

SAFE Spotlight

July/August 2009



THE SAFE COMMUNITY NETWORK IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S BUREAU OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION & TREATMENT IN THE DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Study on 21 Drinking Age Shows Major Reductions in Binge Drinking Except in College Students

New research from the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis has found substantial reductions in binge drinking since the national drinking age was set at 21 two decades ago, with one exception -- college students. The rates of binge drinking in male college students remains unchanged, but the rates in female college students has increased dramatically. The report was published in the July issue of the *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. The core message of the research shows that the 21 year old drinking age is having a beneficial impact and reducing it would be a mistake.

The data were analyzed from 20 administrations of the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, yielding a pooled sample of more than 500,000 subjects. The study looked at past 30-day prevalence of binge drinking by age, sex, and student status, among youths and young adults in the United States between 1979 and 2006, a period that

encompasses the federally mandated transition to a uniform legal drinking age of 21 years, and other policy changes aimed at curbing underage drinking. Significant reductions in relative risk for binge drinking over time were observed for 12- to 20-year-old males. No changes were observed for females in this age range and binge drinking among minority females increased. Risk for binge drinking increased among 21- to 23-year-old women, with college females outpacing non-students in this age range. Trends also indicate that no reduction in binge drinking occurred for college men.

Although this study showed trends of lower rates of binge drinking among youth, which is likely a result of a higher legal drinking age and other changes in alcohol policy, little improvement has occurred for college students, especially among college-aged women. Understanding these specific trends will help focus substance abuse prevention efforts.

Is your coalition SAFE recertified?

Find the application at

www.idph.state.ia.us/bh/sa_safe_network.asp

Funding Availability*:

- **AMA Foundation Fund for Better Health**
www.ama-assn.org
- **Heineman Foundation Grant Program**
www.heinemanfoundation.org/application
- **Staples Foundation**
www.staplesfoundation.org
- **Union Pacific Foundation**
www.up.com/found/request.shtml
- **Wal-Mart Foundation**
www.walmartstores.com

*Funding opportunities published here are selected for their news value and do not signify endorsement by IDPH

Is Your Coalition a Part of Connected Communities?

There is a new social networking site called Connected Communities which is available to coalitions and coalition leaders. This free network offers coalitions the opportunity to share stories, photos and videos, to initiate topical discussions and to get advice from others in the field. Members from around the world can network with others on an individual or group basis and can share issues and challenges, successes, best practices and lessons learned. Connected Communities allows coalitions to be involved in a network that can help inform and strengthen local efforts.

The site features blog posts, diverse groups, discussion topics and photos and videos of coalitions at work. Coalitions can also create their own coalition-specific group, use a discussion board to contact other coalition leaders, as well as connect with other coalition members throughout Iowa. Please consider joining this exciting network

To sign up, go to <http://connectedcommunities.ning.com/>





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History of the SAFE Community Network

In 1989, the Iowa SAFE Community Network was launched in response to needs and concerns expressed about substance abuse issues across the state. Initially, SAFE was an acronym for “Substance Abuse Free Environment” but now the SAFE format can be used to focus on many prevention-related issues. Offered by the Iowa Department of Public Health, this program helps communities collaborate to reduce substance abuse, crime, violence and other related problems. The Iowa SAFE Community Network is designed to enhance, recognize and support existing prevention services and initiatives in the community and to be a resource to its citizens.

Coalition Update

Iowa Awarded Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG)

The state of Iowa has been awarded \$10.5 million to reduce binge and underage drinking, and the problems associated with both. The funding was awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) through the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and will be administered by the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). IDPH will use a selection process to distribute the money to substance abuse prevention coalitions in counties with the highest rates of underage alcohol use, as well as youth and adult binge drinking.

The grant is organized around the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF), which uses the findings from public health research, along with evidence-based prevention programs and policies, to promote the health of individuals, families, and communities. Iowa will receive \$2.1 million dollars in each of the next five years. For more information about Iowa’s substance abuse programs, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/bh/substance_abuse.asp.

New Social Host Ordinance

On May 22, Linn County passed a new “Social Host” ordinance. The purpose of the policy is to prohibit the consumption of alcohol by youth at gatherings where adults knowingly allow them to drink. This is a superb example of how communities can make a difference in reducing Iowa’s high rate of binge drinking. Research from the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health shows that 11 percent of Iowans 12 to 17 years of age and 51 percent of Iowans ages 18 to 25 had engaged in binge drinking during the past month. To learn more about how local advocates succeeded in shaping this policy in their community, contact Jennifer Husmann of the Grant to Reduce Alcohol Abuse in Mount Vernon at jhusmann@asac.us.

Substance Abuse Disaster Relief Campaign Starts in July

Between July 2009 and September 2010, the IDPH Division of Behavioral Health will provide substance abuse disaster relief services to Iowans impacted by last year’s weather disasters. The funding, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Social Services Block Grant through the Iowa Department of Human Services, will be disseminated statewide to Comprehensive Prevention contractors and treatment

providers. Prevention contractors will implement a statewide prevention campaign to decrease substance abuse related to weather disasters and on-going stress. The statewide campaign includes TV and radio messages, billboards, and newspaper articles that reference a statewide 800# telephone response and referral line. These ads will begin running in July. For more information about this campaign, contact Julie Hibben at jhibben@idph.state.ia.us.

Rise in ADHD Drug Abuse in Eastern Iowa

The Gazette Newspaper recently reported on an increasing number of young Eastern Iowans being seen at hospitals for abusing drugs prescribed for ADHD. Medications involved were Adderall, Concerta, Ritalin LA and Vyvanse. The Iowa Poison Control Center reported seven people, ages 13 to 24, were seen at Eastern Iowa hospitals in four days.

“They’re abused to get high, to lose weight, to stay awake, to increase mental alertness,” said center director Linda Kalin. “Parents may not even know this is going on and the teens and young adults might not even know they can cause serious symptoms.”

Of the seven patients who were hospitalized, two reported using the drugs to stay awake while studying and five were abusing the medication to get high.