



PRAIRIE RIDGE

PREVENTION SERVICES

"CLEAN MIND; CLEAN BODY; CLEAN SPIRIT; DRUG FREE"

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North Iowa Youth Get Ready to Launch Social Norms Campaigns

By Melissa Deckard, CPS

To highlight the positive choices and behaviors of high school students, two North Iowa community coalitions, the Worth County Asset Team (WCAT) and Garner Asset Project (GAP), is promoting the "*Strong Enough to Say No*" Campaign: *8 out of 10 Worth County students and 7 out of 10 Garner Hayfield 11th graders do not binge drink* this month. This campaign is the first ever "social norms" campaign created and led by the youth.

Social norms campaigns are carried out in communities nationwide to address community concerns. This approach is an effective science-based strategy, which uses locally derived data to reduce students' misperceptions of negative peer behavior. The goal of the *Strong Enough to Say No* campaign is to show youth what the normal behaviors actually are, based on local survey data.

Youth behaviors and attitudes are influenced by perceptions of what they believe to be the "norm." The problem is most youth misperceive what their peers are doing and are more likely to engage in negative behaviors because of the perception that "everyone is doing it."

For these campaigns, youth have created positive messages that are going to be displayed and distributed in their high schools and communities using posters, stickers, radio spots, newspaper ads and social media. *Strong Enough to Say No* supports and celebrates the fact that the majority of students are not using substances. By communicating the data and information to students, parents, teachers and the wider community, these youth hope to encourage their peers to continue to make positive, healthy choices.

A few of the messages from the *Strong Enough to Say No* campaign will be centered around:

- The consequences of underage drinking
- The consequences of supplying a venue and/or alcohol to underage individuals
- Increasing knowledge of the risk and harm of prescription drug and over the counter drug abuse

If you would like more information about these campaigns or would like to get started on your own youth led social norms campaign, contact Melissa Deckard, Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist at Prairie Ridge 641-424-239 ext. 248.

STRONG ENOUGH TO SAY NO



Follow the campaign on Facebook visit [Prairie Ridge Prevention Services](#)

March of Dimes Birth Defects Prevention Month

National Mentoring Month

**Thank Your Mentor Day
January 25, 2011**

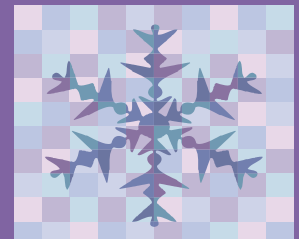
HAPPY NEW YEAR
From the
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Alcohol Sales Compliance Checks: Sting or Public Health Initiative?

By Jay Pedelty, CPS

North Iowa area substance abuse prevention coalitions have many strategies at their disposal to reduce the costs of problematic substance use in their local communities. These coalitions need to implement multiple strategies because there is no single change that will significantly reduce the crushing cost of alcohol and other drug abuse. To have any preventative affect, those strategies need to affect people's perception of benefit or risk or they need to affect availability.

Recently, coalitions have asked county governments to consider adopting a social host ordinance. When the county supervisors were exposed to research, exploring the connection between age of onset of regular alcohol use and future alcohol problems, Winnebago, Worth, Mitchell, Floyd, Cerro Gordo and Franklin counties all passed this ordinance. Even if some property owners do not acknowledge the risks to the adolescent brain associated with underage drinking, they now have to acknowledge the financial risk for themselves if they knowingly provide a place where underage drinking occurs.

The latest prevention initiative for coalitions is to encourage alcohol compliance checks by local law enforcement. Let's start out by acknowledging the obvious. Selling alcohol to someone under 21 is illegal. The reality though is that here in North Iowa- in some counties- is one third or more of the businesses have failed compliance checks. Simply having a law doesn't ensure compliance. Therefore, the only reasonable way to know if liquor license holders are not selling to people under 21 is to have someone under 21 go in and try to buy alcohol. Some liquor license holders call this a "sting", but is it a sting when the fireman comes into a business and checks for fire extinguisher compliance? Currently, local coalitions are not focusing on compliance checks because they believe most alcohol consumed by underage drinkers is not purchased by them at a grocery store, convenience store or bar. In fact, they know that only about 30% of the alcohol consumed by underage drinkers is purchased with the rest being given to them by a friend, relative, or is taken from the home without permission.

Coalitions are now trying to mandate compliance checks because the state of Iowa estimates that underage drinking is costing the tax and insurance premiums, paying residents of the state upwards of \$600 million dollars a year. Even if compliance checks only have the potential to deal with one third of the availability, that is still a substantial savings (\$180 million). Coalitions also pay attention to the research that has shown that underage drinkers that pay for the alcohol they drink tend to drink about 50% more per episode than those that do not pay for their alcohol. The result is prevention efforts targeted at the underage drinking are *most likely* to be problematic. Lastly, mandating compliance checks is a change that only law enforcement can affect and law enforcement has a much more realistic perception of the cost of problematic alcohol use than the general public. That is, this change on the part of law enforcement takes fewer resources than would be necessary to initiate a change in the entire community.

Once there is a clear understanding of the connection between alcohol availability and problematic usage, most law enforcement agencies will look upon compliance checks as a cost effective way to fulfill their mission of "law enforcement". Right now, many law enforcement agencies in North Iowa **do** consider compliance checks as part of their regular law enforcement duties. Some only do compliance checks when they are motivated by money outside their regular budget and some don't do compliance checks at all.

If you ever feel powerless to affect your taxes or insurance premiums or your family's safety, take heart. People can and do act in their own best interest when they have a realistic understanding of an issue. Problematic substance use of all kinds is powered by only two factors, perception of benefit/risk and availability. Help the community coalitions that are working for you. Advocate for institutionalized compliance checks by your local law enforcement and feel empowered.

TIPS:

A beverage seller/server training program

Did you know...if you are not checking I.D.'s and you fail a compliance check it is a \$750.00 fine? If you are a seller or server- think before you sell alcohol.

TIPS (Training for Intervention ProcedureS) is a program that provides education and training for the responsible service, sale, and consumption of alcohol. The TIPS responsible alcohol training and certification program is designed to prevent intoxication, underage drinking, and drunk driving by enhancing the fundamental "people skills" of servers, sellers and consumers of alcohol.

Anyone who serves alcohol in a licensed establishment can take this training and receive their certification. The TIPS certification is highly sought after by many liquor license holders and insurance companies.

Prairie Ridge Prevention Services' Certified TiPS trainer, Amy Markham, can stop by your establishment to drop off details about the TiPS program and speak with you further about the training and benefits to your establishment!

For more information contact Amy Markham at 641-424-2391 ext. 234 or amarkham@prairieridge.net

January 22, 2011 Youth Diversion Program at Prairie Ridge, Mason City. The program will be from 8:30-5:30 p.m. Saturday.

For more information please contact the Prairie Ridge Mason City Office 1-866-429-2391.

January 22 & 24, 2011 Adolescent Prime for Life at Prairie Ridge, Mason City. The program will be from 8:30-5:30 p.m. Saturday & Monday 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Upcoming Events