

The percentage of Kentucky teens using prescription drugs for off-label purposes has dropped dramatically over the past four years, a new survey has found.

The 2012 Kentucky Incentives for Prevention (KIP) School Survey found that use of prescription drugs without a doctor's specific direction to do so has decreased steadily among sixth-, eighth-, 10th- and 12th-graders since 2004. The declines have been the most significant since 2008, when the Commonwealth intensified its efforts to combat prescription drug abuse.

"Education works," said Governor Steve Beshear. "Our public health and law enforcement communities have worked tirelessly to educate the public about the dangers of using prescriptions outside of a doctor's care. And this report shows that when people have the correct information, they make better choices."

"The perception of risk is always a key factor in the abuse of substances," said Van Ingram, executive director for the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy. "I believe Kentucky teens are now recognizing the risk of abusing prescription drugs."

Additionally, the report found that nearly every other area surveyed – including alcohol, tobacco, Oxycontin, cocaine and hard drug usage – had declined between 2008 and 2012.