



Alert

METROPOLITAN DRUG COMMISSION
strengthens families. protects lives.

MDC collaborates with local high schools to extend “Parents Who Host Lose The Most” campaign



Don't be
a party to
teenage
drinking.

**It's against
the law.**

It may come as no surprise that alcohol is the number one drug of choice among youth in Knoxville with more than 36 percent of teens consuming alcohol in the last month. But did you know that 65 percent of those teens get their alcohol *not* from restaurants or convenient stores, but from family and friends?

In all 50 states, the minimum drinking age is twenty-one. In Tennessee, parents can spend up to 11 months and 29 days in jail under the Social Host Law for providing alcohol to a minor. Allowing teens to drink at home sends

a mixed message: some laws are meant to be broken. This attitude can blur the lines for many teens when it comes to breaking the law.

As part of the Metropolitan Drug Commission's ongoing effort against underage drinking, the organization has launched a nationally recognized awareness campaign in partnership with WBIR, WATE and South Central Media. *Parents Who Host Lose The Most: Don't Be A Party To Teenage Drinking* is an evidence-based social marketing initiative used by substance abuse prevention agencies across the country. The campaign was developed by Drug-Free Action Alliance in 2000 to educate parents about the health and safety risks of serving alcohol at teen parties and to increase awareness of and compliance with underage drinking laws.

To extend the campaign's reach across Knox County, MDC has enlisted the help of our public and private high schools. The Metropolitan Drug Commission has provided large banners with the *Parents Who Host Lose The Most: Don't Be A Party To Teenage Drinking* logo to be hung in high school football stadiums this fall. These are provided free of charge to all interested schools.

In addition, MDC has developed a short, 20 second announcement for each school's sports announcer to read during each game to drive the message home.

“We want parents to understand that underage drinking is not a ‘rite of passage’ and that allowing teens to drink, even under your supervision, is illegal,” Heather Sutton, media relations and project director, said. “By reaching out to local high schools, MDC can bring prevention

Strike A Pose!



Parents, post a picture of you and your teen next to a *Parents Who Host* banner on our Facebook page, and you could be featured in future editions of our newsletter! Banners can be found at these schools:

- Webb School of Knoxville
- Christian Academy of Knoxville
- Karns High School
- Carter High School
- Halls High School
- Knoxville Catholic High School
- Grace Christian Academy
- Tennessee School for the Deaf
- West High School
- Bearden High School
- Powell High School
- Hardin Valley Academy



Alcohol can negatively impact teen athletic ability

High school football season is finally here, and the heat is on for many student athletes. Teen athletes face immense pressure from parents, teachers and coaches to perform both on and off the field. To cope with stress and anxiety, some turn to alcohol and other drugs.

Athletes sometimes choose to drink to fit in with their teammates or to blow off steam. According to research from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, approximately 57 percent of teen athletes have consumed alcohol at least once in the past month, compared to 45 percent of non-athletes. This falls in line with the 2009 Knox County Youth Risk Behavior Survey in which 36.6 percent of teens admitted to underage drinking in the last 30 days.

Even occasional alcohol use can have a negative impact. According to the American Athletic Institute, a single night of partying can undo two weeks' worth of training. Alcohol affects the central nervous system, which controls numerous body functions, and blocks some of the messages trying to get to the brain. This can alter a person's perceptions, emotions, motor skills, vision and hearing. Overall performance potential is lowered by about 11.4 percent after recent heavy drinking.

Drinking during adolescence can negatively impact a teen's future health as well. Research shows that high school drinkers tend to drink more heavily later in life. In particular, binge drinking during the teenage years can disturb genes involved in forming bone mass, increasing the risk for osteoporosis and bone fractures in adulthood.

While males are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, females are no exception. When it comes to drinking among teenage girls, the stakes are higher and the danger is multiplied. Body weight, size, consumption rate and the amount consumed can intensify a female's level of impairment, making her more susceptible to alcohol poisoning.

The rate of alcohol absorption also can be impacted by menstrual cycles, fat content within the body, muscle mass and even contraceptives. Overall, women have less lean muscle than men, allowing women to absorb alcohol in their bloodstream faster than men. In addition, women have one third less alcohol dehydrogenase, a chemical inside the body responsible for the breakdown of alcohol. Dr. Daniel Hommer of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse also reported that the female brain is more vulnerable to "shrinkage" caused by alcohol than the male brain.

Early intervention is the best solution to reduce teen drinking. The New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA), in conjunction with the American Athletic Institute, has developed a program called "Life of an Athlete." NMAA is launching a website that includes an interactive program designed to educate high school athletes about the dangers of alcohol abuse. It is open to students and officials from around the country. For more information, visit www.lifeofanathlete.com.



Parents can help keep teens sober this Halloween

With Halloween fast approaching, parents should be aware of the potential underage drinking dangers lurking in the shadows.

Halloween is one of the deadliest nights of the year when it comes to impaired driving. On Halloween night 2008, 17 percent of teen drivers involved in alcohol-related traffic fatalities had a Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) of .08 or higher, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Alcohol hijacks teens' decision-making abilities. It causes poor judgment, loss of coordination, blurred vision and slowed reaction time, all of which can lead to a traffic collision. In addition, adolescents' inexperience with alcohol can leave them seriously impaired.

If your teen is attending a Halloween party this year, find out where they are going and who they are with. Call the hosting parents to share your rules and expectations. Make sure adult supervision will be available to ensure the festivities remain alcohol-free.

Parents can also help keep their teens safe by providing an alcohol-free environment in which to celebrate. With these simple tips, parents can be sure their Halloween party is "totally ghoulish":

- **Set Ground Rules:** Let your teen know that alcohol and other drugs are absolutely not allowed. Make sure your child's friends are aware of these rules ahead of time. Discuss these expectations with their parents as well.
- **Don't Baby Your Baby:** Paper mâché ghosts and handmade skeletons were great when your teen was five. Choose age appropriate activities and decorations. Remember, your teen has a reputation to uphold!
- **Create a Spooky Soundtrack:** Get your teen involved in choosing the music for the occasion. Don't forget to add some Halloween classics, like "Thriller" and "Monster Mash," to the mix.
- **Keep Them Full:** Food is always a big hit with teenagers. Offer them treats they enjoy, like pizza, nachos, chicken strips and cookies. As for beverages, mix up some Halloween-themed, non-alcoholic cocktails to keep the mood festive.
- **Have a Scream Fest:** Finish the night right with a horror film. Download a classic, such as "Friday The 13th" or "The Sixth Sense."

For alcohol-free drink recipes, game ideas and other party planning tips, log on to www.metrodrug.org.

Celebrating recovery this Veterans Day

Our military veterans and their families pay a high cost for the freedoms we enjoy each day. While the physical tolls of war are readily apparent, many suffer "invisible injuries" that are rarely discussed and often hidden.

Substance abuse is a major health concern for returning veterans. Veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan face longer deployments on average than veterans of previous wars. Sadly, extended periods away from loved ones coupled with combat exposure and injuries leave veterans vulnerable to substance abuse and mental health disorders. In fact, substance abuse is four times more common in today's veterans, according to St. Luke's Health Initiative in Arizona.

According to a 2009 health survey released by the Pentagon, nearly 25 percent of soldiers say they misused a prescription medication in the last year. The National Institute on Drug Abuse also reports 27 percent of Army soldiers meet the criteria for alcohol dependency.

Alcohol and other drug abuse is particularly prevalent in individuals suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Veterans will sometimes self-medicate with substances to help them cope with incredible stress and trauma or to suppress painful memories.

As we salute our U.S. military and their families this Veterans Day, take a moment to recognize the physical and psychological burden these men and women willingly and knowingly take on. Remember, just because they have come home doesn't mean their battle is over. We can all support our troops by championing treatment, recovery and prevention programs and encouraging veterans to seek help if needed. It is important to remind them that they are not alone and that they can regain control over their lives.

If a veteran you love is suffering from a substance abuse or mental health disorder, treatment resources are available through your local Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). To locate a VA office near you, log on to www.va.gov/directory.



In Pictures: 25th Anniversary Fundraising Celebration

The Metropolitan Drug Commission's 25th anniversary fundraising celebration was a great success. With more than 240 guests, we raised \$26,200 for our organization! Each dollar raised will help MDC better serve families throughout Knox County in three focus areas:

1. Reducing underage binge drinking
2. Decreasing the misuse of prescription drugs among youth
3. Decrease the number unintentional drug poisoning deaths

Check out highlights from the event below. You may even recognize a few familiar faces!



We appreciate everyone for their continued support and commitment to our mission. We would like to extend a special thanks to MDC fundraising committee members: J.E. Henry, Michele Carringer, Sterling Owen, IV, Larry Elmore and Commissioner Mike Brown.

Five community leaders welcomed into the MDC family

The Metropolitan Drug Commission has expanded its board of directors with the addition of five new members.

This year, the board has opened its membership to include grassroots representation. Webster Bailey, clinical outreach manager at Cornerstone of Recovery, will serve on the board representing MDC's Drug-Free Community coalition. This marks the first time a coalition member has been appointed to the board. The board hopes this new addition will help the board interface more directly with MDC's volunteer base.

"We feel it is vitally important to include the MDC coalition in the board's activities," Charles Swanson, president of the board, said. "These folks are 'in the trenches' of substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery each and every day. Their perspective can help us make more informed decisions as a board and focus our efforts on what the real issues are."

Russell Byrd (Senior Director of Government & Public Affairs at Comcast), Keith Goodwin (President/CEO at East Tennessee Children's Hospital) Rick Lassiter (President/CAO at Parkwest Medical Center) and Tori Strother (YAC Representative) have also been elected to the board. Please join us in welcoming the following members:

2011 - 2012 MDC Board of Directors

Executive Board

Charles W. Swanson, President
 Donald B. Wake, Vice President
 Dr. Martha Buchanan, Secretary
 Chuck Baine, Treasurer
 Sterling Owen, IV, Past President
 C. Larry Elmore, At-Large Representative
 J.E. Henry, At-Large Representative

Board Members

Andy Black	Dr. Jim McIntyre
Commissioner Mike Brown	Dick Moran
Mayor Tim Burchett	Suzan Puhl Murphy
Russell Byrd	General Randy Nichols
Michele Carringer	Chief David Rausch
Dennis Francis	Councilwoman Marilyn Roddy
Keith Goodwin	W. Timothy Rogers
Hon. Tim Irwin	P.D. Mark Stephens
Sheriff Jimmy "J.J." Jones	Tank Strickland
Mayor Daniel Brown	Loida Velazquez
Dr. Parinda Khatri	Dr. Donna Wright
Rick Lassiter	Mayor Daniel Brown
Webster Bailey (MDC Coalition Representative)	
Tori Strother (YAC Representative)	

Advisory Board

John Gill
 Mary Lou Horner
 Jeff Lee
 Terry Upshaw Morgan
 Tim Wright

Missed the premiere of MDC's mini-movie?

Some of the Metropolitan Drug Commission's dedicated board members and coalition volunteers came together to discuss substance abuse in Knoxville, what the community can do to help and why you should become involved.

View it now from your mobile device using your phone's barcode scanner app or visit www.metrodrug.org from your home computer!



A special thanks goes out to Indya Kincannon, 2nd District School Board Representative, for her service to the board this year. We wish her well and hope she will remain involved with MDC as we continue our fight against substance abuse in Knoxville.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Important Dates

October

- 10/22 – 30: Red Ribbon Week
- 10/29: DEA's National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day
- 10/31 – 11/4: National Drug Facts Week
- 10/31: Happy Halloween

November

- 11/11: Veterans Day
- 11/12: East Tennessee Regional Drug Take-Back event
- 11/24: Happy Thanksgiving

December

- 12/20: Happy Hanukkah
- 12/25: Merry Christmas

You Can Make An Impact

When family members, friends and neighbors abuse alcohol and other drugs, we all pay the price. Each year, drug and alcohol abuse costs this country more than \$500 billion in law enforcement, violence, property damage, healthcare and other expenses.

You can help reduce the burden on our families and our wallets by becoming a member of MDC's Drug-Free Community Coalition. The subcommittees will meet in the Knox County Health Department's Community Room on **Tuesday, October 25** at noon. The full membership will come together on **Tuesday, November 29**. Come have lunch with us and see what we're all about! For more information, call (865) 588-5550.

Protect Our Kids And The Environment

The East Tennessee Regional Medication Collection Coalition is once again hosting a prescription drug take-back event on **Saturday, November 12 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.** The Knoxville event will be held at West Town Mall. The collection events are part of a nationwide effort to reduce the amount of drugs in home medicine cabinets from either being flushed or poured down drains. For a list of all area locations, visit medicationcollection.org.

Want to become a certified Drug-Free Workplace?

The National Drug Free Workplace Alliance has named the third week of **October National Drug-Free Work Week**. To celebrate, MDC is offering its Drug-Free Workplace at a discounted rate.



Call and mention the above ad between October 17–22 to receive \$20 off your first hour. To learn how your company can benefit from a Drug-Free Workplace certification, email sharder@metrodrug.org.

Be Eco-friendly

Help us reduce paper waste and conserve our environment! "Go Green" this month and sign up for MDC's eNewsletter. You will receive all the information offered in our print newsletter straight to your email inbox. To register, go to www.metrodrug.org.

Get Connected



Help us grow our Facebook and Twitter family! Connect with us to read the latest news on drugs and alcohol, discover upcoming events and more. Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MetroDrug and on Twitter @MetroDrug!

Show your support. Make a contribution.

The Metropolitan Drug Commission has made significant strides in combating substance abuse in our area. In order to continue these successful programs, we need your financial support. Your charitable contribution will be used to extend our reach to youth and adults throughout Knox County.

Supporters can now donate online by clicking the "Donate Via PayPal" button at www.metrodrug.org. Offline donations can be made by calling (865) 588-5550. The Metropolitan Drug Commission is a 501c(3) organization. All contributions are tax-deductible.



To submit an article, announcement or suggestion to the Metropolitan Drug Commission's ALERT newsletter, please contact Heather Sutton at (865) 588-5550 or hsutton@metrodrug.org.

Metropolitan Drug Commission
4930 Lyons View Pike • Knoxville, TN 37919
Phone: (865) 588-5550 • Fax: (865) 588-0891 • www.metrodrug.org

ASAM's new definition of addiction could have far reaching impacts

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) recently changed its definition of addiction. The ASAM now defines addiction as a chronic neurological disease involving multiple brain functions. It is characterized by inability to consistently abstain from a substance; impairment in behavioral control; craving; diminished recognition of behavioral problems; strained interpersonal relationships, and a dysfunctional emotional response.

The definition is the conclusion of a four year study involving more than 80 leading experts in addiction and neurology. Experts emphasize that addiction is a primary, life-long illness, meaning it is not caused by other health issues such as mood or personality disorders. This research contradicts the popular perception that addictive behaviors are a form of "self-medication" to ease the pain of mental disorders, such as depression or anxiety.

This disease is caused by the imbalance in the reward circuitry section of the brain. The brain contains a natural reward system which can temporarily increase levels of dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with feelings of pleasure. Drugs activate the same system activated by natural rewards (such as food, sex and exercise), but drugs activate the system stronger and longer.

Drugs take over the brain's dopamine system and the brain becomes dependent on the drug. Over time, the addicted brain reduces natural production of dopamine because the brain is used to receiving a huge amount of dopamine caused by drug use. The deficit in dopamine causes an inability to feel pleasure, except through drug use.

"The ASAM wants to make a concise definition pointing out addiction as being a biological disorder as opposed to a behavioral disease," Dr. Curtis Markham, medical director at Cornerstone Recovery, said. "The dysfunction in these circuits and systems leads to differences in biological, social, psychological and spiritual manifestations."

Addicts are extremely susceptible to relapse. Without proper treatment, addiction can progress at significant rates, resulting in disability or premature death. John West, community representative at Bradford Health, added that addiction affects our frontal lobe responsible for thinking and reasoning.

"Once you are clean and sober, you have many choices of whether you become powerless over addiction again," West said. West noted that in the active phase of addiction many cannot control their addictive behavior. After proper treatment, an addict is better equipped with skills to fight their cravings.

Rick Walker, program coordinator at the E.M. Jellinek Center, agrees. "Addiction strikes a chemically induced insanity where they are not responsible for what they do. At a subconscious level, you will die if you don't get the chemical," Walker said.

The key is proper treatment and gaining the necessary skills to avoid relapse. The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) has a great impact on public health policies that guide addiction treatment. Insurance companies are mandated by law to use the DSM's diagnostic classifications to determine which illnesses they will cover. Now that addiction is put in the same category of chronic diseases as diabetes and high blood pressure, this could have a positive impact on medical coverage for treatment.

"There has always been more money in psychiatric diagnosis as opposed to addiction. We are now seeing a new emergence of a possibility of addiction getting paid on the medical side," West said.

One of ASAM's goals is to fight the stigma many addicts experience. Markham hopes society will not villainize addicts, but instead help them find the treatment they need.

"No one chooses to be an addict and not all of them are bad people, but good people with bad diseases."

MDC collaborates with local high schools to extend "Parents Who Host Lose The Most" campaign – continued from page 1

messages to parents right there in the stands each Friday night. We hope more schools will consider partnering with us on this important initiative."

Parents play a crucial rule in prevention. Teens with "hands-on" parents have a 25 percent lower risk of using alcohol or other drugs as with "hands-off" parents. The following tips can help you prevent dangerous drinking behaviors:

- Talk with your teen early and often about alcohol.
- Be clear that you disapprove of underage drinking. Don't leave room for interpretation.
- Reinforce that underage drinking is against the law.
- Know who your teen is with and where they are going. Get to know their friends and their friend's parents.
- Make sure your teen is aware of curfews and other ground rules, as well as the consequences for breaking those rules. Discuss your expectations with other parents.
- Take notice of bloodshot or drooping eyes, slurred speech, staggering or the smell of alcohol on your child's breath.

For more information or to request a banner for your school, contact Heather Sutton at (865) 588-5550.

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4930 Lyons View Pike

Knoxville, TN 37919

Phone: 865.588.5550

Fax: 865.588.0891

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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

This project is funded under an agreement with The State of Tennessee