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Study Highlights Important Role of Parents in Underage Drinking

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Special points of interest:

- **Community Awareness**
- **Education**
- **Prevention**
- **Intervention**
- **Treatment**
- **Recovery**

New research suggests that if parents want to keep alcohol away from their middle school children, the best place to start is at home. The study, reported in the June issue of Preventive Medicine, shows that of 11-14 year olds who choose to drink, only a small fraction (2.4% in the 6th grade, rising to 5.6% at the end of the 8th grade) obtain alcohol from commercial venues. More than one-third of the alcohol consumed by these children came from their own or a friend's parents or guardians.

The proportion of alcohol users is also disturbing; 17% at the start of the 6th grade and more than twice as many, 41% by the end of the 8th grade. The study reminds parents that they need to consider their positions as role models at the crucial time when their middle school children are likely to have their first serious encounters with alcohol.

Early onset of drinking leads to a long list of alcohol-related problems. It is important to educate parents about the consequences of alcohol use at a young age and try to prevent them from being their child's primary source of alcohol.

Whether you know it or not,

you are a role model for your child. Research shows that an overwhelming number of young people look up to their parents and other family members as examples to follow. Nearly half of young women respondents say they look to their mothers as their role model, according to one online survey. Almost half of the teens in another survey say their role model is a family member, not a pop icon or sports star.

What does this mean for you? As a parent, you may have more influence for good than you thought you did. By setting a good example of healthy living, you can help your children make healthy life choices. You also can talk to them about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse so they know where you stand on this issue. Youths who have positive role models are more likely to do well in school and have higher self-esteem; they also are less likely to abuse substances.

You can set a good example by putting time

and effort into your relationships with your child and other family members. Family life provides meaningful opportunities to demonstrate healthy behaviors every day. When you and your family show caring and respect toward each other, you provide excellent examples for your child to follow:

- Talk openly, honestly, and respectfully; think before you speak, and acknowledge your child's point of view, especially when there is conflict.
- Praise your child's positive qualities and behavior.
- Spend time together regularly; do things your child enjoys.
- Have family meals together and engage in family activities on a regular basis.
- Make some family gatherings alcohol-free to show your children that you don't need alcohol to have a good time.

Give your children guidance to make healthy choices and take responsibility for their

Study Highlights Important Role of Parents in Underage Drinking Prevention



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Household rules also remind you and other family members to model healthy behavior for your child. You set a good example when you enforce rules consistently: it shows that you care, are reliable, and stand by what you say.

- Don't allow your child to drink, smoke, or abuse other substances. You can make it official by writing a family contract.
- Protect your children from alcohol or tobacco use within your family. For example, don't allow them to get a beer or a cigarette for you or other family members.
- Never drink and drive or allow other family members to do so.
- Set additional "house rules" for matters such as

curfew, unsupervised time, homework, chores, driving, cell phones, Internet use, and entertainment including movies, television, and video games.

Set clear rules, and discuss in advance the consequences of breaking them. When your child breaks a rule, respond with an immediate consequence each time the problem behavior occurs. Calmly explain to your child why the behavior results in that consequence. The consequences for breaking rules can be supportive so that the focus is on teaching rather than harsh punishment. For instance, if your child broke the family rule by staying at an unsupervised party, you

might ground your child for some specific length of time; others might restrict instant messaging and have their child read online about the harmful effects of drugs. Each family has differing priorities when negotiating and agreeing on rules, expectations, and consequences for rules broken.

Your values, opinions, and example carry more weight with your child than you may have thought. By providing a positive model for your child to follow, you set a good example on how to successfully navigate life's conflicts and negative messages—and to choose healthy behaviors that will follow into adulthood.

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Introduction to Prescription Medication

On Monday June 25, 2007, Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services will be hosting the workshop Introduction to Prescription Medication Abuse at the Connecticut Clearinghouse Plainville, CT from 9:00–

4:30 p.m. This course introduces the participant to prescription and over-the-counter medications that are being abused in the home and on the street. The impact of these medications on the brain and

body of people with substance use disorders and/or mental conditions will be emphasized.

For more information: www.dmhhas.state.ct.us/educationtraining.htm

National HIV Testing Day

On June 27, state and local health departments, HIV testing sites, and AIDS service providers across the country will participate in events for National HIV Testing Day. National HIV Testing Day (NHTD) is an annual campaign produced by the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA-US) to encourage at-risk individuals to receive voluntary HIV counseling and testing. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 180,000 to 280,000 people nationwide are HIV-positive but are unaware of their status. HIV counseling and testing enables people with HIV to take steps to protect their own health and that of their partners, and helps people who test negative get the information they need to stay uninfected. Across the country, thousands of HIV counseling and testing sites, state and local health depart-

ments, and community-based HIV/AIDS service providers will participate in NHTD events, by holding health fairs, providing community and media outreach, hosting special testing-related events or operating extended hours. Some of these events may be scheduled in the days and weeks surrounding NHTD. Campaign materials including posters, for use by these groups have been developed by NAPWA and are available for order or to download.

NHTD organizers will also reach out to communities at increased risk of HIV infection, including African American and Latino populations, both of which are disproportionately affected with HIV when compared to other

demographic groups in the United States. The campaign also highlights this Web site, which allows users to locate HIV testing sites in their area. Founded in 1983, NAPWA is the oldest coalition of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world and the oldest national AIDS organization. NAPWA advocates on behalf of all people living with HIV and AIDS in order to end the pandemic and human suffering caused by HIV/AIDS. HIV-positive people have a unique role to play in HIV prevention and promotion of voluntary HIV counseling and testing. This is the thirteenth year of National HIV Testing Day.

For more information or to find out what's happening in your community visit www.hivtest.org

TAKE THE TEST, TAKE CONTROL



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June 27
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SAFE SUMMER

Summer is fast approaching and it's time for you to think about things to do while school is out. There are so many great activities happening in churches, parks, organizations, schools and more throughout the city. Be sure to stay involved in positive activities; encourage

your friends and family to do the same and have a Safe Summer. Safe Summer is about having a great time with your friends – the Beach; BBQs; Concerts;



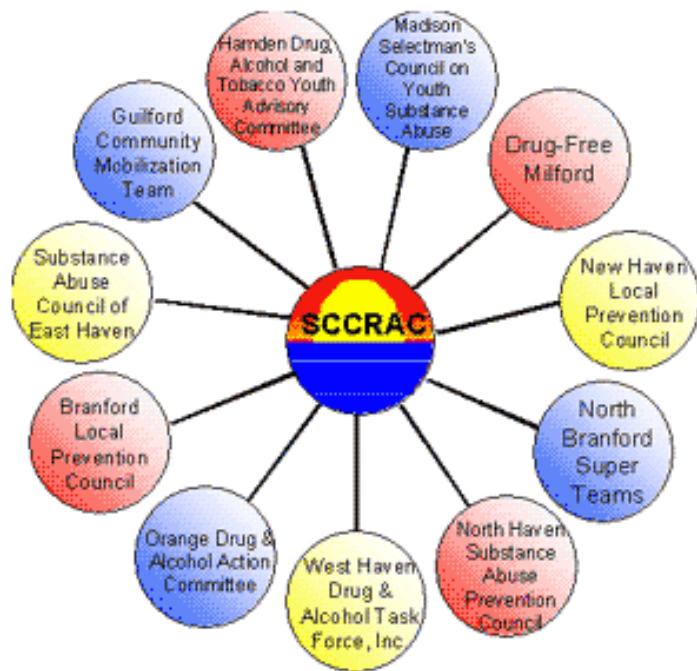
Camping; Cruising – whatever you're doing we

want you to have a great time. For information what's going on in your community, contact your local Parks and Recreation Departments, Youth Service Bureaus and Community Service and Recreation Departments.

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Shining a Light on Prevention that works

Help Prevent Impaired Driving during July 4th

In 2005, 280 people were killed in crashes across America during the Fourth of July holiday period involving a driver or motorcycle operator with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .01 or above. Of those, 245 fatalities involved a driver or motorcycle operator with a BAC level of .08 or higher. That's why the South Central Regional Action Council will be joining with other highway safety, community health and law enforcement officials to remind all Fourth of July party-goers that *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving* and to designate a sober driver before the celebrations begin. In 2005, the Fourth of July holiday period was the deadliest holiday period of the year—due to impaired driving]. Too many people still don't understand that alcohol, drugs and driving just don't mix. Impaired driving is no accident—nor is it a victimless crime. Too many lives are being lost and we need everyone's help to stop it.

Drunk driving is one of America's deadliest problems. Nearly 13,000 people died in highway crashes involving a driver or motorcycle operator with a BAC of .08 or higher in 2005.

Alcohol plays a big role in motorcycle fatalities too—affecting those skills most essen-

tial to operating a motorcycle—balance and coordination. In 2005, 41 percent of the 1,878 motorcycle operators who died in single-vehicle crashes had BAC levels of .08 or higher. Much of the tragedy from drunk driving can be prevented with a few simple precautions before going out to celebrate:

- Plan ahead: Whenever you plan on consuming alcohol, designate your sober driver before going out and give that person your keys.
- If you're impaired, call a taxi, use mass transit or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely.
- If your community offers a Sober Rides program, use it.
- Promptly report drunk drivers you see on the roadways to law enforcement.
- Wearing your seat belt or using protective gear on your motorcycle is your best defense against an impaired driver.

And remember, Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk. If you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely. Driving impaired is simply not worth the risk. The consequences are serious and real. Not only do

you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be significant. Violators often face jail time, the loss of their driver's license, higher insurance rates, and dozens of other unanticipated expenses. It's obvious to recognize someone who's had way too much to drink to drive safely. But what about those who have had just a few too many. You don't have to be 'falling down drunk' to be a threat to yourself and others on the road.

Don't let this Fourth of July blow up in your face. Remember, *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*. Designate your sober driver before the parties begin.

For more information, please visit www.StopImpairedDriving.org.

buzzed
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driving