



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Website Offers More ‘Parent Up’ Help to Prevent Underage Drinking

*National Public Health Week is April 7-13
- Working Every Day for Your Health -
April is Alcohol Awareness Month*



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Media Contact:

Vermont Department of Health
Communication Office
802-863-7281

BURLINGTON – Four years ago, the Vermont Department of Health launched *ParentUp*, a web-based campaign focused on the important role of parents in preventing underage drinking. Research shows that parents are the number one influence on a child’s decision to drink or not to drink alcohol.

The website ParentUpVT.org offers information, tools and videos that illustrate simple, proven steps parents can take with their children to help reduce underage drinking. As part of Alcohol Awareness Month, the Health Department has added new videos and a listing of local events for parents to talk with each other about the problem of underage and risky drinking.



“Talking with your kids about alcohol beginning around age 11 can be one of the best prevention steps a parent can take,” said Deputy Commissioner Barbara Cimaglio.

“We also understand that parents also need a place and time to talk with each other about this issue.”

The Health Department funds 17 community coalitions as part of a coordinated statewide effort to reduce the prevalence of underage drinking. According to the Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey, underage drinking has steadily decreased – from 43 percent in 2007 to 33 percent in 2013.

“We know these discussions can be difficult and awkward,” Cimaglio said, “but parents are usually surprised at how receptive children are, and how much they rely on you as a resource and source of support.”

Enhancements to the website include a new “Talk: They Will Hear You” video from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Local meetings where parents can talk and get good information include a Town Hall in Ludlow on April 22, a presentation on the impact of drinking and drugs on a young person’s brain in Hardwick on April 24, and a discussion of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome on April 25 at the VFW in Brattleboro.

Student events include an Alcohol Awareness Poster Contest in Essex on April 21-May 1 and workshops at North Country Union High School, Lake Region Junior High School, and Orleans Middle School in April and May. The workshops give students an opportunity to think critically about alcohol and tobacco advertising.

A public service announcement about Alcohol Awareness Month will run on radio stations WMOO and WIKE in Derby beginning on April 10.

ParentUp is designed to support communities with appropriate tools to create the right localized approach with ParentUpVT.org acting as a clearinghouse for information and resources.

For more information on about the *ParentUp* campaign and a full list of alcohol and tobacco prevention events, go to ParentUpVT.org or healthvermont.gov.

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Vermont Department of Health | 108 Cherry Street | Burlington, VT 05402
Voice: 802-863-7200 | In Vermont 800-464-4343 | Fax: 802-865-7754 | TTY/TDD: Dial 711 first
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