

# Alert

## Metropolitan Drug Commission

Strengthens Families. Protects Lives.

## Here's the "Kicker": Alcoholic Energy Drinks Fizzle Under Pressure from Watch Dog Groups and State Attorneys General

Pre-mixed alcoholic energy drinks that once stirred up confusion among retailers, law enforcement and parents have been canned by several distributors after pressure from watchdog groups and state attorneys general, further demonstrating the power of a coalition. Following the removal of caffeine from "Tilt" and "Bud Extra" last June, MillerCoors has pulled the plug on "Sparks" as a caffeinated alcoholic beverage as of this January.

With the introduction of non-alcoholic energy drink "Red Bull" to the U.S. in 1997, the energy drink industry exploded with more than 500 new products worldwide. Shortly thereafter, nightclubs and bars began creating energy drinks mixers like "jager bombs, speedballs, bull-garitas, etc." Capitalizing on that popularity, beer companies started producing and marketing pre-mixed drinks containing alcohol and caffeine, and they adopted the same advertising tactics that were effective in the non-alcoholic energy drink industry— extreme sports sponsorships, text messaging and Internet interactions like Facebook and MySpace—all of which appealed to teens and young adults. With edgy brand names and an association with risk taking and adventure targeted at youth, these drinks "sparked" an outcry from the public which is finally being heard by lawmakers and industry leaders.

Attorneys for several states entered into an "assurance of voluntary compliance and discontinuance" (or settlement) with MillerCoors last December, citing a violation in trade practices. The settlement alleged that MillerCoors made false or misleading health-related claims about the energizing effects of these drinks while failing to

disclose the consequences of combining caffeine (a stimulant) with alcohol (a depressant). The document also claimed the company directed advertising efforts toward underage consumers. The parties agreed that MillerCoors would stop manufacturing, marketing and distributing any and all caffeinated alcohol beverages including "Sparks" brand products by January 10, 2009. In addition, MillerCoors consented to eliminate promotional materials that refer to "Sparks" in the caffeinated form and to omit any reference to mixing "Sparks" products with any alcohol-based products. Furthermore, MillerCoors settled that it would not brew alcoholic beverages containing caffeine or other stimulants like guarana for itself or other manufacturers. Since then "Sparks" has been reformulated and reintroduced to the market without the caffeine to meet the terms outlined in the settlement.

MillerCoors is not the first producer of alcoholic energy drinks to respond to growing concerns about the health effects of combining stimulants and depressants and marketing ploys aimed at younger crowds. Anheuser-Busch also recalled "Spykes", a caffeinated drink containing 12 percent alcohol after 29 state attorneys sent a letter to Anheuser-Busch. Since then, Anheuser-Busch has cooperated and revamped "Tilt" and "Bud Extra" by eliminating the caffeine component.

With continued pressure from alcohol awareness groups, community coalitions, law makers and others, pre-mixed alcohol drinks may be just about all "tapped out."

## CDC Alerts Pregnant Women to Drop the Bottle for Baby

According to a 15-year study released by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of women "throwing back the bottle" while pregnant is not decreasing. The CDC analysis showed that 1 in 8 women drank any amount of alcohol while pregnant, and 1 in 50 engaged in binge drinking.

While this study did not explore why women are still drinking while pregnant, it did reveal some interesting demographics. **Unmarried women age 35-44 who were college graduates and employed were most likely to report any alcohol use** (defined as at least one drink of any alcoholic beverage in the past 30 days).

Pregnant women who binge drink (consuming five or more drinks on at least one occasion in the past 30 days) were more likely to be employed and unmarried than were pregnant women who did not binge drink.

It is not yet known why women in this particular demographic are more likely to use alcohol while pregnant, so further research is necessary. However, some possible reasons could include: more educated, employed women may have more available cash to purchase alcohol; older women may be alcohol dependent and cannot abstain from drinking; unmarried women may attend more social functions serving alcohol; or, unmarried women dealing with mental health stressors may self-medicate with alcohol.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, drinking any amount of alcohol while pregnant can result in birth defects known as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders ranging from mental retardation to learning and behavioral problems. Other alcohol-related birth defects might include growth deficiencies, facial abnormalities and central nervous system impairment.

Alcohol damage to the fetus can occur at any stage during pregnancy, so women who are planning on becoming pregnant should also avoid alcohol. **Local OB-GYN Dr. Leonard Brabson** advised, "Alcohol-related birth defects are totally

preventable, so it is important that we communicate to women that even in the first few days before pregnancy is detected, drinking alcohol can harm the fetus."

Because past drinking habits can predict a woman's drinking habits during pregnancy, identifying and modifying a woman's prenatal alcohol use in early pregnancy is very important. (*Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*) CDC

epidemiologist Clark Denny, main author of the 15-year study, pointed out the crucial job of physicians in addressing drinking during pregnancy, "By screening and advising women about the risks of drinking while pregnant, health care providers can play a key role in reducing rates of fetal alcohol syndrome."

Some health care providers use various screening tools to assess alcohol use by pregnant women. One such measure, a simple four-item questionnaire known as CAGE, can identify a range of alcohol use from lifetime alcohol diagnosis to pre-pregnancy risk drinking to current pre-natal consumption. Questions that physicians use during screening with CAGE include:

- C- Have you felt you ought to **C**ut down on drinking?
- A- Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
- G- Have you felt **G**uilty about drinking?
- E- **E**ye-opener: Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover?

If a pregnant patient discloses that she is currently drinking alcohol, that she drank more than seven standard drinks a week or more than three at a time prior to pregnancy, or if she scores positively on the screening questionnaire, a clinician should discuss her alcohol use with her and determine if further assessment or intervention is needed to change her behavior.

With proper screening, patient/physician conversation, early intervention and education women can take the necessary steps to eliminate or reduce prenatal alcohol use, as well as minimize risk to the fetus and maximize the outcome of the pregnancy. When it comes to alcohol use by a pregnant woman or someone who thinks she may be pregnant, the best advice according to Dr. Brabson is: "Avoid it. There is no safe level of alcohol consumption."

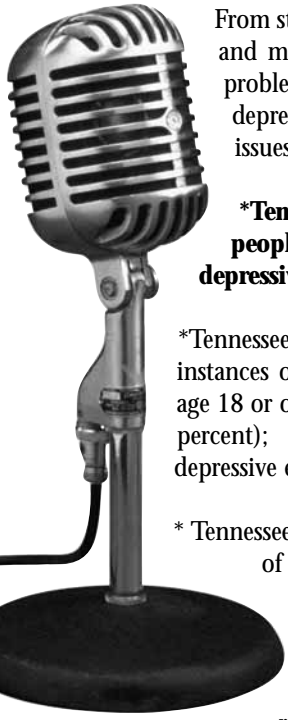
The Metropolitan Drug Commission would like to reach out to women before they become pregnant or when they are planning a pregnancy and raise awareness of the harm alcohol usage may cause. The Metropolitan Drug Commission is looking to form partnerships in the community with physicians, agencies and other organizations which can help connect with pregnant women and provide them with information to make healthier choices.

For women currently seeking pregnancy resources and information the Knox County Health Department offers family planning, gynecology wellness care, pregnancy testing and other women's wellness screening services. The University of Tennessee Medical Center also offers helpful tools including an on-line health center with information from pre-pregnancy planning to baby's first weeks after delivery, accessible at [www.utmedicalcenter.org/prenancycenter](http://www.utmedicalcenter.org/prenancycenter).



# Tennessee Sings the Blues

## Report Shows State's High Rate of Depression and Drug Use



From state to state one thing is clear: All states face substance and mental illness challenges. What vary are the levels of problems from illicit drug use to alcohol dependence and depression. A new national report analyzed a list of these issues and outlined some notable findings.

**\*Tennessee leads the nation with the highest rate of people age 18 and older who experienced a major depressive episode in the past year at 9.8 percent.**

\*Tennessee is among the top fifth of states reporting the most instances of serious psychological distress (SPD) among people age 18 or older at 13.7 percent. West Virginia ranked first (14.4 percent); Hawaii ended up with the lowest rates of both a depressive episode (5 percent) and SPD (8.2 percent).

\* Tennessee ranks in the upper fifth of states for past year's usage of cocaine (2.8 percent) as well as past month's use of illicit drugs other than marijuana among people age 12 and older (5.2 percent).

\*In the area of non-medical use of prescription pain relievers Tennessee is again in the highest fifth of states in each of the three age groups (12-17, 18-25 and 26 or older with 9.1 percent, 15.8 percent and 5.3 percent respectively in each category) and also for the

total population of age 12 and over (7 percent). Arkansas leads that list, and South Dakota ranks lowest.

While those statistics are downers for our state, there is *some* encouraging news. Tennessee is ranked in the bottom fifth of states for the rate of past month alcohol consumption among people age 12 and over (40.2 percent)

**And, with a past month alcohol consumption rate of 23 percent, Tennessee is almost at the very bottom of the list among underage persons 12-20 years-old—a population that the Metropolitan Drug Commission has spent many hours engaging at the local level.** Only Mississippi and Utah boasted lower underage drinking rates at 22 percent and 17.3 percent respectively. North Dakota possessed the highest (40 percent).

Developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) from the 2006 and 2007 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health, the findings show the wide variation of problems in the U.S. The surveys interviewed over 135,000 people across the country, measuring illicit drug use, binge drinking, alcohol and illicit drug dependence, tobacco use, serious psychological distress and major depressive episodes.

With these findings SAMHSA hopes to help public health authorities better determine the most effective way to address the problems facing each state. The full report is available on line at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k7/state/TOC.cfm>.

## Knoxville Youth Leadership Changes Hands; Youth Hands Change Mores

For half of a decade the Metropolitan Drug Commission has worked to provide a "Voice for Youth" through support of the Knoxville/Knox County Mayors' Youth Action Council (YAC). At the end of this past school year the council changed hands to further the mission of "changing mores" when it comes to teen apathy.

Charged with ensuring the opinions and concerns of young people are asserted, these youth leaders developed a strategic plan during a May retreat at Camp Wesley Woods. A few of the projects they will undertake include: planning the 2010 Knoxville Youth Summit "service blitz" day; recognizing outstanding teen volunteers at the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Knoxville SPHERE Awards; helping support the Knoxville Area Chamber Partnership's Drop-out Prevention Summit (in response to one of the most talked about issues of the 2009 Youth Summit); and, following up on last year's project to create a system for student evaluation of courses in Knox County High Schools.

Last year's YAC members planned and coordinated the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Knoxville Youth Summit, an event which has engaged over 1,000 teens in community service and dialogue with elected leaders. Recent Webb graduate Michaelan Moore, Summit Committee Chair, acknowledged that the phenomenal support of adult and student volunteers resulted in positive outcomes from this year's summit, "Fortunately, we were blessed with some amazing volunteers to help us with this event. According to event evaluations, 95% of participants surveyed indicated that the Youth Summit taught them how they can make a positive difference in the community, and 97% indicated that the event helped them come up with a plan that they can use in their organization or school."

Youth Action Council Advocacy and Education Committee Chair Chris Hickman worked with his committee on public policy and system change issues. "Our group decided early on to try to create a way for students to have the opportunity to provide feedback on courses taken in Knox County's high schools." Through those efforts the committee successfully presented a plan to the Knox County School Board for a system of student evaluation of courses in Knox County High Schools. Dr. McIntyre has approved a pilot program for the system at South Doyle High School in the fall.

YAC has been grateful for the financial and in-kind contributions of community leaders and businesses to support its projects in previous years. Soon new members will be seeking sponsorships for the 2010 Knoxville Youth Summit and SPHERE Awards to be held next spring. Anyone interested in becoming a sponsor of Youth Action Council events should call Leah Adinolfi at (865) 588-5550 or email [ladinolfi@bellsouth.net](mailto:ladinolfi@bellsouth.net).

With goals in mind and big shoes to fill the new class of YAC members is equipped to move Knoxville's youth on a course that changes the culture from one that views teens as problems to be solved to one that sees teens as community problem solvers.

Joining the growing list of community youth leaders are the newly appointed members of the 2009-2010 Knoxville and Knox County Mayor's Youth Action Council (YAC):

- |                               |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Taylor Bowling- Halls         | Eliza Norrel- West                |
| Carrie Cox- West              | Lauren Ortiz- Knoxville Catholic  |
| Raven Dyer- Fulton            | Eliza Rowcliffe- Hardin Valley    |
| Amanda Furrow- Central        | Zach Saunders- Farragut           |
| Christiana Goode- Austin East | Drew Stover- Bearden              |
| Chris Hickman- South Doyle    | Tasia Tate- West                  |
| Rachel Jackson- Hardin Valley | Max Waibel- Farragut              |
| Preston Johnson- Austin East  | Tiffany Winstead- Fulton          |
| Kristy Kelly- Webb            | Melanie Young- Knoxville Catholic |
| Will Kronick- West            | -and-                             |
| Hester Lam- Central           | Alternate: Anna Rennich- West     |
| Lynsa Lovell- Carter          | Honorary Member: Sara Denton-     |
| Truman Melton- South Doyle    | Hardin Valley                     |



*New Youth Action Council members set goals during a brainstorming session at the YAC retreat.*



*The 2009-2010 Youth Action Council members participated in a retreat at Camp Wesley Woods to prepare for upcoming school year. Pictured here are bottom row left to right: Will Kronick, Raven Dyer, Rachel Jackson, Tiffany Winstead, Hester Lam, Kristyn Kelly, Anna Rennich; second row left to right: Amanda Furrow, Lynsa Lovell, Christiana Goode, Lauren Ortiz; back row left to right: Melanie Young, Taylor Bowling, Carrie Cox, Eliza Norrell, Chris Hickman, Tasia Tate, Drew Stover, Max Waibel, Sara Denton, Zach Saunders. (Not pictured: Preston Johnson, Truman Melton, Eliza Rowcliffe)*

## Substance Abuse Is the Latest “Home Invasion” — “TRACS” Provides Answers

A report published by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) shows nearly 12 percent of children under age 18 live with a parent who abuses or is dependent on alcohol or illicit drugs. Based on the annual National Survey on Drug Use and Health and representing five years of data collection from 2002 to 2007, these findings point to over 8.3 million American children living in homes where drug or alcohol abuse is prevalent. [In Knox County alone this percentage translates to over 11,000 children estimated to reside with substance-abusing parents.]

Other national findings from the SAMHSA report include:

- Almost 7.3 million children lived with an alcohol-dependent or alcohol-abusive parent;
- Around 2.1 million children lived with a drug-dependent or drug-abusive parent;
- Past year substance dependence or abuse by parents involved almost 14 percent of children aged 5 or younger.

According to the report, parental substance dependence and abuse can have profound effects on children, including child abuse and neglect, injuries and deaths related to motor vehicle accidents and increased odds that the children will become substance dependent or abusers themselves. SAMHSA Acting Administrator Eric Broderick noted, “The research increasingly shows that children growing up in homes with alcohol and drug-abusing parents suffer—often greatly. The chronic emotional stress in such an environment can damage their social and emotional development and permanently impede healthy brain development, often resulting in mental and physical health problems across the lifespan. This underlines the importance of preventive interventions at the earliest possible age.”

**Mary Waugh, Director for Children and Youth Mental Health Programming at Helen Ross McNabb Center in Knoxville** agreed, “Helen Ross McNabb believes early intervention is key, and (it) has a huge impact on a child’s emotional and social well being.” With an entire division dedicated to providing prevention services to at-risk youth, the McNabb Center will add a new program to its continuum this August.

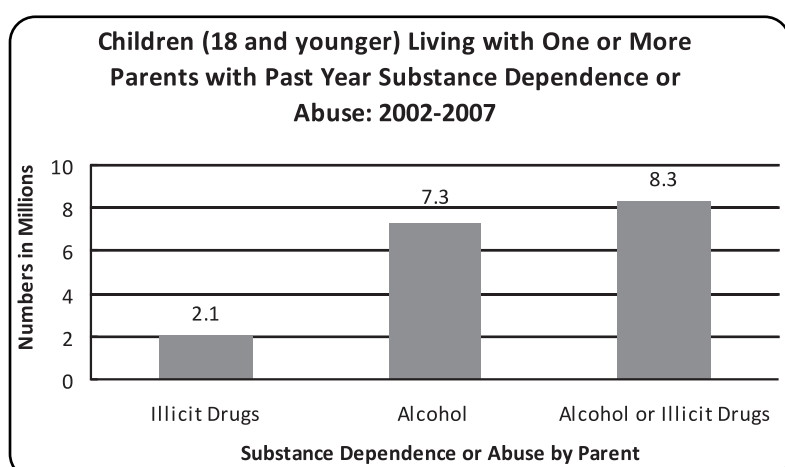
**TRACS (Teaching Resilience and Creating Strengths)** will address specific risk factors which can reduce and prevent substance use in adolescents. “Research supports children are at a greater risk for abusing substances in the future when they are living in an environment with substance-abusing parents. This program specifically targets that population, adding positive social supports for children ages 10-14 during high risk hours (4-6 p.m.),” said Waugh.

Additionally, primary risk periods for drug abuse occur as children experience life transitions such as advancement in school, and early adolescence is the time that children are likely to encounter the choice and pressure to use drugs for the first time. Waugh acknowledged, “We know that transition is a difficult process in general and has an impact on children as they advance from elementary school into middle school, and again from middle school to high school. During this transition class work becomes more challenging, homework increases, a desire for autonomy from the authority of parents increases, as does the need to create an identity that is socially acceptable. Targeting this age group with prevention services will impact them developmentally and socially and possibly avoid future concerns.”

Serving 200 families annually, TRACS will operate as an after-school program for 4 hours a week for about 15 weeks. Eligibility to participate in these services will be based on risk factors that include substance abusing parents, witnessing domestic violence, victims of violence and trauma, placement into foster care, poor school performance, truancy, poverty, experimental use, emotional issues and alcohol and drug exposure. A strong family and community component is a unique part of the service delivery.

Overall the program is designed to arm each participant with the skills and tools to make positive choices and drive out the influences of alcohol and drug use, while preparing them to build a life worth living.

If someone you know meets the eligibility requirements for this program, and you would like more details, please contact Mary Waugh at Helen Ross McNabb at 523-8695 x. 1262.



Source: 2002 to 2007 SAMHSA National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs).

## METROPOLITAN DRUG COMMISSION SEARCHES FOR “PATHWAYS” PROVIDERS

The Metropolitan Drug Commission is on the hunt for new services providers and updated information from existing treatment and prevention agencies for its resource guide, “Pathways.” First published in 1992, the “Pathways” manual has been distributed to thousands of individuals and agencies as a resource for the treatment and prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse.

To provide the most accurate and informed referrals, the Metropolitan Drug Commission is asking area treatment services and facilities, prevention efforts, support groups and law enforcement to send in their latest contact and other information for compilation into this directory. Submissions may be made by contacting our office at (865) 588-5550 or by going on-line to [www.metrodrug.org](http://www.metrodrug.org).

Catherine Thatcher Brunson, Metropolitan Drug Commission executive director notes, “Unfortunately, in our community, the waiting lists for treatment are 16 – 20 weeks for the uninsured. It is imperative that people can access treatment readily. Maintaining the most up-to-date resources is critical in helping us reduce the amount of time Knox Countians have to wait to receive the treatment they need. Otherwise, too often, they end up in our jails.”

The Metropolitan Drug Commission has assisted roughly 400 to 500 individuals annually and has disseminated nearly 10,000 materials to the community this past year. Around two-thirds of callers sought drug assessment and treatment. Of those who called 45% sought information for alcohol-related services, and another 32% requested help for prescription drug usage. Nearly half of those persons seeking aid were uninsured. Updating the directory with the latest information will ensure the Metropolitan Drug Commission can assist the community most effectively in accessing the assistance they need to overcome their alcoholism and addiction.

## New Student Rep Gives Students a Voice in Knox County Education

The Metropolitan Drug Commission is pleased to welcome the newest member of the Knox County Board of Education. Sara Denton, a junior at Hardin Valley Academy, has been chosen as the school board’s student representative for 2009-2010.

With a black belt in American Karate, 10 years of piano lessons and a summer mission trip to Honduras to work in a foster home for children, Denton will add yet another responsibility to her growing list of accomplishments as she represents her peers on the Knox County Board of Education. Actively involved in her church, school and the community, Denton has traveled around Europe with the international group “People to People” as a student ambassador; has participated in Knoxville Work Camp and mission trips from New Orleans to Philadelphia as an active member of West End Church of Christ; and will represent the Junior Class at her school as a secretary of SGA and as an academics/organizations editor for the school yearbook. Denton desires to attend David Lipscomb College with a possible interest in pursuing elementary education, music and journalism.

The school board seat that Denton will occupy this fall is a position first proposed by the Youth Action Council (YAC), a group formed by a partnership between the city and county mayors’ offices and the Metropolitan Drug Commission. The YAC is comprised of a group of students representing all high schools in Knox County who work to ensure that students have a voice in public policy. The group hosts the annual Knoxville Youth Summit and works on a number of public policies and civic engagement projects throughout the year. As the student school board representative, Denton will serve as a liaison to the Youth Action Council, while the Youth Action Council will serve as a network of support and an avenue to communicate with students from every school.

Eager to assume her new role Denton remarked, “As the student representative on the Knox County Board of Education, I look forward to many things. Meeting new people and understanding their specific interests connected to our schools and students will allow me to better understand the different needs in our county. I hope to gain better understanding of the process of decision making, compromise, and conflict resolution the board is faced with regularly. As a current student I would like to share our perspectives when important decisions are being made by the school board that will impact our future. The leadership skills I will observe will better make me aware of the importance of listening, knowledge, patience, competency, encouragement, and responsibility.”

**Hardin Valley Junior Sara Denton will represent students on Knox County School Board.**



## Announcements

The Metropolitan Drug Commission is pleased to announce a new student production competition to be held in the fall semester of 2009 entitled "A-Parent Miscommunication Contest." High school students in grades 9-12 are invited to produce a 15 or 30 second video advertisement or Public Service Announcement (PSA) aimed at reducing youth access to alcohol. Entry forms as well as a detailed contest timeline and requirements for entering will be available at [www.metrodrug.org](http://www.metrodrug.org).

## MDC in Action

From May 1 to June 30, 2009, the MDC serviced the community by providing:

- 39 Treatment Referrals
- 3629 Prevention Materials & Resources

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To submit an announcement or article to the Metropolitan Drug Commission's **ALERT**, please call (865) 588-5550.



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Visit our website for information about starting or maintaining a Drug-free Workplace Program, parent resources; treatment options; general drug descriptions, including warning signs and effects; and local and national research about drug use.

[www.metrodrug.org](http://www.metrodrug.org)

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