

## INTRODUCTION TO MISSOURI'S HIGHER EDUCATION SUBSTANCE ABUSE CONSORTIUM

Partners in Prevention is Missouri's higher education substance abuse consortium dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses. The coalition is comprised of 21 public and private college and university campuses across the state. Campus judicial officials, law enforcement, and campus prevention professionals are encouraged to take part in both their local coalition efforts and the statewide Partners in Prevention coalition. The unique composition brings together different perspectives on health promotion and prevention efforts.

### CAMPUS PARTNERS:

- University prevention professionals
- University student conduct professionals
- University and community police and public safety officers
- Undergraduate student volunteers
- Graduate student assistants
- Community business owners
- University administration

### FUNDING PARTNERS:

- Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Missouri Department of Transportation, Division of Highway Safety
- Missouri Department of Mental Health, Youth Suicide Prevention Project
- US Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant

## BACKGROUND

Founded in 2000, Partners in Prevention (PIP) strives to curb high-risk drinking among college students in the state of Missouri. PIP has championed remarkable changes in student health behavior on Missouri campuses. Institutions have developed the capacity on their campuses to address binge drinking through the development of strategic plans and sustained campus-community coalitions. PIP is comprehensive, influential, and effective as documented by long-term evidence of success on both the statewide and local levels.

Each year PIP implements the Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS) to gauge health behaviors and knowledge of students. The MCHBS is an online, anonymous survey covering issues related to college student health given to a random sample of students at 21 Missouri colleges and universities. Each year the data is used to design campus prevention programming and provide local data for tracking purposes. Members of PIP use social norming efforts to change perceptions of high-risk drinking among students. In addition to on-campus efforts, PIP uses MCHBS results in community outreach and statewide efforts such as grant applications and policy discussions.

## HEALTHY DECISION APPROACHES

PIP uses evidence-based programs that yield results, focusing on four approaches to promote healthy decisions with alcohol. The four approaches are prevention education, social norming, harm reduction programs and environmental management. PIP also works with statewide programs that focus on smoking cessation, safe driving, gambling abuse prevention and suicide prevention.

Social norming campaigns use school-specific student data to change perceived norms regarding alcohol use. Students self-report their involvement in various subpopulations in the demographic section of the survey. Later, students are asked about their perception of drinking in those same subpopulations on their campus. Analysis consistently reveals that students over-perceive other students' level of high-risk behavior (e.g., fraternities/sororities, athletes, 'typical student', etc). By correcting students' misperceptions of what is "normal", students can feel more comfortable drinking less by understanding they are within the campus norms.

The MCHBS covers a wide variety of topics, with alcohol use being the most in-depth. In addition, illegal and prescription drug use and tobacco use are examined.

CONTINUED 

<b>PARTNERS IN PREVENTION MEMBER-SCHOOLS MISSOURI COLLEGE HEALTH BEHAVIOR RESULTS</b>	<b>2007* (n=2763)</b>	<b>2012** (n=4021)</b>
<b>STUDENTS YOUNGER THAN 21</b>		
<b>Consumed alcohol in the past 30 days</b>	62%	53%
<b>Drove after drinking in the past year</b>	26%	17%
<b>Did poorly on a test or assignment in the past year due to alcohol use</b>	17%	10%

\*2007 data includes 12 public institutions \*\*2012 data includes 21 public and private institutions

Students' stress and suicidal behavior are explored through a series of questions measuring their help seeking behaviors. New in 2011, the MCHBS started examining intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

## **CHANGE IN BEHAVIORS**

The above table shows data from all respondents under the age of 21, including non-drinkers. Decreases are apparent in the negative behaviors represented in the table. Most notably, there was a 41% reduction in students doing poorly on a test or assignment as a result of their drinking. The MCHBS examines not only drinking behaviors that can result in legal consequences, but also behaviors that can reduce a student's academic success.

In addition to negative behaviors, the MCHBS investigates reasons why students reduce or avoid drinking. One series of questions posed by the MCHBS details positive behaviors exhibited while drinking, including reducing alcohol intake and creating a support system of monitoring their friends. In 2012, 81% of students monitored their drink location, 78% ate before or during drinking, and 58% avoided keeping up or out-drinking others (percentages found by combining 'Usually' and 'Always' responses to the questions).

## **EMERGING TRENDS**

The MCHBS is used to detect emerging trends in drug use, as well as measure change in behaviors longitudinally. In 2012, measurements were taken

regarding e-cigarettes, K2, and bath salts. By gauging student use in emerging drug trends the information can be used in initial policy discussions to prevent widespread use. Longitudinal measurements of alcohol and drug trends are also used in grant applications.

## **THE FUTURE OF PIP**

In association with a grant from SAMSHA's Garrett Lee Smith Campus Grant project, PIP has begun to implement a comprehensive suicide prevention effort at member campuses over the next two years for high risk populations including lesbian, gay and bisexual students and military family members and veterans. After programming is first solidified at the University of Missouri, the PIP coalition will expand this programming onto college campuses across the state, integrating lessons learned from initial experiences in implementation and administration.

## **CONTACT US**

Partners in Prevention would like to become your source of information about Missouri college student health behaviors. To learn more about PIP, please visit our website at <http://pip.missouri.edu> or contact Joan Masters, PIP Senior Coordinator, by email at [mastersj@missouri.edu](mailto:mastersj@missouri.edu) or by phone at 573-884-7551.

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