

## UNDERAGE DRINKING PREVENTION NATIONAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

### FACT SHEET

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Underage Drinking Prevention National Media Campaign's (the Campaign) goal is to reduce underage drinking among youth aged 9 to 15 by providing their parents and caregivers with the resources they need to properly address this issue with their children early. The Campaign seeks to:

- » Increase parents' awareness of the prevalence and risks of underage drinking;
- » Equip parents with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to prevent underage drinking; and
- » Increase actions by parents to prevent underage drinking.

### Underage Drinking Is a Serious Problem

- » In the United States, an estimated 10 million people under the age of 21 drank alcohol in the past month.<sup>1</sup>
- » Many young people start drinking before the age of 15.<sup>2</sup>
- » The 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey<sup>3</sup> found that during the past 30 days:
  - 42 percent of high school students drank some amount of alcohol;
  - 24 percent of high school students binge drank;
  - 10 percent of high school students drove after drinking alcohol; and
  - 28 percent of high school students rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol.
- » The Monitoring the Future Survey<sup>4</sup> found that:
  - 33 percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 70 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> graders in the United States said they tried alcohol at some time in their lives;
  - 13 percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 27 percent of 10<sup>th</sup> graders said that they had consumed alcohol in the month before the survey; and
  - 65 percent of teens who do drink reported that they get drunk in a typical month.<sup>5</sup>

## **The Consequences of Underage Drinking Can Be Devastating**

The consequences of underage drinking can include:

- » Injury or death from accidents;<sup>6</sup>
- » Unintended, unwanted, and unprotected sexual activity;<sup>7,8</sup>
- » Health problems such as depression and anxiety disorders;<sup>9</sup>
- » Academic problems;<sup>10</sup> and
- » Drug use.<sup>11</sup>

## **Parents Do Not Feel Fully Prepared to Address the Issue of Underage Drinking**

Many parents with children between the ages of 9 to 15 know that peer pressure and media influences can often lead to underage drinking. However, they are not fully aware of the immediate dangers of alcohol consumption by their children. Statistics that point to the common nature of underage drinking can be shocking and unbelievable to some parents. Furthermore, parents often do not feel equipped with the information or resources they need to properly address underage drinking with their children.

## **The Campaign Seeks to Give Parents Knowledge, Resources, and Confidence**

The Campaign will use radio, television, and print ads; online PSAs; social media; partnership networks; and direct outreach to help parents feel more confident when talking to their children about alcohol. Messages will:

- » Emphasize the importance of parents talking to their kids about underage drinking before they reach the age range when alcohol use typically begins (before the age of 15);
- » Offer advice to parents about preparing children to deal with peer pressure issues that may lead to alcohol abuse;
- » Highlight underage drinking statistics that are likely to catch parents' attention;
- » Focus on helping parents address the issue of underage drinking in a manner that emphasizes their children's ability to make autonomous decisions; and
- » Model behaviors and situations when parents can begin the conversation about the dangers of alcohol with their children.

## References

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