

Navajo County Drug Project

Navajo County Coalition Against Drug Abuse



A Coalition of Concerned Navajo County Residents Joined Together to:

- EDUCATE the Community on the substance abuse crisis
- REHABILITATE those who have fallen into the addiction
- ENFORCE laws pertaining to the spread of substance abuse in our communities

Press Release

DATE: April 1, 2010
For Immediate Release

Contact: Debe Campbell
navajocountydrugproject@gmail.com

National Underage Drinking Campaign for Alcohol Awareness Month

More than a quarter of American youth aged 12 to 20 (27.6 percent) drank alcohol in the past month, according to a new survey by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The study shows that the underage drinking rates were as high as 40 percent in some states such as North Dakota and Vermont.

Yet, in Navajo County 31.87 percent of 8th, 10th and 12th graders had consumed alcohol within 30 days of the most recent Arizona Youth Survey (AYS), conducted by the Arizona Attorney General's Office (35.9 percent for the same group of Arizona youth). The bi-annual AYS, last conducted in 2008, revealed that 72.9 percent of 12th graders in Navajo County have used alcohol in their lifetime.

In a major effort to combat the epidemic of underage drinking, SAMHSA and the national Ad Council launched a new series of national public service advertisements (PSAs) to encourage parents to talk to their children about drinking alcohol at an early age. The campaign and study were released in conjunction with Alcohol Awareness Month (April) and as part of the Surgeon General's "Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking."

"Prevention is the number one priority of SAMHSA, and reducing underage drinking is a key part of that effort. Underage drinking is a national crisis putting the lives of millions of Americans at risk as well as the futures of many of our youth," said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde, J.D. "The national educational campaign SAMHSA is undertaking with the Ad Council aims at bringing to bear the most effective weapon against underage drinking; conversations between parents and their children."

Navajo County Drug Project focuses this year on Underage Drinking Prevention and kicks off its campaign this month with a t-shirt design competition, to raise awareness. Complete contest details are at www.navajocountydrugproject.com.

The Navajo County Drug Project – Navajo County Coalition Against Drug Abuse
P.O. Box 1596, Pinetop, AZ 85935
(928) 368-7519, (928) 358-1645 FAX
navajocountydrugproject@gmail.com www.navajocountydrugproject.com

Mission Statement:

To develop a diverse community representation, coordinate a sustained effort in educating and preventing the substance abuse through a plan for change in local social norms through prevention, treatment and vigorous enforcement of existing laws.

New PSAs Aimed at Parents

The new PSAs aim to reach parents of children ages 11 to 15, with an emphasis on parents of middle school children who have not yet started drinking. ***By age 15, 47.8 percent of Navajo County youth have tried alcohol***, according to AYS '08. The television, radio, magazine, newspaper and Internet ads are designed to reduce and delay the onset of underage drinking by increasing communication between parents and youth. The ads encourage parents to talk early, talk often and get others involved.

The PSA campaign includes resources for parents that illustrate the short and long-term consequences of underage drinking and for tips on talking with their kids about alcohol. The accompanying Web site features a number of helpful resources for parents, including an action plan that parents can personalize for their children to help start the conversation.

What the Survey Found

Alcohol is the most widely used substance of abuse among America's youth. Alcohol contributes to the three leading causes of death among 12 to 20-year-olds (unintentional injury, homicide and suicide). And research shows that those who start drinking before age 15 are six times more likely to have alcohol problems as adults than those who start drinking at age 21 or older.

The study also reveals that nationwide, approximately 8.6 percent of past-month drinkers aged 12 to 20 purchased their own alcohol the last time they drank. In Arizona, that is on average, 8.06 percent for 15-18 year olds, but 7 percent in Navajo County. (Notably 11.4 percent for Navajo County 11th graders.)

The national data were drawn from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, using combined 2006-2008 data in estimates of past month alcohol use and self-purchase of alcohol among persons aged 12 to 20. The report is available at oas.samhsa.gov/2k10/180/SR180UADhtml.pdf. The Navajo County data may be downloaded at navajocountydrugproject.com.

###