The percentage of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders reporting past month use of alcohol reached record lows* in 2010, according to data from the national Monitoring the Future study. Less than one-half (41.2%) of 12th graders reported drinking at least one sip of alcohol in the past month in 2010, compared to the peak prevalence of 72.1% in 1978. Past month prevalence rates among 8th (13.8%) and 10th (28.9%) graders are also at the lowest levels since these grades were first included in the study in 1991 (see figure below). In addition, binge drinking—drinking five or more drinks in a row at least once in the two weeks prior to the survey—also continues to decrease in all three grades (data not shown). For example, 23.2% of 12th graders reported binge drinking in 2010, compared to the peak of 41.4% in 1981.

*The Monitoring the Future survey began surveying 12th graders in 1975. Surveys of 8th and 10th graders were added in 1991.