



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Parents Have The Most Influence on Whether or Not Their Child Will Drink

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Vermont Department of Health

BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health and a network of 29 community coalitions are embarking on a coordinated statewide effort to combat underage drinking with today's launch of the ParentUp campaign. The first phase of the campaign is designed for parents of Vermont middle school students ages 11 to 13, with a second phase for parents of older teens beginning in April.

While the rate of youth alcohol use has declined significantly in the last decade, 36 percent of Vermont students still report they drank alcohol at least once in the last 30 days. Approximately one out of five middle school students try alcohol before the age of 13.

“The primary goal of this first phase of the campaign is to encourage parents of middle school students to talk to their children about drinking, and to provide parents with information about community resources available to support them,” said Barbara Cimaglio, deputy commissioner, Division of Alcohol & Drug Abuse Programs. “But it is every bit as important that we get parents talking to each other and help to create an environment that supports and perpetuates that dialogue.”

Parents can play a significant role in changing the statistics on underage drinking. Studies show that parents have the most influence on whether or not their child will drink. This campaign is designed for parents of middle school children because younger students are much more likely to talk to parents about problems they are having with alcohol. According to the 2009 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 32 percent of 8th graders and 29 percent of 9th graders would talk to a parent, compared to 22 percent of 10th, 11th, or 12th graders.

The ParentUpVT.org website and other campaign materials illustrate simple, proven steps parents can take with their children to help reduce underage drinking. The second phase, launching in mid-April, will encourage parents of high school students to refuse to give alcohol to minors or host underage drinking parties, and is intended to increase awareness about community resources and support. “We want to be sure that parents feel ready and able to have these important conversations at the time when they are needed most,” said Cimaglio.

Each community has its own unique makeup and circumstances. The campaign is designed to support community coalitions with appropriate tools to create the right localized approach with ParentUpVT.org acting as a clearinghouse for information and resources. This grassroots campaign is supported by radio, print and online advertising throughout March and April.

For more information on about the ParentUp campaign go to ParentUpVT.org or <http://healthvermont.gov> or dial 2-1-1. You can follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/healthvermont>.

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