than e-cigarette usage among adults. Figure 61 on the next page shows the comparison between adult cigarette and e-cigarette by county in 2019.

FIGURE 61: ADULT TOBACCO USE BY COUNTY



According to Figure 61 above, in 2019, Baker, Bradford, Dixie, Lafayette, Putnam, and Union counties had the highest percentages of adult cigarette smokers. Alachua, Citrus, Columbia, Hernando, and Lake counties had the highest percentages of adults using e-cigarettes. Figure 62 below examines youth and adult nicotine consumption in CCA service area counties to see if a correlation exists between adult and youth nicotine consumption. The blue line indicates youth past 30-day cigarette use, the green line is youth past 30-day vaping, and the pink background in adult smoking.

FIGURE 62: YOUTH AND ADULT NICOTINE CONSUMPTION BY VARIOUS GEOGRAPHIC AREAS)



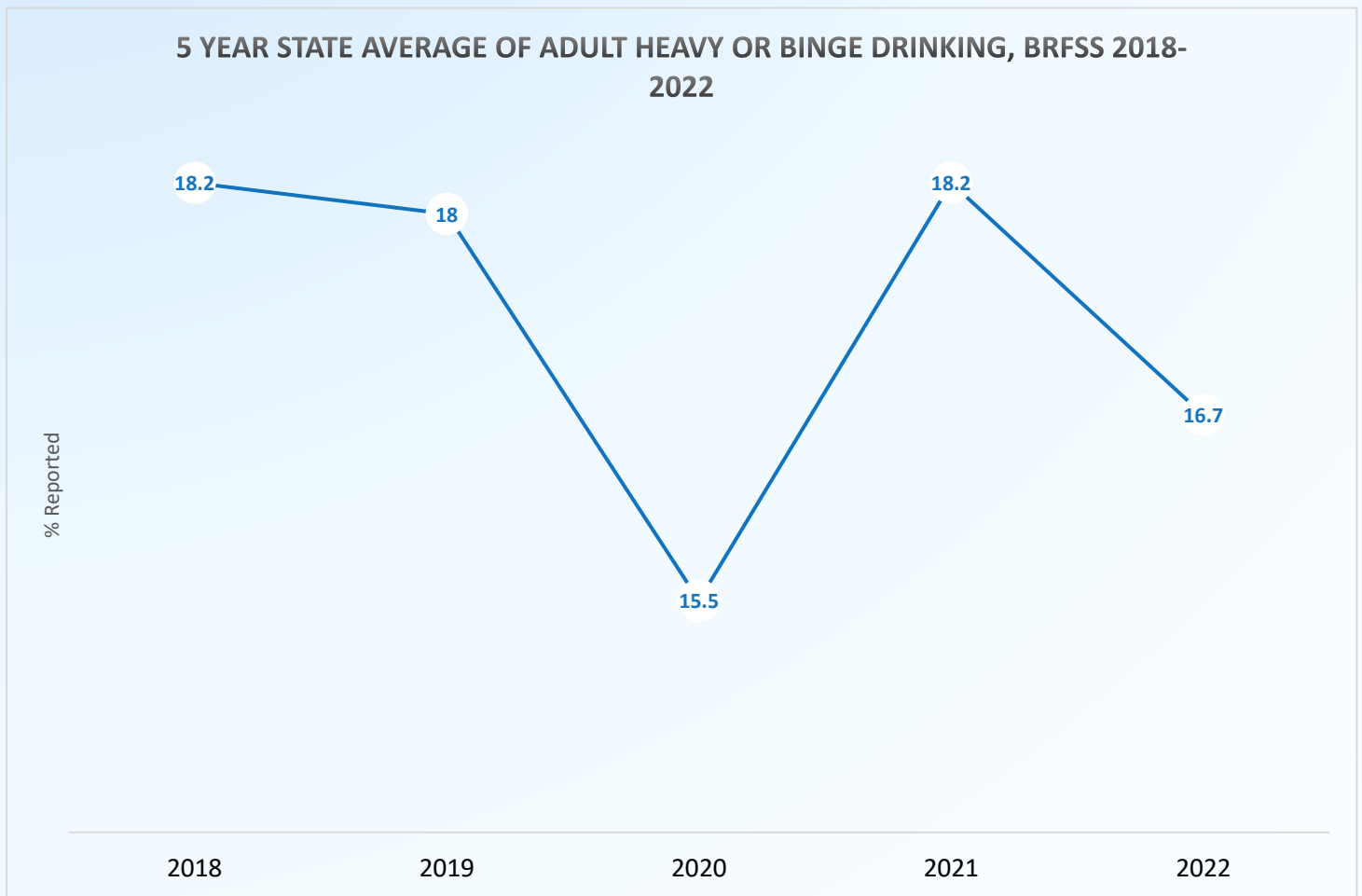
(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS – BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM 2019; FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - FLORIDA YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SURVEY 2022)

In reference to [Figure 62](#) on the previous page, although youth vaping use is lower than adult tobacco use, the trends do follow similar patterns. In Dixie, Nassau, and St. Johns youth vaping and adult tobacco use are very close. Tailoring messaging to combine these health education topics might be beneficial to preventing youth from using tobacco long term.

ADULT ALCOHOL USE

According to data from NSDUH (2021), adult alcohol use in the state has been on the decline since 2015. Currently the average for past 30-day alcohol use among adults is recorded as 51.7%, this is lower than the national average of 53.2%. On the state level from 2018-2022, the percentage of adults who reported heavy or binge drinking has remained steady with decreases in 2020 and 2022 as shown in [Figure 63](#) below.

FIGURE 63: 5-YEAR STATE AVERAGE OF ADULT HEAVY OR BINGE DRINKING



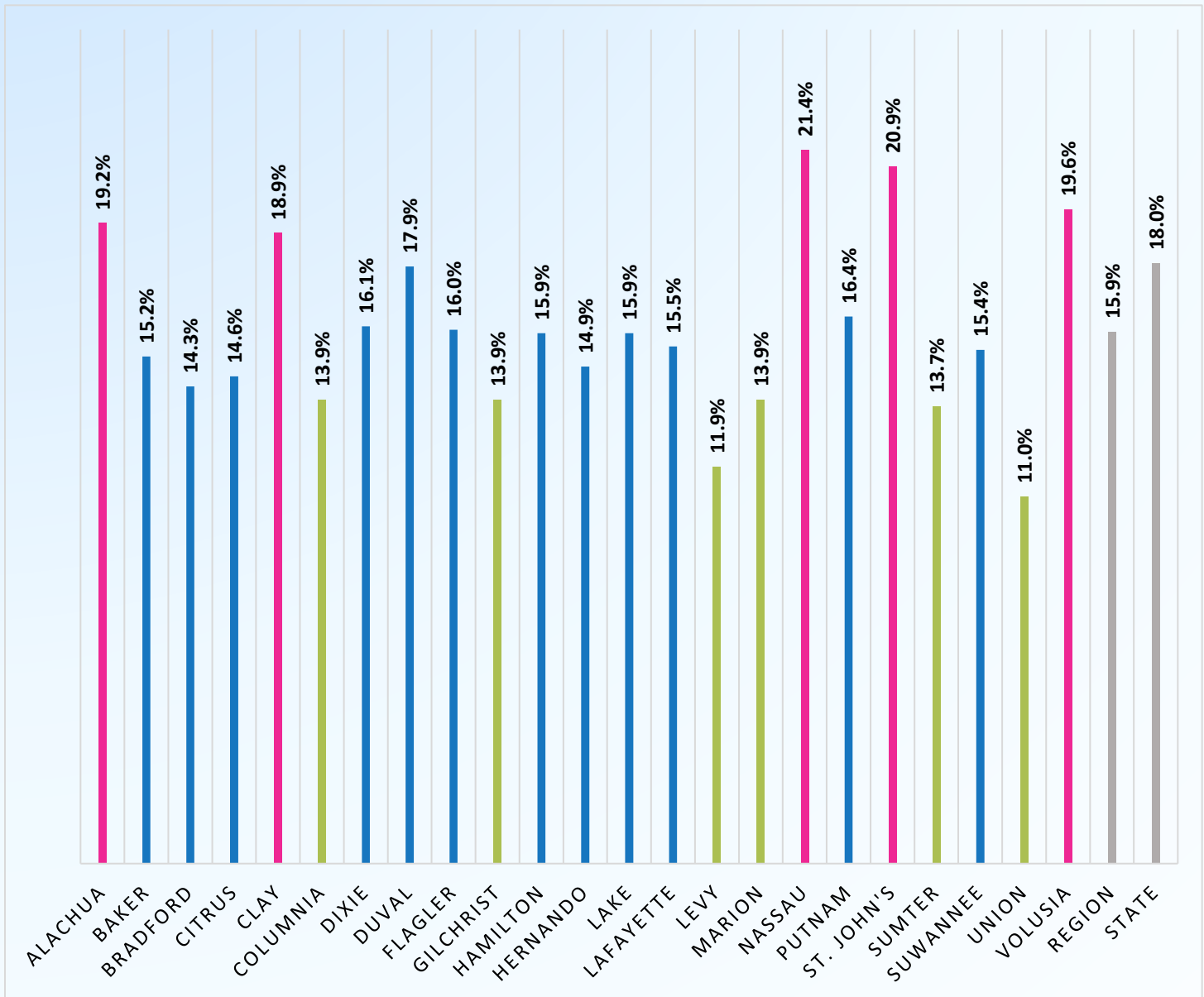
(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS – BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM 2022)

It is important to note that 2020 data could be impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic due to the need for changes in data collection processes during this time. Overall, the rate of binge drinking has slightly dropped from 2018 (18.2%) to 2022 (16.7%).

Data from the 2019 county-level BRFSS report indicated that 15.9% of adults in Northeast Florida reported they engage in heavy or binge drinking. Figure 64 below compares the reported rates of binge drinking among adults by county in the Northeast region in 2019.

The top 5 highest counties are highlighted in pink, and the top 5 lowest counties are highlighted in green (Columbia, Gilchrist, and Marion tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> in the lowest in adult heavy or binge drinking).

FIGURE 64: ADULT HEAVY OR BINGE DRINKING BY VARIOUS GEOGRAPHIC LEVELS



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS – BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM 2019)

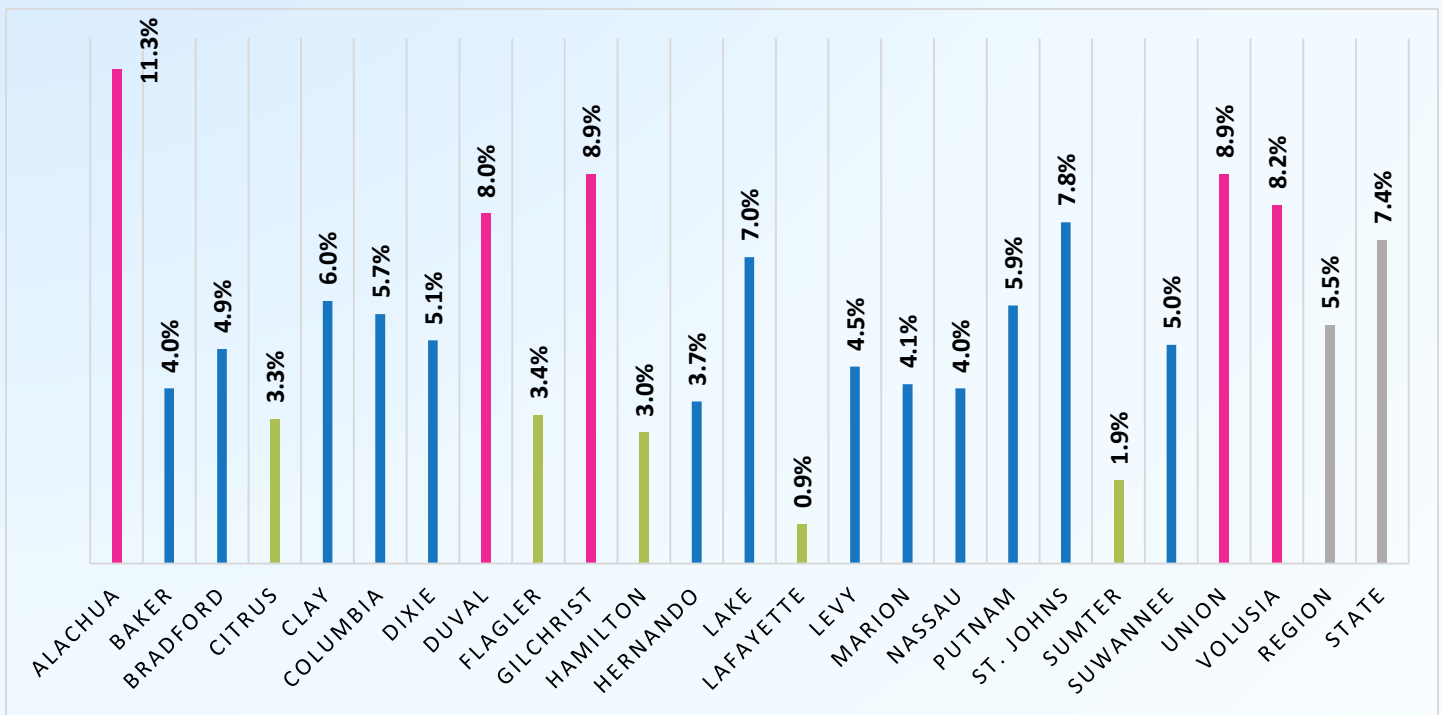
Alachua, Clay, Duval, Nassau, and Volusia Counties had the highest percentage of adults reporting heavy or binge drinking, with at least 2 in 10 adult drinkers reporting this behavior. Of Northeast Florida counties, 9 were higher than the regional average of 15.9%, and 5 were higher than the state average of 18.0%.

ADULT MARIJUANA USE

Moreover, when it comes to adult marijuana use, the most recent data release from NSDUH recorded state-level marijuana use patterns among adults. In 2021, 15.4% of adults reported marijuana use in the past year, this is lower than the national average of 19.5% in the same year.

The most recent BRFSS county-level data regarding marijuana use from 2016 indicates that 5.5% of adults in Northeast Florida reported using marijuana or hashish within the last 30 days, this is lower than the state average of 7.4% in 2016. Figure 65 below shares a visual comparison of this data by county, region, and state. The top 5 highest counties for adults reporting marijuana use are highlighted in pink, the top 5 lowest are highlighted in green.

FIGURE 65: ADULT MARIJUANA USE IN THE PAST 30-DAYS BY VARIOUS GEOGRAPHIC LEVELS (BRFSS, 2016)



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS – BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM 2016)

ADULT PRESCRIPTION AND ILLCIT DRUG USE

Prescription misuse among adults was also recorded in the most recent data release from NSDUH and discussed in the 2024 Patterns of and Trends in Substance Use in Florida Annual Report sponsored by FADAA, a subsidiary of the Florida Behavioral Health Association, and the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families. According to the data presented, pain reliver misuse is on the decline among Florida adults since 2015, with slight increases between 2017-2018, and 2021-2022, currently reported at 2.7%.



Heroin and methamphetamine use among adults in Florida has remained at less than 1% reporting since 2015, with 0.3% of adults reporting heroin and 0.6% reporting methamphetamine use in 2021. Cocaine use also remain low among adults in Florida at 1.4% in 2021.

IMPACTS

NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL IMPACTS

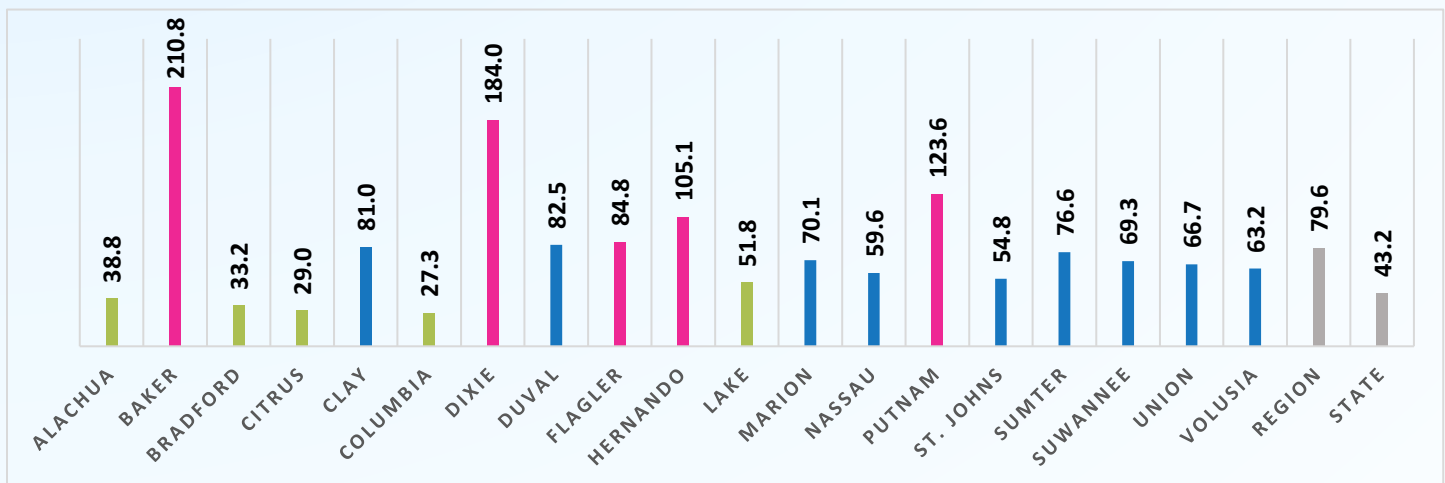
This section of the report focuses on the impacts of substance use and related mental health disorders in Northeast Florida. Impacts include negative occurrences or consequences of substance misuse. The data provided in this section comes from the Florida Department of Health, FL Health Charts Substance Use Dashboard 2022 data release as well as 2023 data from the Florida Poison Control Centers. In 2022, there were 7,769 fatal overdoses across the state, 105,490 EMS overdose responses, 51,752 instances of Naloxone administration, 83,197 annual drug arrests. Moreover, in 2021 934 cases of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) were recorded.

NEONATAL ABSTINENCE SYNDROME

In 2021, the annual rate of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) was 43.2 per 10,000 live births in Florida. In 2022, 548 early steps clients were experiencing neonatal abstinence syndrome. NAS is determined when infants less than 28 days old are exposed to opioid prescription or illicit drugs during the mother’s pregnancy. In Northeast Florida during this timeframe, the rate of NAS was almost double that of the state with a rate of 79.6 per 10,000 live births. This data is provided by the Florida Department of Health, Birth Defects Registry.

The following figure (Figure 66) provides a visual of the rates by each county in Northeast Florida as compared to the region and state in 2021. The top 5 counties with the highest rates of NAS are highlighted in pink, the top 5 lowest counties are highlighted in green.

FIGURE 66: RATES PER 10,000 OF NEONATAL ABINSTINCE SYNDROME (NAS) ACROSS VARIOUS GEOGRAPHIC AREAS



( SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS – SUBSTANCE USE DASHBOARD – FL BIRTH DEFECTS REGISTRY 2021)

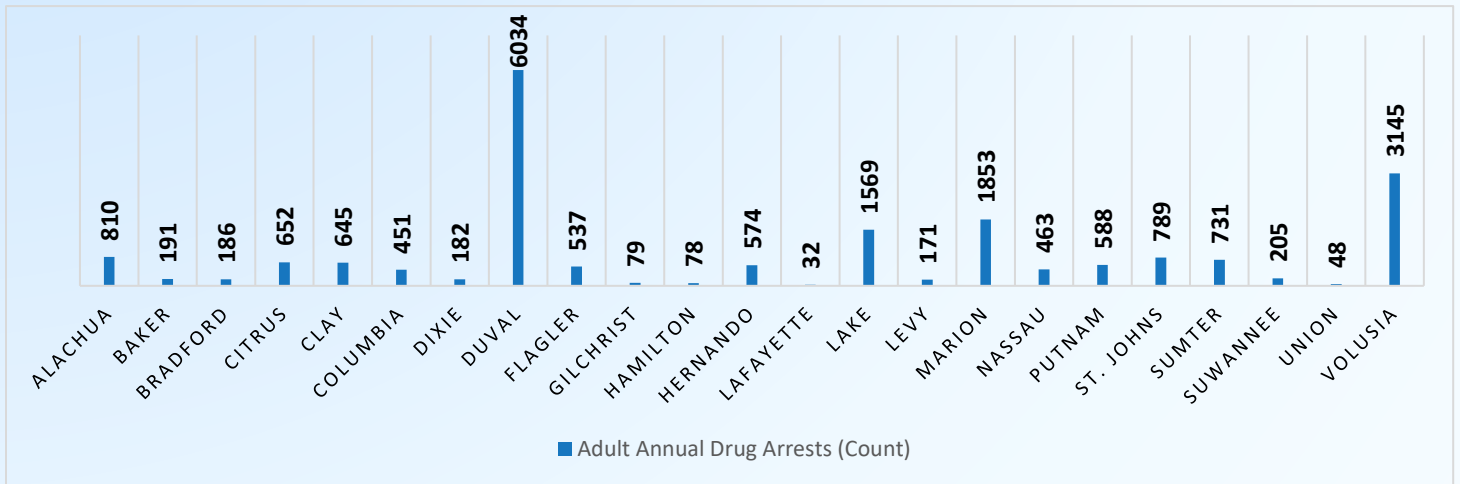
Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, and Levy counties did not share a rate in 2021. The top 5 counties with the highest rates were Baker, Dixie, Flagler, Hernando, and Putnam counties, the top 5 lowest were Alachua, Bradford, Citrus, Columbia, and Lake counties. The regional average for Northeast Florida was 59.3% higher than that of the state. In 2022, there were a total of 548 early steps clients experiencing NAS in Florida, and 169 of these cases were occurring in Northeast Florida counties, 86 of which were in Duval County alone.



ARRESTS

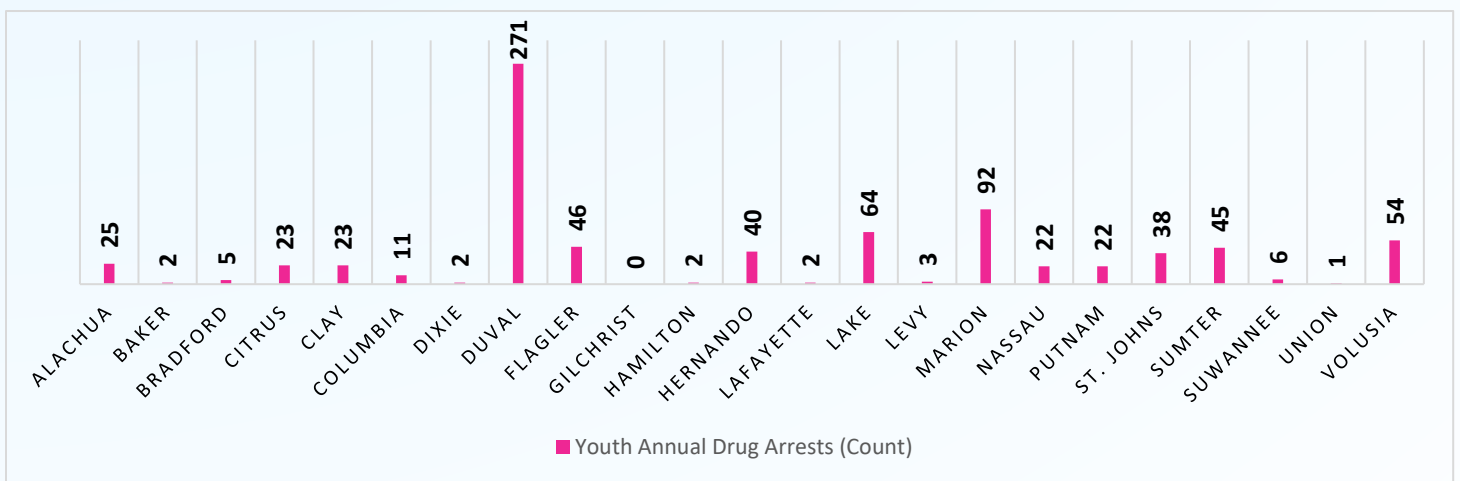
Another impact of substance use in Northeast Florida is drug arrests. In Florida, in 2022, there were a total of 83,197 drug arrests, with 3,415 of these being juvenile arrests. Northeast Florida represented 20,812, or 25%, of total drug arrests, and 799, or 23.4%, of total youth drug arrests. The graph below (Figure 67) shows a county-by-county comparison of this arrest data provided by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (2022) for youth and adult drug arrests.

FIGURE 67: ANNUAL ADULT DRUG ARREST DATA (COUNTS) FOR NORTHEAST FLORIDA COUNTIES



Duval, Lake, Marion and Volusia counties had the highest number of drug arrests among adults in 2022. These counties also have higher population density than some of the other Northeast Florida counties which could lead to higher numbers of arrests. Figure 68 below examines the same data for youth arrests, again with Duval, Lake, Marion, and Volusia having the highest number of arrests, but Flagler and Sumter also show higher than expected counts for this category.

FIGURE 68: ANNUAL ADULT DRUG ARREST DATA (COUNTS) FOR NORTHEAST FLORIDA COUNTIES

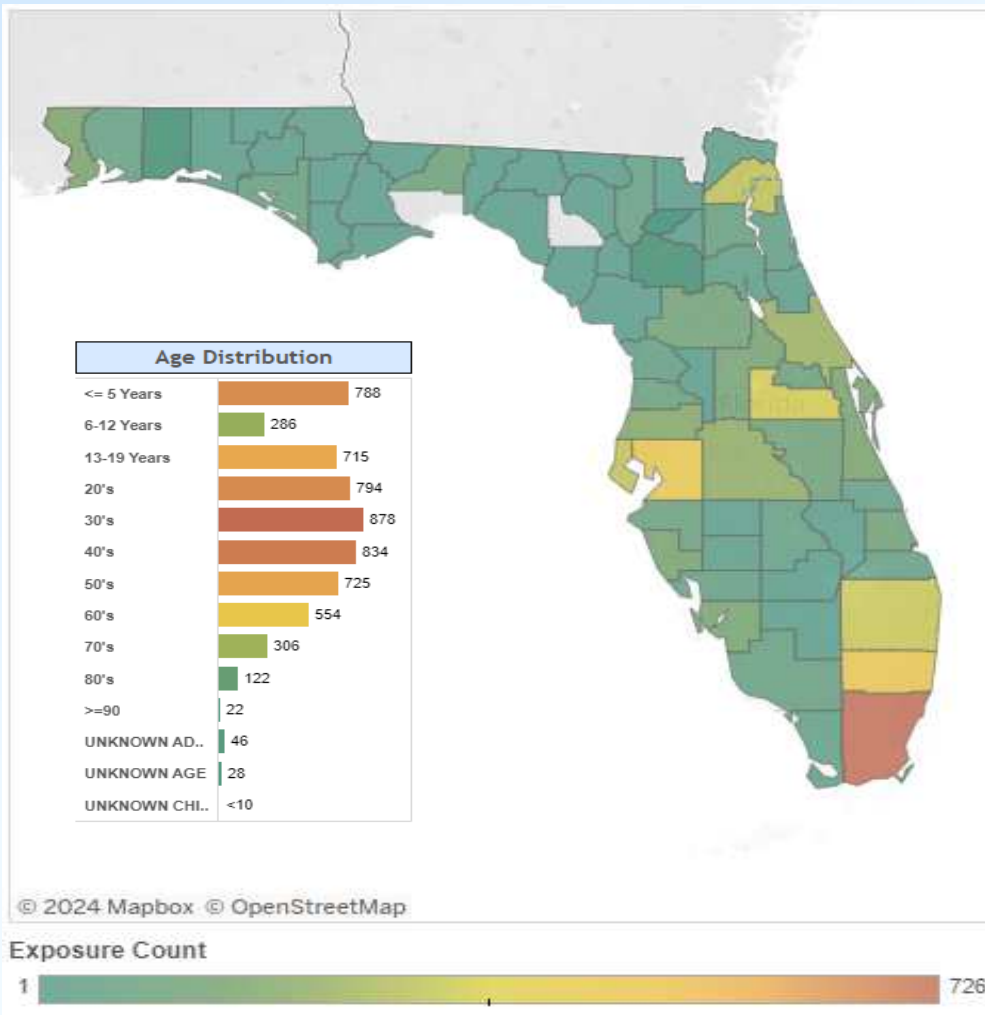


(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT 2022)

POISON CONTROL

According to data from the Florida Poison Control Center Network Statics Dashboard, from 2021-2024, 74% of all calls were related to human exposures. The top substances reported were Ibuprofen, Benzodiazepines, Melatonin, Ethanol (Alcohol), and Acetaminophen (Adult). In Northeast Florida, Ethanol (Alcohol) was the third most common followed by Benzodiazepines, and Atypical Antipsychotics.

FIGURE 69: DRUGS OF ABUSE EXPOSURE RATE MAP



The map to the left (Figure 69) highlights the rate of exposure to drugs of abuse in Florida in 2023. During this time, the top 5 drugs of abuse exposure categories were Benzodiazepines, Gabapentin, Amphetamines, Marijuana, Methamphetamine, and Kratom based on calls to the Florida Poison Control Centers during this time with most exposures happening among children under 5 years old and adults in their 20s-50s. Duval County and Volusia County had the highest rates in Northeast Florida when looking at this map.

When it came to opioids, the top exposure categories recorded by Florida Poison Control Centers in 2023 were Acetaminophen mixed with

Oxycodone or Hydrocodone, Oxycodone, Tramadol, Fentanyl (Prescription), Buprenorphine, and Morphine. Most exposures in this category were among individuals in their 20s.

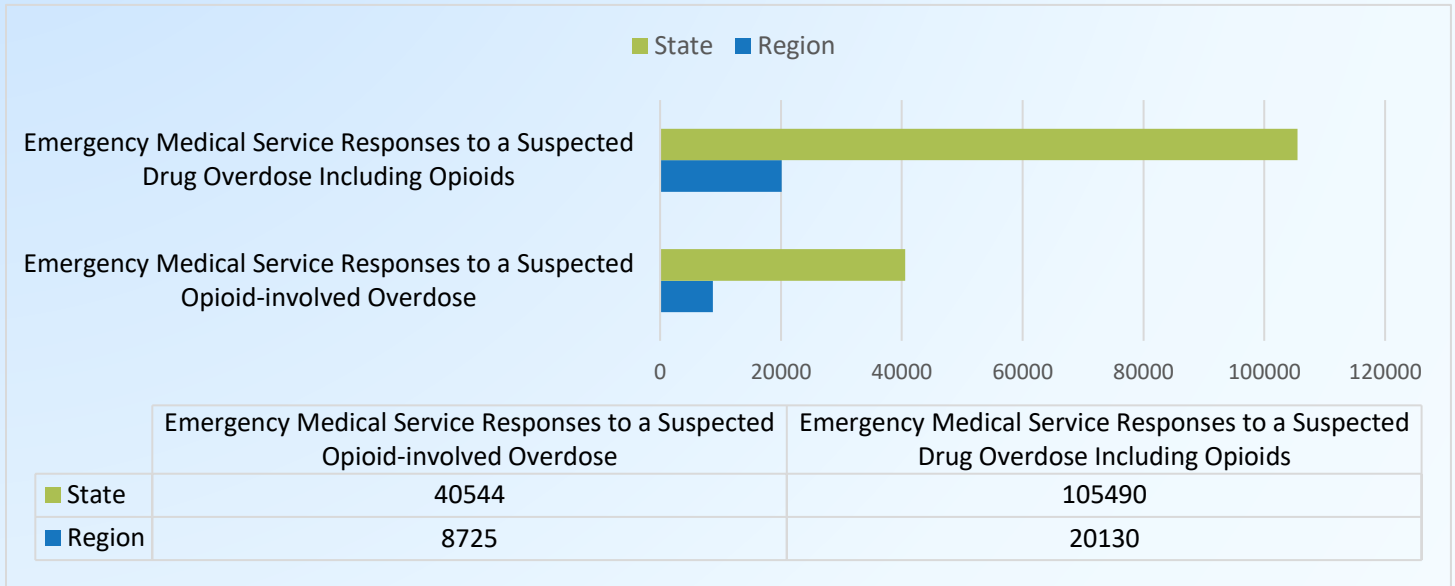
(SOURCE: FLORIDA POISON CONTROL CENTERS 2023)

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES & NALOXONE ADMINISTRATION

The following data is provided by the Florida Department of Health Substance Use Dashboard using EMSTARS data recorded by Emergency Medical Services (EMS) on arrival. In 2022, EMSTARS data reported 40,544 EMS responses to suspected opioid-involved overdoses, and 105,490 responses to suspected drug overdoses

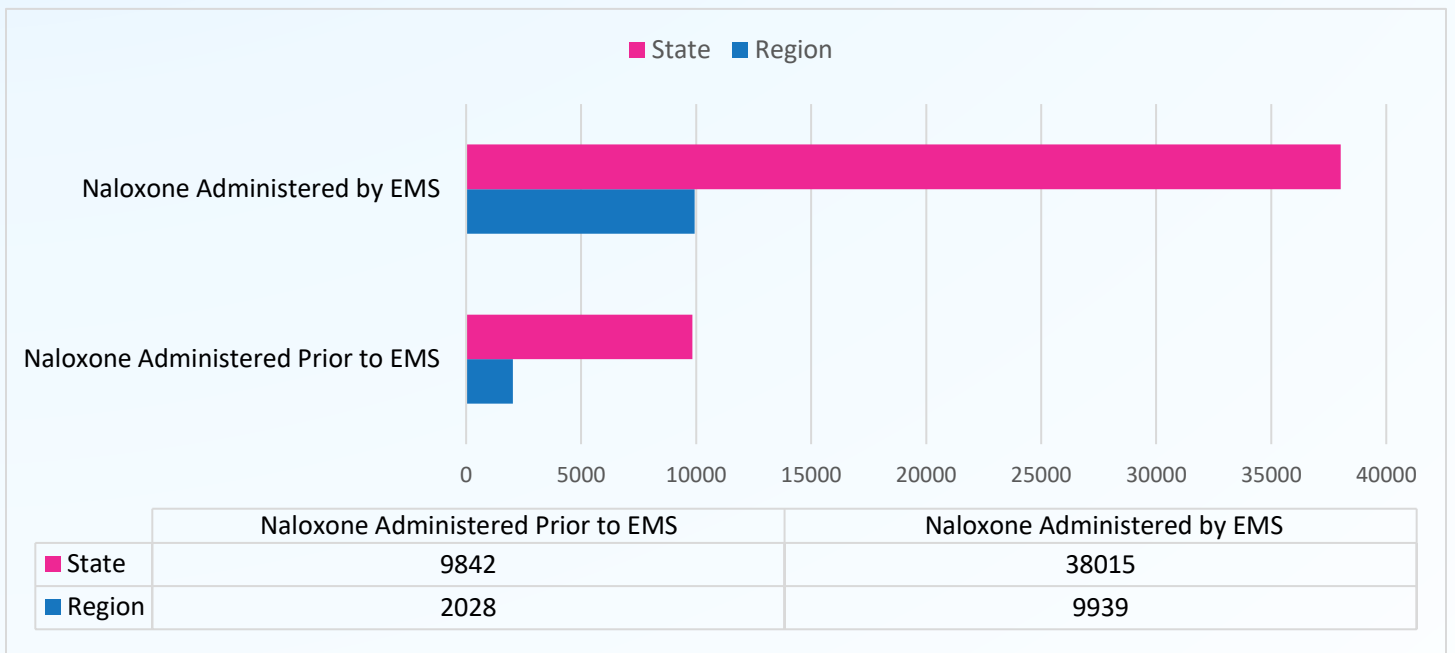
including opioids. Northeast Florida accounted for a total of 20,130 of these calls. [Figure 70](#) below provides a visual of the data discussed on the previous page.

FIGURE 70: EMS RESPONSES TO SUSPECTED DRUG OVERDOSES INVOLVING OPIOIDS



EMS also reports information on Naloxone, and time-limited opioid overdose-reversing drug, administration to EMSTARS. In 2022, there were 9,842 instances of Naloxone being administered prior to EMS arrival, with a total of 2,028 happening in Northeast Florida. The following figure ([Figure 71](#)) compares the region to the state for this data.

FIGURE 71: NALOXONE ADMINISTRATION (FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - EMSTARS 2022)

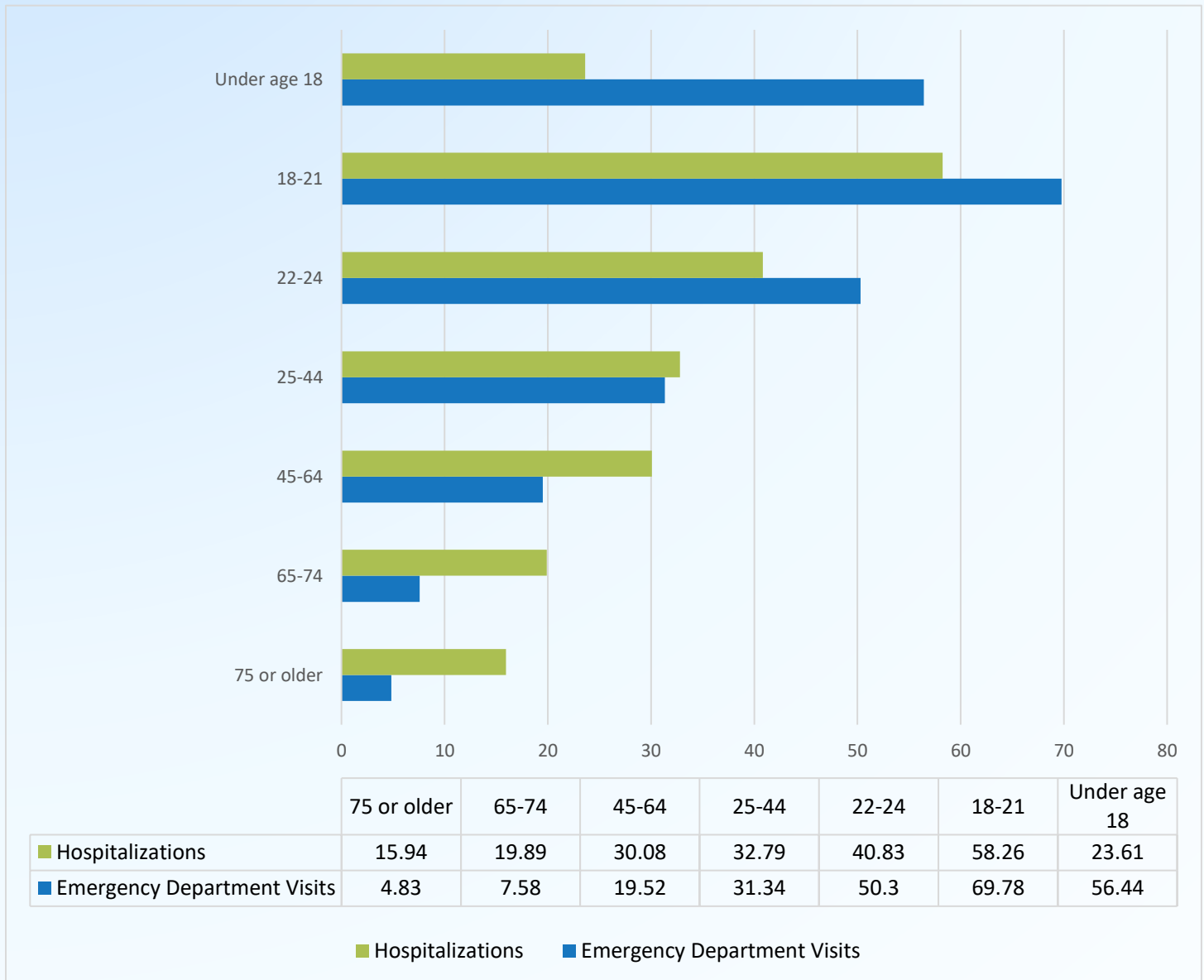


(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS – SUBSTANCE USE DASHBOARD - EMSTARS 2022)

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS & HOSPITALIZATIONS

The following section will review emergency department visits and hospitalization due to mental health and substance use. The first graph below (Figure 72) examines drug poisoning emergency department visits and hospitalizations by age group at the state level in 2022.

FIGURE 72: DRUG POISONING EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS AND HOSPITALIZATION BY AGE GROUP, RATE PER 100,000, FLORIDA STATE-LEVEL 2022

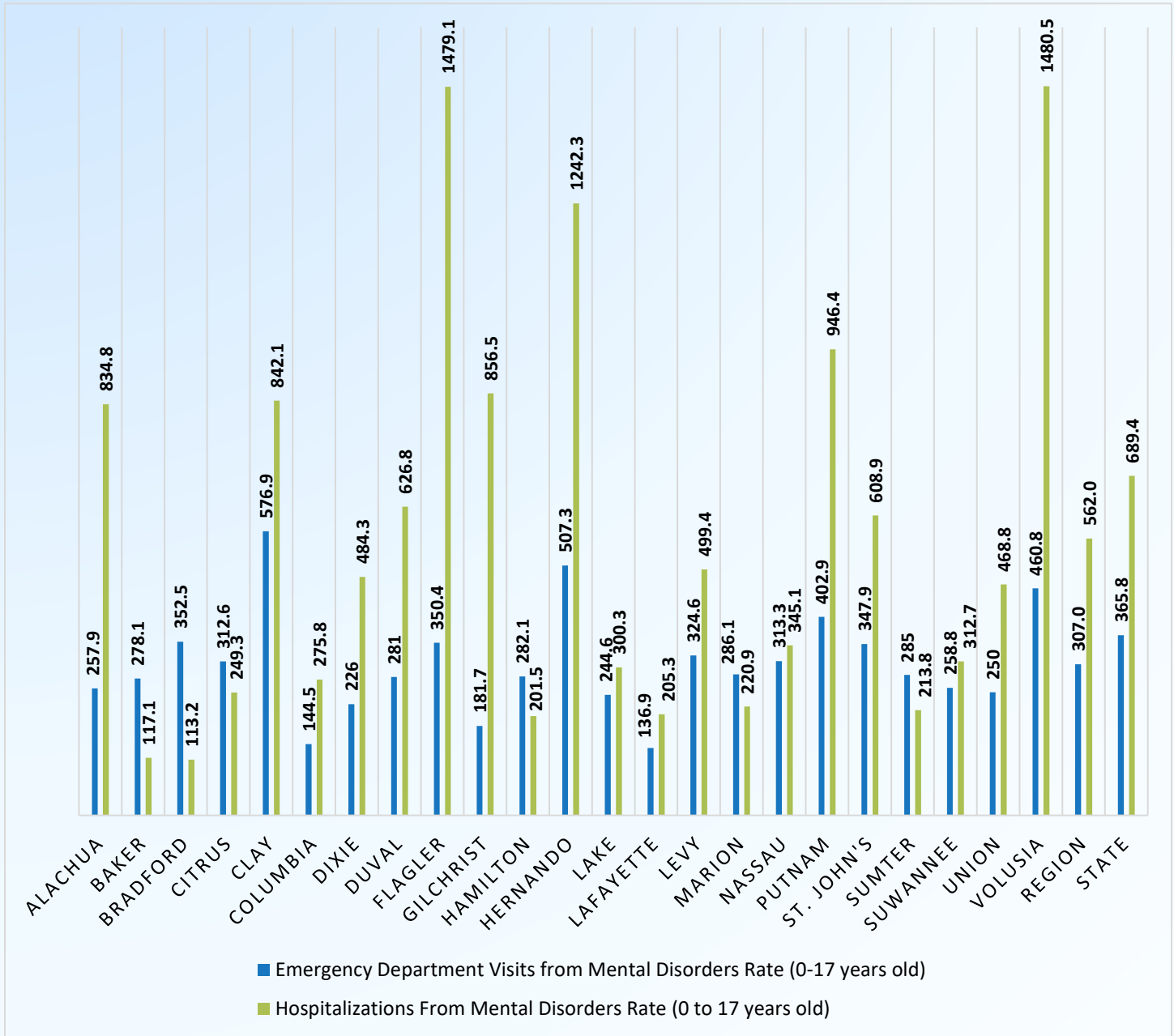


(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS - NON-FATAL INJURY PROFILE 2022)

According to the above graph, individuals 18-21 years of age in Florida had the highest rate of emergency department visits and hospitalizations per 100,000 for drug poisoning. The second highest age group for drug poisoning hospitalization was 22–24-year-olds, followed by 46–64-year-olds. The second highest age group for emergency department visits were individuals under the age of 18.

Figure 73 below examines mental disorder emergency departments visits and hospitalization rates per 100,000 for individuals under age 18 in Florida at the county, region, and state-level.

FIGURE 73: MENTAL DISORDER EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS AND HOSPITALIZATION RATES (PER 100,000) UNDER AGE 18 BY VARIOUS GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

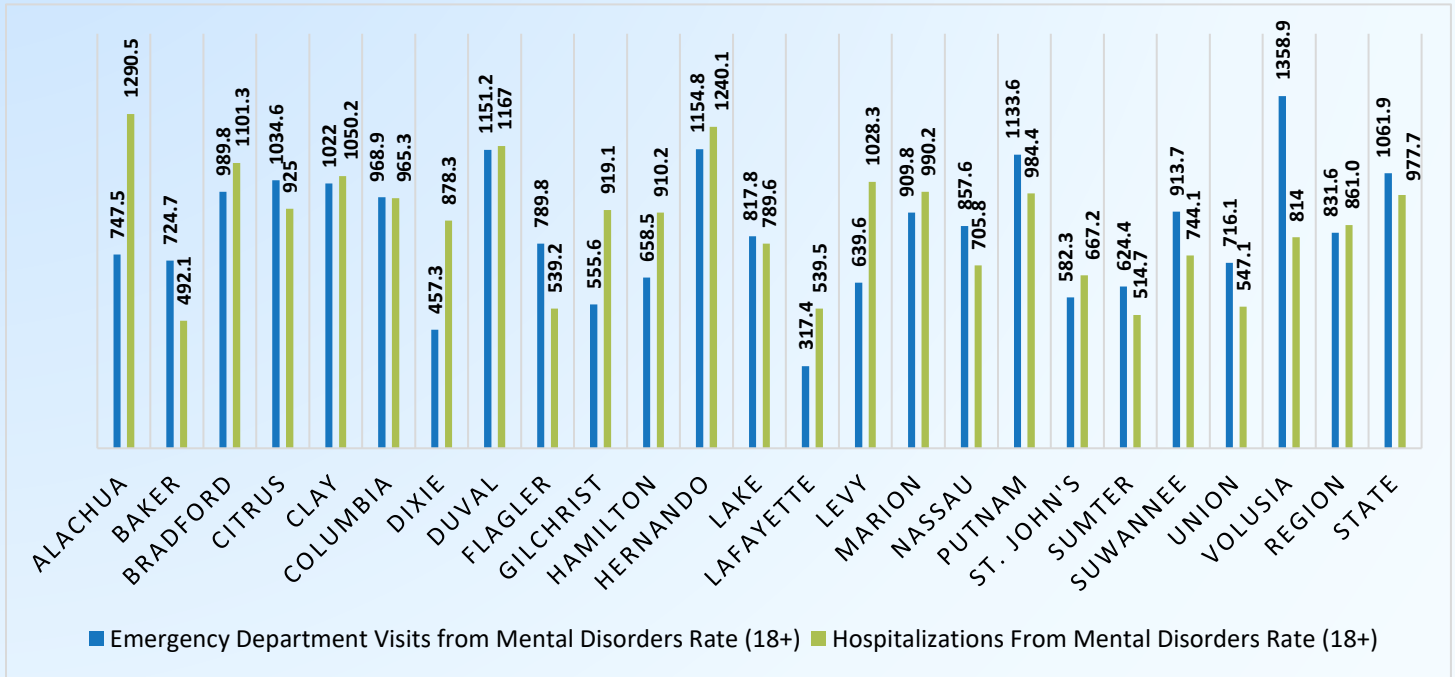


(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS – SUICIDE AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFILE 2022)

The average regional rate for both emergency department visits and hospitalizations were lower than that of the state. Several counties had a rate almost 2-3 times the region and state rate for hospitalizations from mental disorders, these included Flagler, Hernando, Putnam, and Volusia counties. Rates of emergency department visits for mental disorders in Northeast Florida were highest in Clay, Hernando, Putnam, and Volusia counties.

The following graph (Figure 74) examines the same data set as Figure 72 but for adults ages 18 and older.

FIGURE 74: MENTAL DISORDER EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS AND HOSPITALIZATION RATES (PER 100,000) IN AGES 18 AND OVER BY VARIOUS GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

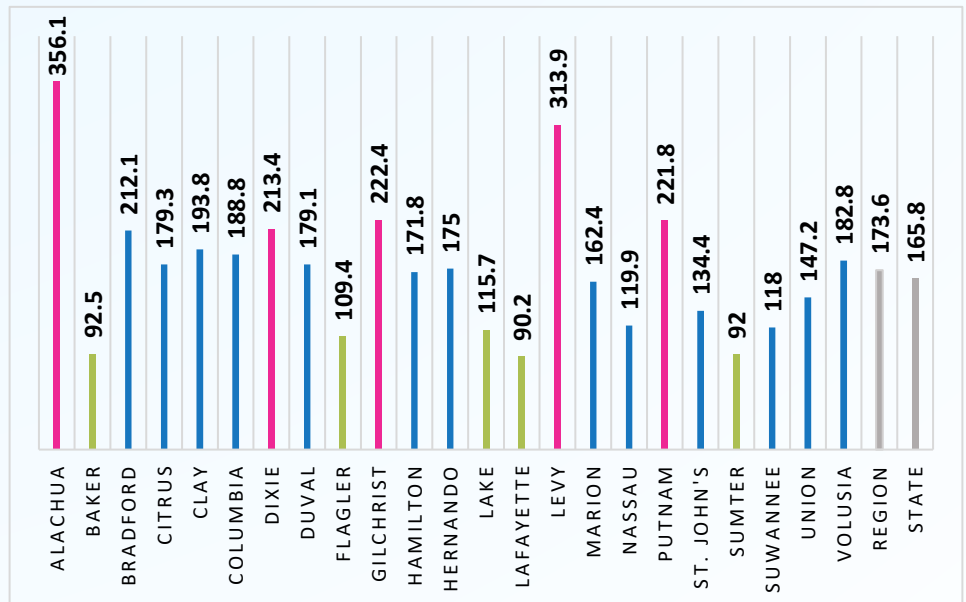


(SOURCE:FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS – SUICIDE AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFILE 2022)

In the graph above we can see the Northeast regional average rate again is lower than the state for adult mental disorder emergency department visits and hospitalization rates. Alachua, Bradford, Clay, Duval, Hernando, and Levy counties have significantly high rates of hospitalizations from mental disorders in individuals over the age of 18 each having a rate of over 1000 per 100,000. Citrus, Duval, Hernando, Putnam, and Volusia counties had the highest rates of Emergency Department visits due to mental disorders.

FIGURE 75: DRUG AND ALCOHOL-INDUCED MENTAL DISORDERS RATE (0-75 AND OLDER) PER 100,000 BY VARIOUS GEOGRAPHIC AREAS (FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – SUICIDE AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFILE 2022)

Figure 75 to the right highlights drug and alcohol-induced mental disorder rates (ALL ages 0-75 and older) per 100,000. The top 5 highest counties are highlighted in pink, the top 5 lowest are highlighted in green.

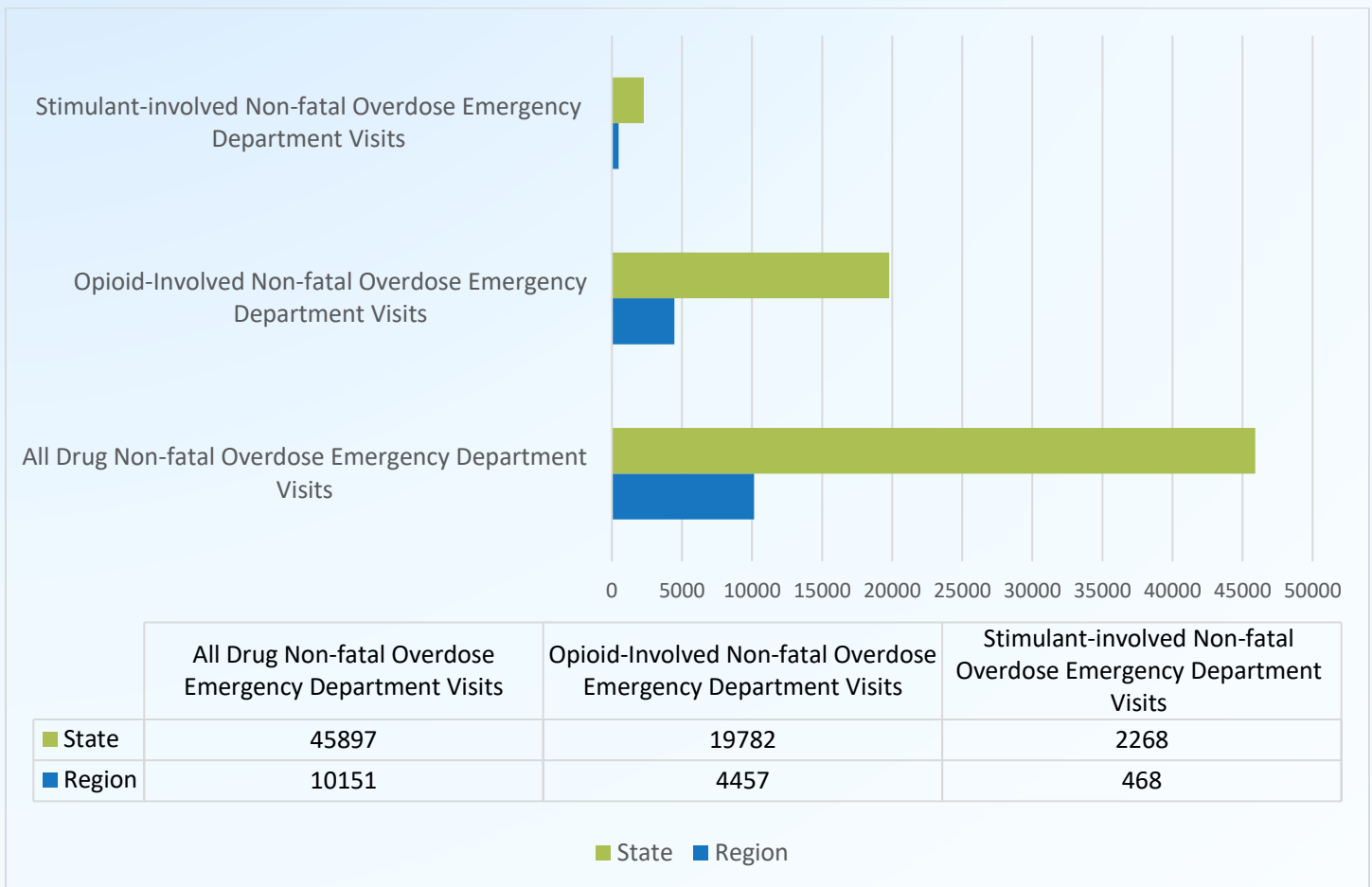


In reference to [Figure 75](#) on the previous page, a majority of drug and alcohol-induced mental disorders were in the 25-44, followed by 45-64 age groups. The regional average was also higher than the state rate for drug and alcohol-induced mental disorders per 100,000. Alachua, Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy, and Putnam counties had the highest rates among the counties, and Baker, Flagler, Lake, Lafayette, and Sumter had the lowest.

The next two figures focus on the type – or cause - of emergency department visit or hospitalization. The three categories which will be assessed are stimulant-involved non-fatal overdoses, opioid-involved non-fatal overdoses, and all drug non-fatal overdoses. These measures are compared at the regional and state levels for Northeast Florida by count of occurrences. The most complete data for this analysis was from 2022.

[Figure 76](#) below compares the region to the state for emergency department visits under these categories.

FIGURE 76: VARIOUS SUBSTANCE NON-FATAL OVERDOSE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISIT COUNTS



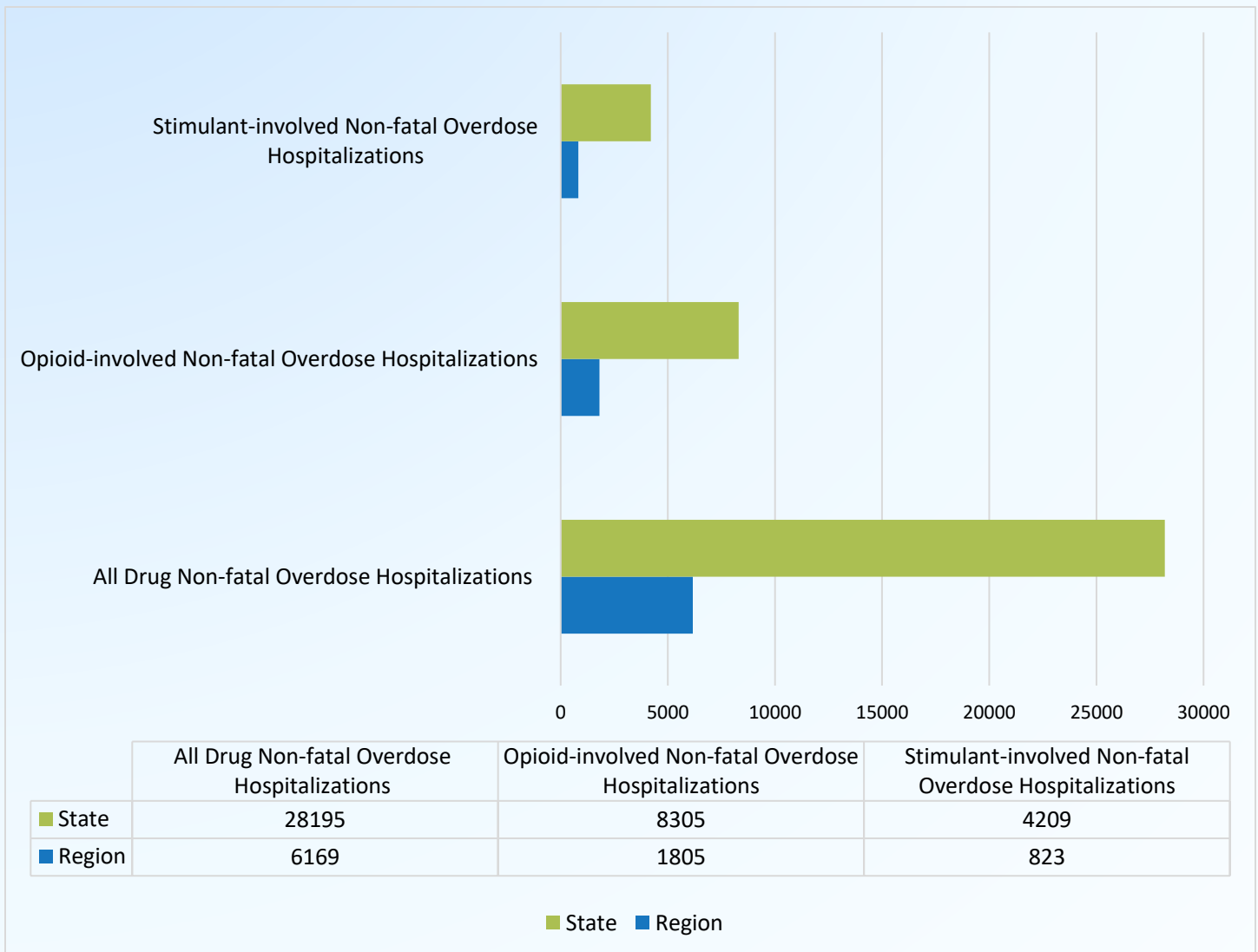
(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS – SUBSTANCE USE DASHBOARD 2022)

The Northeast Region of Florida accounted for a majority of all drugs non-fatal overdose emergency department visits in 2022, accounting for at least 1 in 4 across the state. In total there were 35,897 drug non-fatal overdose emergency department visits in the state, and 10,151 in the Northeast 23-county region. Of these overdoses, 19,782 or 43.1%, were opioid involved at the state level. Opioid-involved non-fatal overdoses also accounted

for 43.9% of all non-fatal overdose emergency department in Northeast Florida. Stimulant-involved non-fatal overdose emergency department visits accounted for 4.9% of all non-fatal overdose emergency department visits at the state level, and 4.6% at the regional level.

Figure 77 below focuses on the same categories as Figure 76, but regarding hospitalizations.

FIGURE 77: VARIOUS SUBSTANCE NON-FATAL OVERDOSE HOSPITALIZATION COUNTS



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS – SUBSTANCE USE DASHBOARD 2022)

In total, in 2022, there were 28,195 drug-related non-fatal overdose hospitalizations in Florida, 6,169 of which occurred in Northeast Florida. When it came to hospitalizations, Northeast Florida accounted for 21.9% of all drugs non-fatal overdose hospitalizations in the state. Of the hospitalizations in Northeast Florida, 29.2% were opioid-involved, and 13.3% were stimulant-involved. Of opioid-involved non-fatal overdose hospitalization 21.7%, or 1,805, were in Northeast Florida. Of stimulant-involved non-fatal overdose hospitalizations, 19.5%, or 823, were in Northeast Florida.



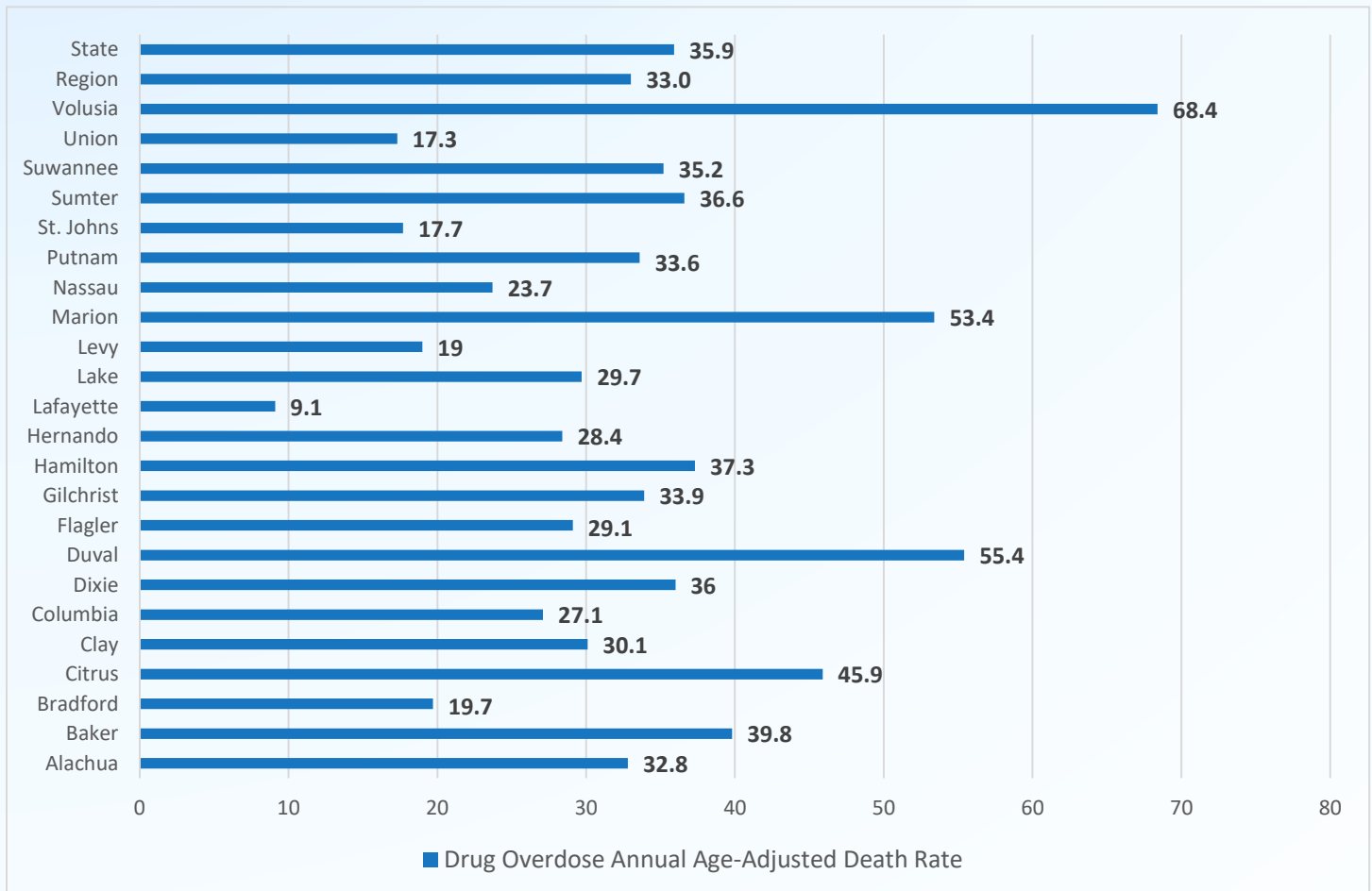
MORTALITY

According to the most recent Patterns of and Trends in Substance Use in Florida Annual Report released by FADAA in 2024, in 2022, Northeast Florida had the second highest number of Fentanyl and Fentanyl Analogue-related deaths at 1,528 after Central Florida with 2,335. When it came to deaths from cocaine this was also the same with Central Florida reporting 1,093 cocaine related deaths in 2022, and Northeast Florida reporting 694. When it came to psychostimulants or Methamphetamine-related deaths the Northeast Region has 846, only preceded again by Central Florida with 1,094 methamphetamine-related deaths. The original data comes from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE).

The following data comes from the Florida Department of Health’s Substance Use Dashboard. The annual age-adjusted death rate per 100,000 for drug overdoses in Florida, in 2022, was 35.9, with an annual age-adjusted rate of 29.0 for opioids alone.

The Northeast Region of Florida, on average in 2022, had a lower annual age-adjusted death rate for all drug overdoses of 33.0 per 100,000, and 26.4 per 100,000 for opioid-specific deaths. Figure 78 below shares a county to region and state comparison of the drug overdose age-adjusted death rate data.

FIGURE 78: DRUG OVERDOSE AGE-ADJUSTED DEATH RATE COMPARISON AT VARIOUS GEOGRAPHIC LEVELS



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS – SUBSTANCE USE DASHBOARD 2022)

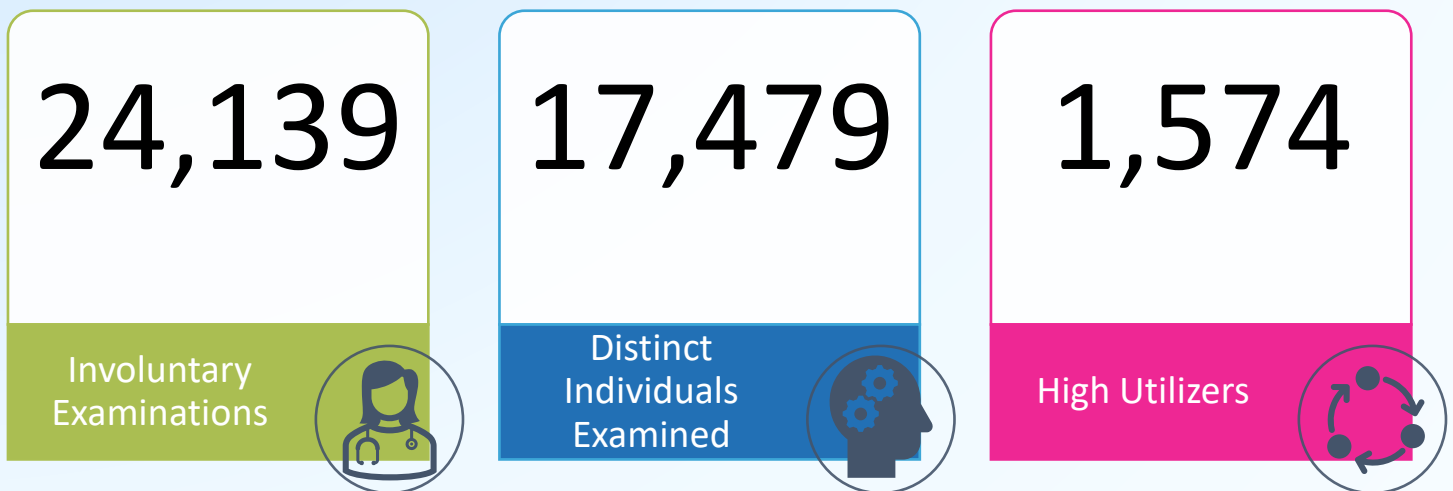
BAKER ACTS, TREATMENT, ACCESS TO CARE & OTHER RESOURCES

NORTHEAST FLORIDA REGIONAL ACCESS TO CARE & OTHER RESOURCES

BAKER ACTS

In the Northeast region there were over 24 thousand involuntary examinations between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. Northeast accounts for 13.8% of involuntary examinations and 16% of the high utilizers in Florida. From July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 Northeast Florida saw the second highest rate of involuntary examinations among regions in the state, only preceded by Southern Florida. The following graphic (Figure 79) shares the total number of involuntary examinations, distinct individuals examined, and high utilizers related to baker acts in Northeast Florida.

FIGURE 79: NORTHEAST FLORIDA BAKER ACT DATA HIGHLIGHT



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES – BAKER ACT DASHBOARD 2022-2023)

Of Northeast Florida counties, Alachua, Duval, and Volusia counties saw the greatest number of involuntary examinations. The location of most involuntary examinations was in a home or community setting, often initiated by a law enforcement professional. The most common reason for a baker act in Northeast Florida was harm to self, accounting for over 50% of all cases.

When examining the demographics of those who have experienced a baker act, we find that around 64% are white, 28% are Black, and around 1% are Asian. Regarding ethnicity and gender, 5.6% are Hispanic, 51.3% are male and 48% are female

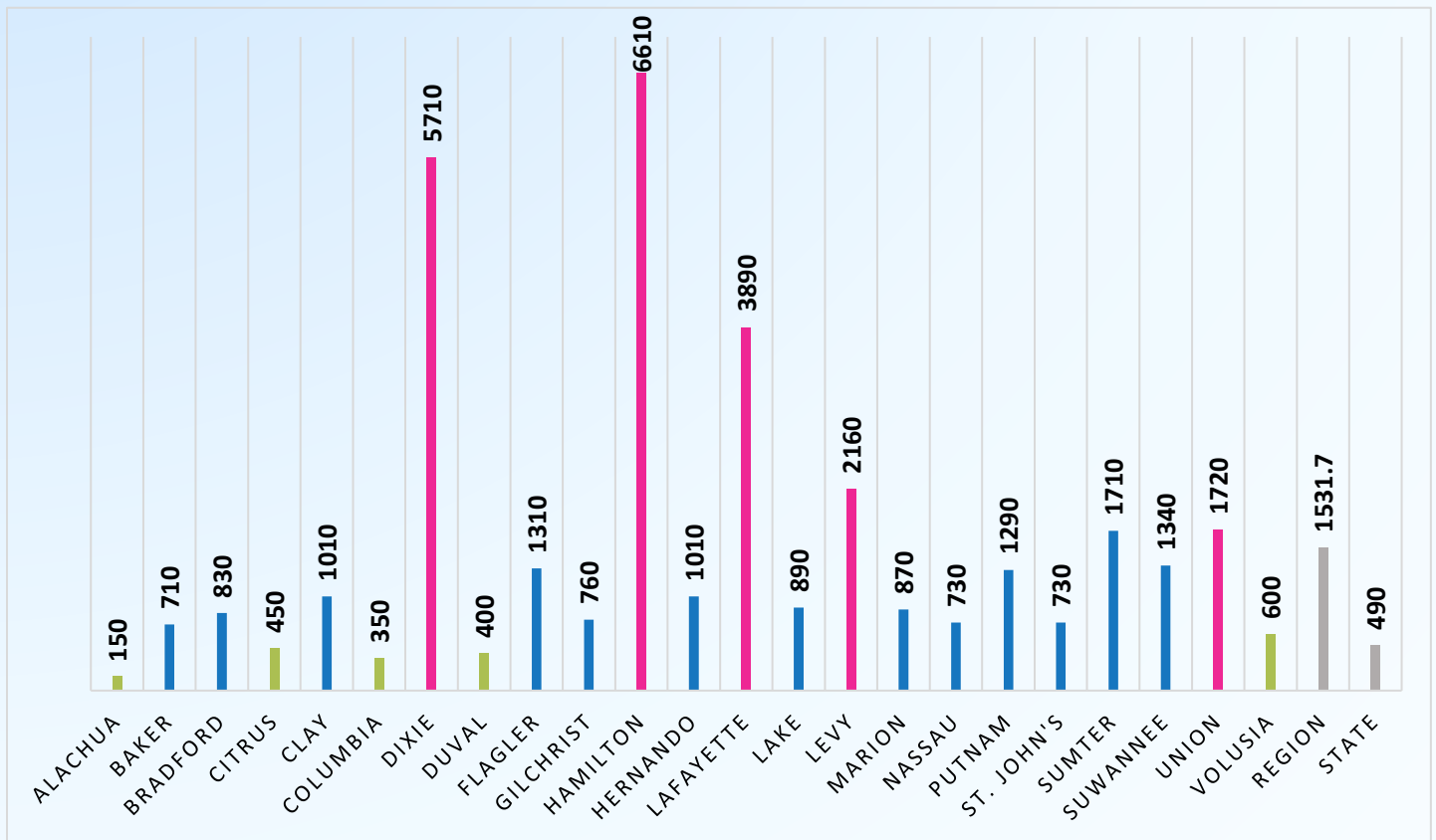
Youth ages 12-17 are experiencing the highest number of baker acts & among this age group around 7% are Hispanic, and around 60% are female. Among adults –30-32-year-old have the highest number of baker acts.

MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

The following data is on mental health provider to patient ratio<sup>4</sup> by county as compared to the region and the state. This data comes from the County Health Rankings data release from 2023. The regional average for patient to mental health provider ratio was 1 provider to 1,532 patients, more than triple the Florida average ratio.

Figure 80 below shares a visualization of this data. The 5 counties with the largest gaps in provider to patient ratios are highlighted in pink, the top 5 counties with the smallest gaps are highlighted in green.

FIGURE 80: MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER TO PATIENT RATIO (1:1) BY COUNTY



(SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN POPULATION HEALTH INSTITUTE - COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS 2024)

Of Northeast Florida counties Dixie, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, and Union had the largest gaps when it came to mental health provider to patient ration. Alachua, Citrus, Columbia, Duval, and Volusia had the smallest gaps.

<sup>4</sup> According to the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (2024), County Health Rankings, Mental Health Providers is the ratio of the population to mental health providers. The ratio represents the number of individuals served by one mental health provider in a county, if providers were equally distributed across the population. For example, if a county has a population of 50,000 and has 20 mental health providers, the county ratio would be: 2,500:1. The value on the right side of the ratio is always 1 or 0; 1 indicates that there is at least one mental health provider in the county, and zero indicates there are no registered mental health providers in the county.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

In 2022, in Florida, there were a total of 66,091 adult substance abuse program enrollees (18 years or older), and 11,149 children (0-17 years old). Of the substance abuse program enrollees in Florida, 12,964 adult enrollees and 2,365 youth enrollees were in the Northeast region, accounting for 19.8% of all substance abuse program enrollees across the state. The following Figures 81 & 82 were created using data from the Florida Department of Health Substance Use Dashboard from 2022 for adult and youth substance abuse program enrollee counts.

FIGURE 81: ADULT SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

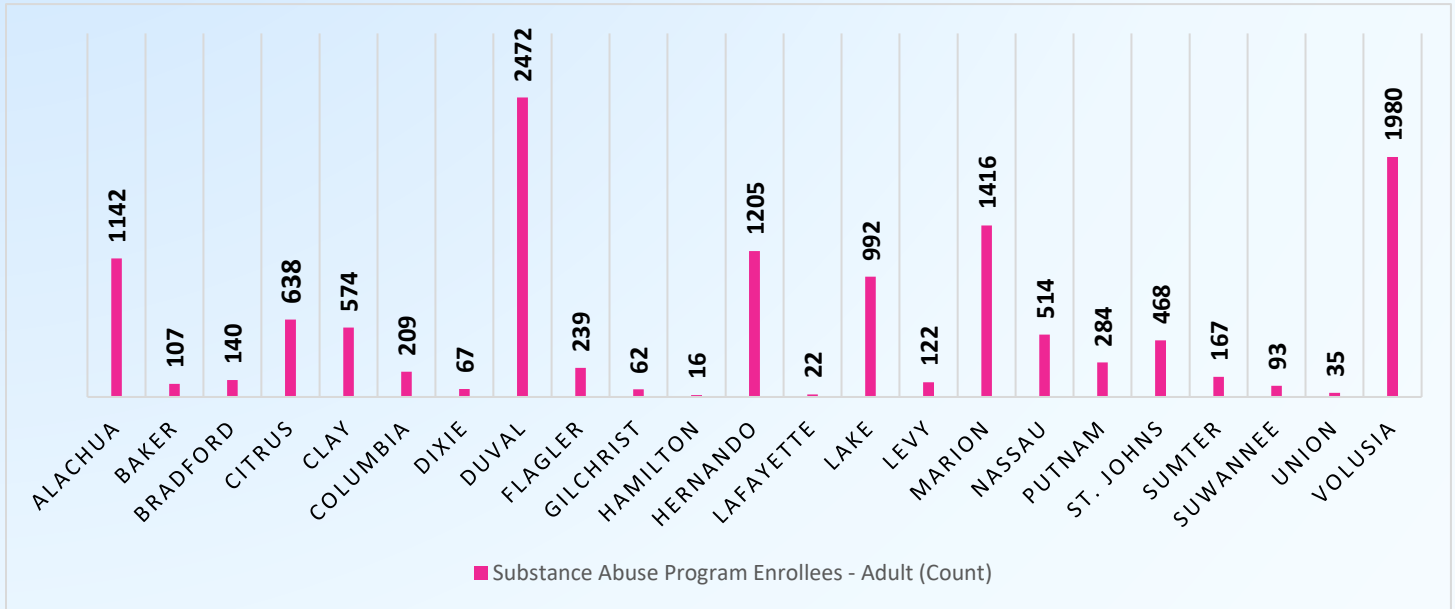
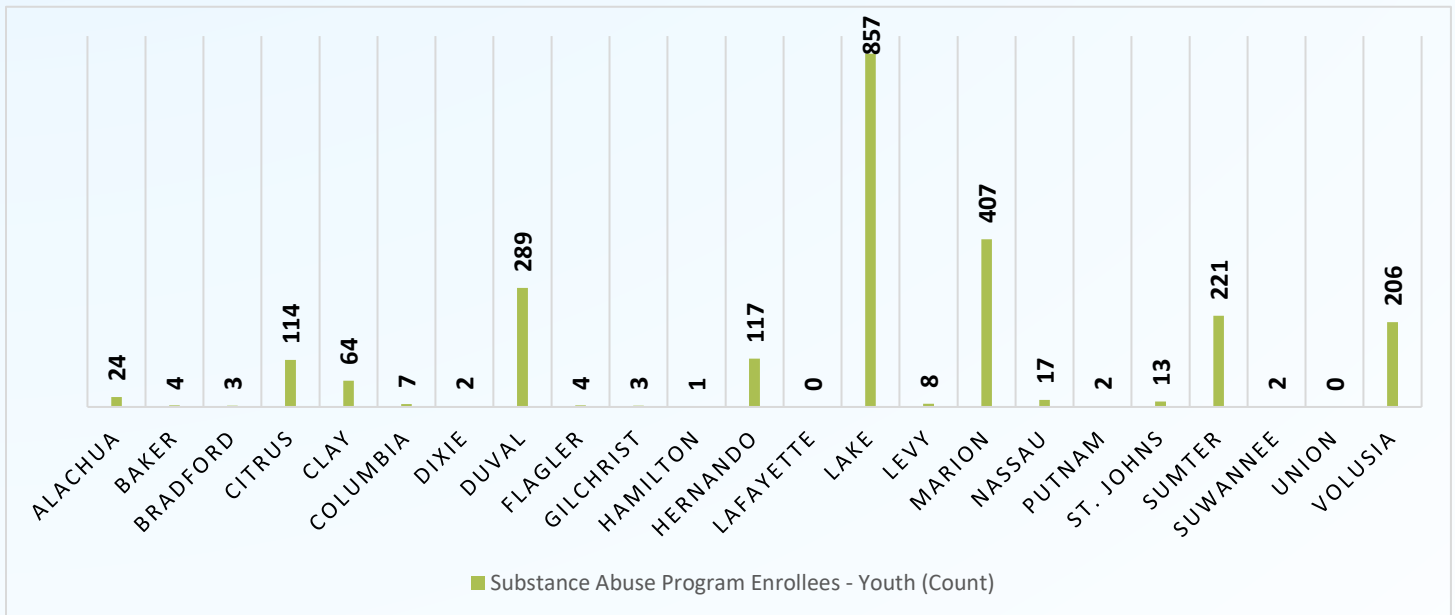


FIGURE 82: YOUTH (LESS THAN 18 YEARS OF AGE) SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT



(SOURCE: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – FLHEALTHCHARTS – SUBSTANCE USE DASHBOARD 2022)

## DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This report highlights mental health, risk and protective factors, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and various impacts associated with substance use among the Northeast region of Florida. Outlined below are the key takeaways from this report.

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### REPORT KEY POINTS

- ❖ In 2022, the Northeast Region had a higher average of students reporting ACEs than the state.
  - ❖ Of the Northeast counties, Citrus, Flagler, Hernando, Marion, and Union counties had the highest percentage of students reporting 4 or more ACEs.
  - ❖ There were no significant differences in reports of symptoms of depression among high school and middle school students among multiple categories.
  - ❖ Overall, 35.8% of youth sometimes feel like life is not worth it, 48.8% sometimes felt they are no good at all, 32.4% are inclined to think they are a failure, and 49.9% reported feeling depressed or sad most days, even if they felt OK sometimes in the past year.
  - ❖ Poor mental health among adults in the Northeast region was higher than the state.
  - ❖ Youth in Northeast Florida tend to have higher rates of substance use compared to the state for both past 30-day use, and lifetime use for nearly every substance.
  - ❖ Female youth reported higher rates of lifetime substance usage compared to male youth.
  - ❖ Compared to middle school students, high school students reported higher lifetime rates of substance use for nearly all substances except inhalants and prescription pain relievers.
  - ❖ High school youth in Northeast Florida were more likely to report higher rates of early ATOD use than the state in all categories.
  - ❖ Among adults, current cigarette usage and use of other tobacco products was higher in the Northeast region than the state, e-cigarette use was lower than the state.
  - ❖ In terms of alcohol use among adults, heavy or binge drinking was higher on the state level than in the region.
  - ❖ Some of the main impacts of substance misuse in Northeast Florida include neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), arrests, emergency visits, hospitalizations, and mortality
  - ❖ NAS was the highest in Baker, Dixie, Flagler, Hernando, and Putnam counties.
  - ❖ Duval county had significantly higher rates of annual adult and youth drug arrests compared to all other counties in the region.
  - ❖ Volusia county has the highest rates of drug overdose mortality compared to the other counties in the region.
-

## DISCUSSION &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS

The Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association (FADAA), in their most recent Patterns and Trends in Substance Use in Florida Annual Report, indicates that substance use among youth in Florida has remained mostly unchanged over time, with some rates declining for lifetime use (Hackworth, 2024). In Northeast Florida, substance use among youth has followed the same trends although often presenting higher rates than the state when it came to youth lifetime use of alcohol, or any illicit drug as recorded in the most recent county-level Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS) conducted by the Department of Children and Families in 2022. The only category which has had steady increases among youth regarding substance use since 2012 is any illicit drug, but no alcohol.

Alcohol remains the highest lifetime and past 30-day use category among youth, followed by vaping nicotine, and marijuana use. Middle school students were more likely than high school students to report lifetime use of inhalants<sup>5</sup> and prescription pain relievers. According to a 2020 fact sheet from the Department of Justice and Drug Enforcement Administration, inhalants are often among the first drugs that young children use, about 1 in 5 children nationally report having used inhalants by the end of middle school. Use of inhalants is one of the only substances that declines in use with age, being used more among younger children than older ones.

A new question regarding high school knowledge and use of Delta 8 or 10 products was included on the most recent state-level FYSAS report in 2023. Of high school students surveyed, 29% stated they had heard of Delta products, while only 9.5%, or 1 in 10, reported ever using them to get high in their lifetime. In a recent 2024 press release from Monitoring the Future<sup>6</sup> it was stated that in 2024 11% of 12 grade students across the United States had reported using Delta-8-THC in the past year.

Regarding perceptions, students in the Northeast region also generally had a lower rated perception of if it be wrong to use substances including cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, or other illicit drugs than the state. Middle school students tended to think it would be more wrong than high school students. Perception of harm also goes down as students' progress from middle school to high school, except regarding cigarette use where more high school students feel there is a risk of harm than middle school students in Northeast Florida.

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<sup>5</sup> According to the DEA, Inhalants are invisible, volatile substances found in common household products that produce chemical vapors that are inhaled to induce psychoactive or mind-altering effects. These may include common household products such as glue, lighter fluid, cleaning fluids, and paint all produce chemical vapors that can be inhaled. Common street names are Gluey, Huff, Rush, and Whippets. Most inhalants produce a rapid high that is similar to the effects of alcohol intoxication. Inhalant abuse can cause damage to the parts of the brain that control thinking, moving, vision, and hearing. Cognitive abnormalities can range from mild impairment to severe dementia.

<sup>6</sup> Monitoring the Future is an ongoing study of the behaviors, attitudes, and values of Americans from adolescence through adulthood. Each year, a total of approximately 50,000 8th, 10th and 12th grade students are surveyed as part of the Main study (12th graders since 1975, and 8th and 10th graders since 1991). The Monitoring the Future Panel study conducts annual follow up surveys with a subsample of each graduating class, who complete a follow up every two years from ages 19–30 and every five years from age 35 onward. The Monitoring the Future Study has been funded under a series of investigator-initiated competing research grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, a part of the National Institutes of Health. MTF is conducted at the Survey Research Center in the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.

## DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Moreover, data presented by the United States Department of Justice indicates that female youth reported greater substance use than male use for 9 out of 13 types of drugs (US Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2023). When it came to data presented in this report this was also true for what we are seeing in the Northeast Region among female versus male students. According to data in this report female youth were more likely to present with depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and engage in substance use. Female students also had lower perceptions of thinking it would be wrong to use substances, reported higher ACE scores, and were less likely to use the 988 helplines when asked compared to male students.

Northeast Florida youth also report with higher ACES than the state in all recorded ACE categories captured on the FYSAS in 2022. At least 16.1% of students in the 23-county area reported having 4 or more ACEs, with 23.9% on average reporting 4 or more ACEs. Middle school students were also often more likely to report impulsivity or lack of self-control than high school students as well as bullying incidents whether as the victim or as the bully. Additional perceived risk factors and enablers reported in Northeast Florida by youth included higher perceived laws and norms favorable to drug use, perceived availability of drugs, family conflict, poor academic performance, lack of school commitment, favorable attitudes toward antisocial behaviors and ATOD use, as well as early initiation of drug use. Prosocial activities such as being involved with school or community sports, bands, and clubs can help to protect against the negative impacts of ACEs. These types of activities are also considered protective factors of positive childhood experiences.

Regarding impacts of substance use in the region, in 2021 the Florida Department of Health Birth Defects Registry recorded a rate of 79.6 per 10,000 live births of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) in Northeast Florida, this was higher than the state rate of 43.2 per 10,000 live births. There was also a total of 20,812 drug arrests in 2022 which could indicate future ACE scores related to having an incarcerated family member among Northeast Florida youth. The region also had a rate of 173.6 per 100,000 for drug and alcohol induced mental disorders which is higher than the state rate of 165.8 per 100,000.

Among overdoses, it was reported that Naloxone was administered prior to EMS arrival 2,028 times in 2022 in Northeast Florida, and 9,842 times across the state. Most non-fatal overdose emergency visits and hospitalizations were opioid-involved in 2022. The opioid overdose annual age-adjusted death rate was lower in the region than the state in 2022.

The region on average has a higher mental health provider to patient ratio gap than the state average. In Northeast Florida the patient to provider ratio (1:1) is 1532:1 while the state is 490:1. Gaps like this can make it hard for individuals seeking treatment to find the resources they need. Resources such as Credible Mind sponsored through CCA can help to cover these gaps by providing a one-stop source for individuals to find immediate resources as well as care near them. CCA will also use data collected through this resource to assess need through a live dashboard on the DOMO platform. A live dashboard will help to provide current or real time insights on needs throughout Northeast Florida and other counties served by CCA and its partners.

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NORTHEAST FLORIDA

REGIONAL

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

PREPARED BY COMMUNITY COALITION ALLIANCE (CCA) STAFF

REQUESTED BY LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA FUNDED BY THE FLORIDA  
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