



Alcohol Use Among Teens IS A Serious Matter!

The Border Region Coalition (BRC) for a Drug Free Doña Ana County would like to offer these important facts regarding underage drinking:

- Between April 2010 and April 2011, The Las Cruces Police Department and Doña Ana County Sheriff's Office made a combined 289 arrests for minors in possession of alcohol (MIP), and of those arrests, 149 are youth under the age of 17.
- According to the 2009 Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey, administered in Doña Ana County in the fall of 2009 to 1,228 students from three different school districts and seven different high schools:
 - 27.1 percent of respondents reported drinking their first alcoholic beverage before the age of 13 years.
 - 40.1 percent of teens reported drinking at least one alcoholic beverage in the last 30 days.
 - 23 percent reported binge drinking, having five or more drinks (males) or four or more drinks (females) in a short period of time, in the last 30 days.
 - 60.7 percent perceived their parents would think it very wrong for students to regularly drink alcohol.
 - Only 39.2 percent reported they believe people risk great harm to themselves from daily alcohol use.
 - 41.7 percent reported someone gave them alcohol, 18.3 percent reported giving money to someone to purchase, 9.4 percent reported they took it from a family member (girls more than boys) and 1.6 percent bought alcohol at a public event.
- Research shows parents are the biggest influence in a teen's life, and when they talk, their children listen. Setting clear guidelines and good examples is the first step in ending underage drinking.
- A young person's brain and body are still growing, and drinking alcohol can cause learning problems or lead to adult alcoholism. People who begin drinking by age 15 are five times more likely to abuse or become dependent on alcohol than those who begin drinking after age 20.
- Many underage drinkers are unaware of the effect of alcohol until it is too late. Drinking too much alcohol too quickly can lead to alcohol poisoning, which can lead to death.
- Drinking alcohol under the age of 21 is illegal.
- Buying alcohol for teens is a 4th degree felony in New Mexico.
- About 45 percent of fatalities in crashes involving a drinking driver under the age of 21 are people other than the driver.
- Underage drinking can lead to increased sexual assault, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

If you think your child may have a drug or alcohol problem, get help. Don't wait. Contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Drug Information Treatment and Referral Hotline at 800-662-HELP (4357) or visit www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov.

The Unified Prevention (UP!) Border Region Coalition works to make sure that every child in Doña Ana County has the opportunity to live a life free of drugs and alcohol. For more information on how you can donate or become a member of the coalition, contact the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico at 575.521.4794 or coordinator@cfsnm.org.