



## Logan County Drug Free Youth Coalition

# Just Say Know!

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### Inside this issue:

Why Alcohol	2
Underage drinking can program the brain for	2
2 brain areas negatively affected by un-	2
A model for change	3
The planning process	3
2010/2011 Strategic and action plan	4

### Why “Just Say KNOW!”

Most of us can remember the surge of drug prevention programs during the “War on Drugs” in the 1980’s. The name of the newsletter is a spin from the “Just Say No” advertising campaign prevalent during the 1980” and early 1990’s, to discourage children from engaging in recreational drug use by offering various ways to say no.

The phrase “Just Say No” first emerged when First Lady Nancy Reagan was visiting Longfellow Elementary School in Oakland, California, in 1982 and was asked by a schoolgirl what to do if she was offered

drugs. The first lady responded by saying, “Just say no”. Just Say No Clubs with schools and school run anti-drug programs soon



became common, in which young people make pacts not to experiment drugs.

Anti-drug campaigns such as

“Just Say No” have a rich history in America’s alcohol and other drug prevention efforts and continues to play a part in comprehensive alcohol and drug prevention effort. This is why the Drug Free Youth Coalition chose “Just Say Know” as the title of the newsletter. We change the No to Know because it is important for adults, parents, and older siblings of young people to “Know” the facts about alcohol and other drugs in order to talk with young people about this issue. The Coalition hopes that the newsletter will be a guide and resource for adults to learn up-to-date information

### How it all Started

The Logan County Drug Free Youth Coalition was established on August 15, 2006, in response to the public health concern of substance abuse identified during the community-wide assessment conducted by the Family and Children First Council. Parents, ministers, youth, school teachers/ administrators, professionals and community members making up the Family and

Children First Council formed the Coalition to address this social issue.

In the fall of 2007, the Coalition began the strategic planning process that focused on “too many youth drinking alcohol”. Alcohol was selected based on the Needs Assessment completed in 2006 and the data collected on the Search Institute Survey of youth behavior

### Fast Fact

*Average age of first use of alcohol by Logan County Youth is 12.*

## Why Alcohol



For young people, alcohol is the number one drug of choice. In fact, teens use alcohol more frequently and heavily than all other illicit drugs combined. Although most children under age 14 have not yet begun to drink, early adolescence is a time of special risk for beginning to experiment with alcohol.

While some parents and guardians may feel relieved that their teen is “only” drinking, it is important to remember that alcohol is a powerful, mood-altering drug. Not only does alcohol affect the mind and body in

often unpredictable ways, but teens lack the judgment and coping skills to handle alcohol wisely. As a result:

- Alcohol-related traffic crashes are a major cause of deaths among teens. Alcohol use also is linked with youthful deaths by drowning, suicide, and homicide.
- Teens who use alcohol are more likely to become sexually active at earlier ages.
- Young people who drink are more likely than others to be victims of

violent crime, including rape, aggravated assault, and robbery.

- Teens who drink are more likely to have problems with school work and school conduct.
- An individual who begins drinking as a young teen is 4 times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than someone who waits until adulthood.

The message is clear: Alcohol use is very risky business for young people.

“Alcohol hijacks the brain’s pleasure-reward system”

## Underage Drinking can “program” the Brain for Alcoholism

Underage alcohol use greatly increase the risk of alcoholism, according to the Institutes of Medicine National Research Council report “Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility.”

Here’s why: The brain is hard-wired to reward positive actions with feelings of pleasure so we want to repeat them. These can range from an intense emotional “high” to a happy sense of satisfaction from doing something well or

for someone else. We remember pleasure from dopamine, a “feel-good” brain chemical.

Alcohol hijacks the brain’s pleasure-reward system by stimulating unusually amounts of dopamine, creating feelings of pleasure from a chemical instead of natural experience. Because the teen brain produces an abundance of dopamine (compared to an adult), it can rapidly go from liking, to craving, to needing alcohol, thus programming it for alcoholism, according to a 1997 article in the Journal of Substance Abuse.

Start before age 15	Start at age 21
40% chance	7% chance

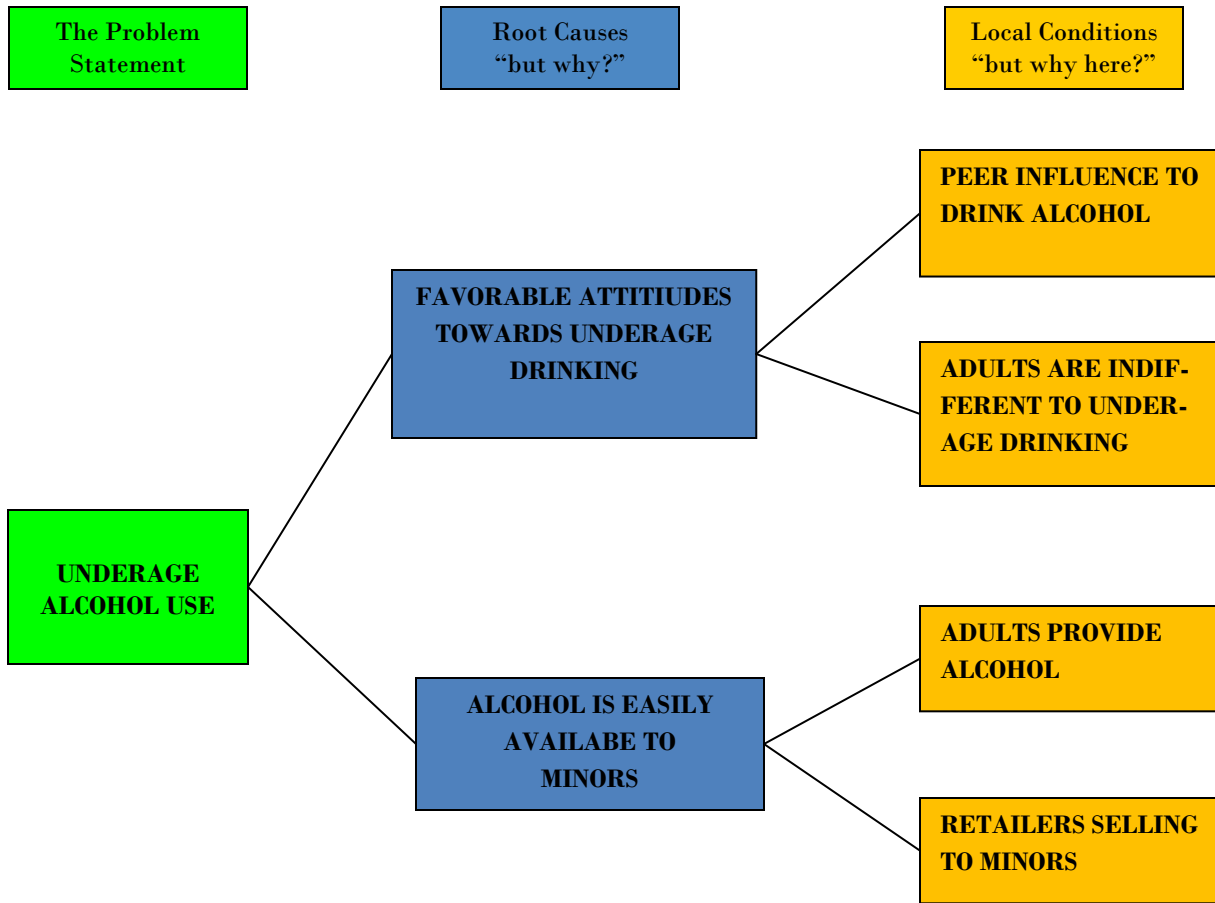
## 2 Brain areas negatively affected by underage drinking

**Prefrontal cortex** area (responsible for good judgment, planning, decision making and impulse control) undergoes the most change during adolescence. Researchers found that adolescent drinking could cause severe changes in this area, which plays an important role in forming adult personality and behavior. Damage from alcohol at this time can be long-term and irreversible.

**Hippocampus** (involved in learning and memory), suffers from the worst alcohol-related brain damage in teens, those who had been drinking more and for longer had significantly smaller hippocampus (10%). In addition, short-term or moderate drinking impairs learning and memory far more in youth than adults.



### A Model for Change: Logan County’s Perspective



### The Planning Process

The Logan County Drug Free Youth Coalition is working to reduce underage drinking. This problem statement was defined in the fall of 2007, after receiving community input and technical assistance from the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America. The Coalition also received mentoring through Community Partnerships organization who walked the Coalition through the problem analysis technique of “but why?”, ”but why here?” at a community forum where local citizens and stakeholders were present. Through this process the Coalition was able to identify community root causes and local conditions that were

contributing to underage drinking. Alcohol was selected based on the Needs Assessment completed in 2006 and the data collected on the Search Institute Survey indicating 25% of eighth graders and over 60% of eleventh graders reported attending a party in the last year where peers were consuming alcohol. In addition, over 20% of eighth graders and 30% of eleventh graders report using alcohol in the last 30-days.



But Why? — But Why Here?

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**Making Logan County a substance free community for children and youth to live, work, and play.**



**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Logan County Drug Free Youth Coalition is to reduce and prevent the harmful effects of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs through community outreach, education, and support. We do this by bringing together programs, people, and organizations that ascribe to our vision and desire to improve the quality of life in Logan County communities.

**2010/2011 Strategic and Action Planning for Local Conditions**

The Coalitions strategic and action plan for the local condition utilizes environmental prevention strategies and the seven strategies for community change. Environmental approaches tend to center on policy that shapes perception in communities, homes or workplaces in local, state or national venues.

Historically, all across the county, communities have approached the problems related to alcohol on an individual level by implementing counseling, treatment, and other individual interventions. These pro-

grams have been effective at addressing the needs of individuals, but have been limited in their ability to impact the environment where high risk behaviors occurs.

Logan County Drug Free Youth Coalition is helping the community develop policies and practices suited to the broader community health needs. The Coalition is working to prevent and reduce problems related to underage drinking by implementation of the following strategies specific to local conditions.

Local condition “Retailers Selling to Minors”

- Educational Packets given to alcohol retailers
- Support & Encourage Alcohol Compliance Checks by Law Enforcement
- Responsible Beverage Servers Training
- Alcohol Management Procedures adopted by retailers

Local condition “Adults Provide Alcohol” & “Adults are Indifferent to Underage Drinking”

- Parents Who Host Lose the Most Campaign
- Town Hall Meetings
- Parent Social Norm Campaign
- Safe Homes/Safe Parties
- Parent Peer Support

Local condition “Peer Influence to Drink Alcohol”

- Social Norm Campaign
- Challenge Day training
- Youth Council
- Be the Change Teams

Individual Strategies	Environmental Strategies
Focus on behavior and behavior change	Focus on policy and policy change
Focus on the relationship between individual & alcohol/drug related problems	Focus on the social, political and economic context of alcohol/drug related problems
Short-term focus on program development	Long-term focus on policy development
Individual generally does not participate in decision making	People gain power by acting collectively
Individual as audience	Individual as advocate