

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES - DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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Away from home, but not out of reach!

Students say, "Parents are the number one influence in their lives, even when they're college freshmen." Parents are the key to help students make positive choices for their futures. Parents need to remain in contact to ensure their child's freshmen college experiences stay positive, safe, and alcohol-free.

Two weeks prior to the starting of fall semester, several statewide colleges and universities plan to distribute a special letter. This letter aims to help parents of freshmen college students understand the dangers of underage drinking, the consequences of drinking on campuses and offers parents supportive prevention skills to help keep their kids alcohol-free.

There exist a number of factors that contribute to a student's decision to abuse alcohol. Several of these factors can be prevented by a consistent parental influence. The availability of alcohol and related illicit substances increases dramatically within a college atmosphere. For many young students, college can be their first experience with alcohol and abusive substances. New students are generally unaware of the pressures brought on by school rigors and many turn to alcohol abuse to cope with these pressures. Freshmen students face intense levels of peer influence, which can establish negative behaviors. Parents have the influence and ability to prepare their children for these potential negative experiences. The previously mentioned organizations believe that this letter provides parents a new understanding of the dangers of alcohol for freshmen students and will serve as motivation to stay involved in their kids' lives throughout the college years. "Parents play a vital role in their student's lives. They continue to be a primary influence in helping their student with making positive life choices," Utah State University Provost Raymond T. Coward said.

When: To be mailed out by August 7, 2009

Who: Parents of all participating 2009 fall semester college/university freshmen.

Where: Utah State University, University of Utah, Weber State University, Southern Utah University, Dixie State College, Salt Lake Community College, College of Eastern Utah, College of Eastern Utah San Juan Campus and Snow College.

College campuses and their students are greatly impacted by alcohol and other drugs. Recently published data illustrates that every year the consequences of college drinking are more significant, more destructive, and more costly than many Utahns realize. Utah has relatively low usage rates compared to national averages but we are not immune to alcohol related problems. It is important to note that many of these consequences may affect students whether they drink, or not.

National Statistics

- **Death:** 1,400 college students between the ages of 18 and 24 die each year from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle crashes and over 500,000 students are unintentionally injured under the influence of alcohol.
- **Assault:** More than 600,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are assaulted by another student who has been drinking.
- **Sexual Abuse:** More than 70,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape.
- **Unsafe Sex:** 400,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 have unprotected sex and more than 100,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 report having been too intoxicated to know if they consented to having sex.
- **Academic Problems:** About 25 percent of college students report academic consequences of their drinking including missing class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams or papers, and receiving lower grades overall.
- **Health Problems/Suicide Attempts:** More than 150,000 students develop an alcohol-related health problem and between 1.2 and 1.5 percent of students indicate that they tried to commit suicide within the past year due to drinking or drug use.
- **Drunk Driving:** 2.1 million students between the ages of 18 and 24 report driving under the influence of alcohol last year.
- **Property Damage:** More than 25 percent of administrators from schools with relatively low drinking levels and over 50 percent from schools with high drinking levels say their campuses have a "moderate" or "major" problem with alcohol-related property damage.
- **Police Involvement:** About 5 percent of 4-year college students are involved with the police or campus security as a result of their drinking. An estimated 110,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are arrested for an alcohol-related violation such as public drunkenness or driving under the influence.
- **Alcohol Abuse and Dependence:** 31 percent of college students met criteria for a diagnosis of alcohol abuse and 6 percent for a diagnosis of alcohol dependence in the past 12 months, according to questionnaire-based self-reports about their drinking.

The Utah Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control is responsible for conducting, licensing and regulating the sale of alcoholic beverages in the state of Utah. In addition, they carry a responsibility to help in the efforts to prevent the sale of alcohol to minors and eliminate underage drinking.

The Student Health Services and Wellness Center aims to educate students, staff and faculty in the development of skills necessary to enhance their personal wellness and ability to be successful in the Five Areas of Life (Spiritual, Mental/Emotional, Physical, Social, and Financial). The center is dedicated to educations about prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, and the consequences that may occur when students engage in these behaviors.

Utah State Substance Abuse Prevention Consortium (USSAP) consist of eleven higher education institutions that include public and private, two and four year institutions. USSAP is a network of directors and coordinators of prevention and education programs who represent Utah colleges and universities.

ParentsEmpowered.org is a statewide campaign focused on eliminating underage drinking in Utah. Its primary goals are to educate parents about the dangers of underage drinking and provide them with proven skills to communicate with their children about remaining alcohol-free. More information is available at www.parentsempowered.org.