



PRAIRIE RIDGE

PREVENTION SERVICES

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

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Vol. 6 Issue 6
May/June 2011

2011 Social Norms Campaigns Wrap Up

By: Melissa Deckard, CPS

This year, students at Central Springs, Northwood-Kensett and Garner-Hayfield High School had the opportunity to participate in a social norms approach to reducing underage drinking. The "Strong Enough to Say No" Campaigns: 8 out of 10 Worth County students and 7 out of 10 Garner Hayfield 11th graders do not binge drink, found that youth responded to these initiatives with more realistic perceptions of their peers.

Garner's Teen Council and youth from the Worth County Asset Team (WCAT) led the social norms campaigns that highlighted the results from the 2008 Iowa Youth Survey. The survey results were used to contradict common misperceptions and reinforce positive behaviors. The youth created several positive messages such as: *You are not alone* and *Support your friend's healthy choices*. These messages were displayed throughout the school and community, using various forms of social media.

Follow-up surveys from all 3 schools combined showed 92.5 percent of respondents maintained or increased their perception of risk associated with high risk underage drinking. *Strong Enough to Say No* supports and celebrates the fact that most students are not using substances. It also emphasizes the environment in which young people live, go to school and participate in activities and how it affects their choices about whether or not to drink. Creating this environment requires consistently communicating expectations about alcohol and other drug related behavior, while supporting and encouraging healthy choices.

In Worth County, the students also chose to promote the *Parent's-Strong Enough to Say No* Campaign. In an effort to curb the number of underage drinking parties the *It's Friday Night- What is Your Teen Doing* message was targeted to adults about their own potential social host liability. In a randomly selected survey, 70 percent of adults were aware of the social host ordinance in Worth County and 93 percent of adults had seen the youth designed social host billboard at the four corner stop in Manly, which states that if an adult knowingly allows an underage youth to consume alcohol illegally in their home or on their property, they may be fined \$500-\$1000.

In Garner, local data indicates that 8 out of 10 parents think it is wrong or very wrong for youth to drink alcohol and 6 out of 10 high school students report that their parents do not knowingly provide alcohol to youth. In an effort to curb the number of underage drinking parties *Parent's-Strong Enough to Say No* will educate adults about their own potential social host liability as well.

In addition, Mitchell and Franklin County were involved in prescription drug awareness campaigns to increase knowledge of risk and harm of prescription drug and over the counter drug abuse. Popcorn bag stickers and movie ads were used to spread the campaign message. If you are interested in learning more or would like to start a social norms campaign in your community, contact Prairie Ridge Prevention Services.



Prairie Ridge Prevention Services

National HIV Testing Day
June 27, 2011

The
Prevention Team:
Kelly Grunhord
Prevention Manager
Melissa Deckard
Prevention Specialist
Amy Markham
Prevention Specialist
Jay Pedelty
Prevention Specialist



**Prairie Ridge
Prevention Services
320 North Eisenhower Ave.
P.O. Box 1338
Mason City, IA 50402
641-424-2391**

*Newsletter is funded through the:
Iowa Department of Public Health*



Women of Child Bearing Years and the Importance of Alcohol Screening

By: Melissa Deckard, CPS

Each year in the United States, approximately 1 out of every 100 live births are affected by alcohol use during pregnancy. According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), binge drinking among women of child bearing age (18-44 years old) in Iowa, is ranked 3rd highest in the United States. For women, binge drinking is defined as having four or more drinks at one time.

In 1981, the Surgeon General first advised that women should not drink alcoholic beverages during pregnancy because of the risk of birth defects and since 1990 the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* have stated that women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant should not drink alcohol.

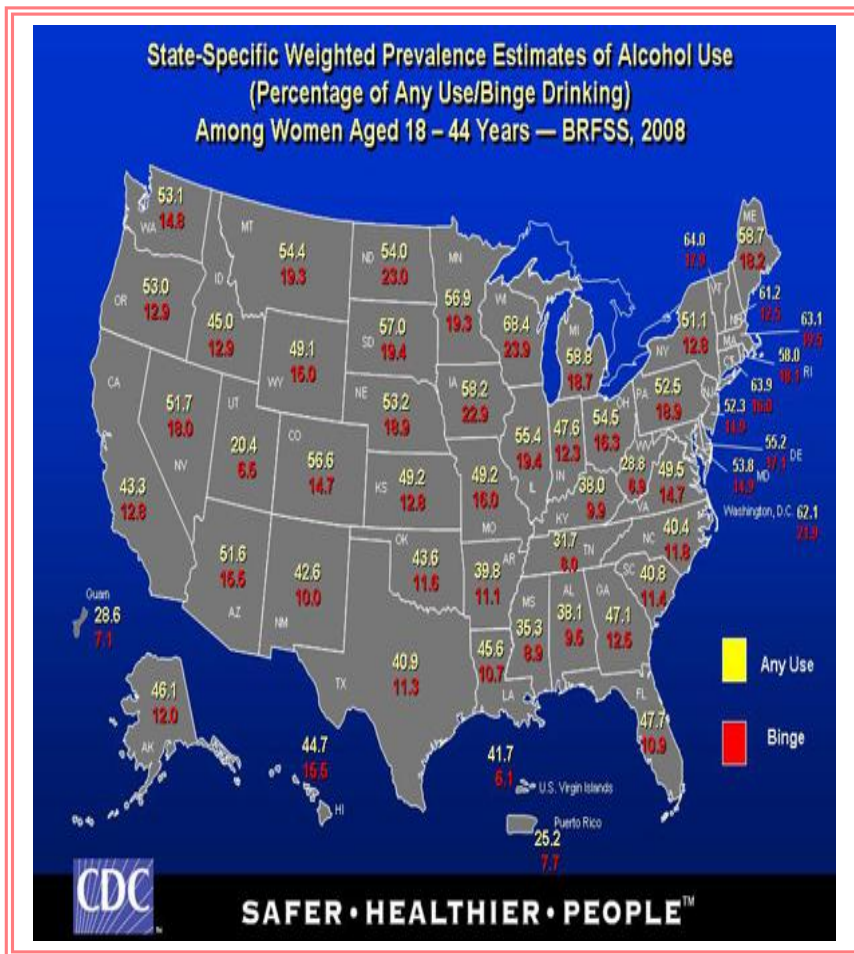
Despite repeated warnings from Surgeons General about the dangers of drinking alcohol while pregnant, a 15-year-study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found the number of women who drink alcohol while pregnant is not decreasing. In fact, binge episodes by women ages 18-44 continue to increase and alcohol use continues to rise.

Alcohol use levels prior to pregnancy are a strong predictor of alcohol use during pregnancy. In the United States, almost 50 percent of pregnancies are unplanned; many women who drink alcohol continue to drink during the early weeks of pregnancy because they do not realize that they are pregnant. Only 40 percent of women realize that they are pregnant at 4 weeks of gestation, a critical period for organ development.

This stresses the importance of educating all women of childbearing age about the risks of alcohol use during pregnancy.

According to the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), alcohol screening is an important part of health history, which is frequently overlooked by primary care physicians. Screening and behavioral counseling interventions in primary care settings to reduce alcohol misuse are top recommendations of the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force. At the Veterans Health Administration (VHA's) office of Mental Health Services, more than 96 percent of the patients are screened for alcohol use disorders. In addition, roughly two-thirds of patients with a diagnosis of a substance use disorder at the VHA are treated in primary care or in general mental health services.

Research shows that brief intervention techniques have been highly successful in increasing motivation to change behavior and that a pregnant woman's concern for her unborn child strongly motivates her to respond positively to her medical provider's advice to abstain from drugs and alcohol. Prenatal alcohol use is a leading preventable cause of birth defects and development disabilities. Knowledge of risks associated with alcohol use in pregnancy is limited, but as primary care physicians and other health related professionals began to build awareness of alcohol screening and resources, the best message to be sending is: Despite common beliefs that drinking during the 3rd trimester is safe, **no amount of alcohol use during pregnancy is safe.**



Upcoming Events

July 9th, 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.

July 9 & 11th, 2011 Adolescent Prime for Life at Prairie Ridge, Mason City. The program will be from 8:30-5:30 p.m. Saturday & Monday 1:00-5:00 p.m.

For more information please contact the Prairie Ridge, Mason City Office 641-424-2391