

Message from the Director

Alcohol-Related Traffic Fatalities are Senseless and Preventable! Celebrate the Holidays – Safely

You will probably see and hopefully read many articles this time of year about celebrating the holidays safely – meaning do not drink and drive. I know you have heard it all before and I toyed with the idea of going in a different direction for this edition of our newsletter, but I couldn't. Why? Because:

Alcohol-Related Traffic Fatalities are Senseless and Preventable!

And, it is not only the Thanksgiving/Christmas/New Year's holidays that people are out drinking and driving - just take a look at the statistics supplied to us from Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (www.madd.org/stats):

Holiday 2003	Total Traffic Fatalities	Total Fatalities Alcohol-Related	Percent Alcohol-Related	Time Period Covered
Fourth of July	514	282	54.9%	6 pm 7/3/03 – 5:59 am 7/7/03
Memorial Day	479	238	49.7%	6 pm 5/23/03 – 5:59 am 5/27/03
Thanksgiving	560	244	43.6%	6 pm 11/26/03 – 5:59 am 12/01/03
Christmas	513	244	47.6%	6 pm 12/24/03 – 5:59 am 12/29/03
New Year's Eve	123	57	46.3%	12/31/02
New Year's Day	150	98	65.3%	1/1/03
Super Bowl Sunday	113	62	54.9%	1/26/03 – 5:59 am 1/27/03

Director's Message Continued on Page Two

Inside this issue...

Director's Message	1-2
In View	3
Resource Review	3
Mark Your Calendar	4
Fast Facts	4
Family Corner—News You Can Use	5

FAST FACT

Alcohol-related car crashes cost the nation \$46 billion annually. These costs are associated with lost productivity, medical costs, and property damage (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).

Nationally, based on 2003 National Center for Statistics Analysis 40% of accident fatalities involved alcohol – that is 17,013 people who died senselessly. Here in Chester County, we had 20 entirely preventable deaths because of vehicular fatalities involving alcohol or other drugs (Coroner’s Statistical Report, 2003).

Although the statistics clearly indicate the lethal combination of alcohol and driving, why do people continue to do so? One answer may be that impairment begins with the first drink and often people do not realize the effects *small* quantities of alcohol have on the skills needed to operate a motor vehicle.

Numerous studies have concluded that drivers experienced “impairment at even modest departures from zero blood alcohol content (BAC)” (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism {NIAAA}, April 2001). Studies show that “alcohol significantly impaired driving simulator performance at all BACs starting at 0.02%. Even at BACs of 0.02% or lower, the ability to divide attention between 2 or more sources of visual perception can be impaired”. Additionally, the studies concluded: “starting at BACs of 0.05%, drivers show other types of impairment, including eye movement, glare resistance, visual perception, and reaction time”. Pennsylvania’s legal limit to operate a motor vehicle is .08 % or above, as is most states.

NIAAA research also states that the following factors influence alcohol-induced impairment: alcohol tolerance, age, and sleep deprivation. Individuals should be aware of these, and other contributing factors such as gender and weight. The best advice to follow is do not consume *any* alcoholic beverages and get behind the wheel of a car.

There is some cause to celebrate - over the past decade statistics show that, nationally, drinking and driving has decreased, especially among young drivers. So, how can we sustain this trend? Listed below are a few prevention strategies from the NIAAA that show evidence of reducing alcohol-related traffic fatalities throughout the United States:

Raising the Minimum Legal Drinking Age (MLDA) – the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) “estimates that raising the MLDA to 21 has reduced traffic fatalities involving 18-to-20 year old drivers by 13% and has saved an estimated 19,121 lives since 1975”.

Zero-Tolerance Laws – “these laws, set the legal BAC for drivers younger than age 21 at 0.00 or 0.02%”. Zero Tolerance Laws have been associated with “20% declines in the proportion of drinking drivers involved in fatal crashes who are younger than age 21 and in the proportion of single-vehicle, nighttime fatal crashes among drivers younger than 21”. Pennsylvania is one of a number of states that have instituted a zero-tolerance law.

BAC Laws that Lower Limits to 0.08% - laws lowering the legal BAC limit for adult drivers to 0.08% are associated with declines in alcohol-related fatal crashes. A number of states, including Pennsylvania have enacted these laws.

Inclusion of Assessment and Treatment Requirements in DUI Laws – the DUI law requires most individuals arrested for DUI to be assessed for an alcohol or other drug problem and to follow through with treatment if needed.

Community-wide Prevention – comprehensive, community-specific initiatives to decrease/prevent drinking and driving unite the efforts of law enforcement, parent groups, businesses, etc. Combining efforts of all interested groups and bringing together resources has proven to be an effective strategy to prevent alcohol-related traffic fatalities.

Whether we are fighting as a community to adopt new laws or devising prevention strategies to combat drunk driving, it is important to do something! Remember, alcohol-related traffic deaths are preventable. If you are interested in more information please contact The Coad Group, Department of Community Prevention at 610-363-6164 or 1-800-917-1117.

Kim P. Bowman

*Director, Chester County Department of
Drug and Alcohol Services*

FAST FACT

BAC (blood alcohol concentration) - is the portion of alcohol to blood in the body. In the field of traffic safety, BAC is expressed as a percentage reflecting grams of alcohol per deciliter of blood – for example, 0.10 percent is equivalent to 0.10 grams per deciliter.

IN VIEW

Treating Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Offenders

(Rewritten in part from the National Commission on Drunk Driving - "Combating Hardcore Drunk Driving: A Source Book of Promising Strategies, Laws, and Programs: Treatment")

The National Commission Against Drunk Driving (NCADD) estimates that 30% to 75% of all Driving Under the Influence (DUI) offenders have serious alcohol problems. The majority of these individuals are referred for treatment through the criminal justice system as a result of their DUI and attend a variety of different treatment programs. Programs range from brief educational interventions, to outpatient counseling, to short or long term residential treatment programs. Although there is no solitary treatment approach that has proven to be the most effective for DUI offenders, there are some general characteristics or best practices that should be followed. As reported by NCADD, research indicates that treatment:

- Should be based on a complete assessment and be conducted separately from those conducted by the courts to decrease the likelihood of offenders distorting information for their potential benefit.
- Should be individualized to meet the needs of each offender.
- Should be based on a combination of strategies.
- Should be provided over a period of time for meaningful behavior change to occur and be monitored.
- Should not be used as a substitute for other sanctions, especially license suspensions. Rather, treatment impacts are greatest when treatment is combined with sanctions such as license suspensions and interlock requirements.

The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services contracts with six (6) outpatient clinics to provide treatment to DUI offenders. Although each program differs slightly from one another, each clinic follows the best practices described by NCADD. Additionally, each clinic works closely with the Adult Probation Department. For a list of contracted treatment providers please contact 1-866-286-3767.

RESOURCE REVIEW

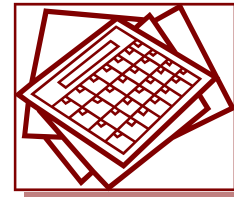
"D.U.I. Arrest" in Pennsylvania

This brochure is distributed by the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board – Alcohol Education Department and helps readers to better understand the legal consequences of being charged and/or convicted of **Driving Under the Influence**.

Within this brochure is a color coded chart which itemizes, per Section 3802 of Pennsylvania Vehicle Code, the Level of Impairment, and the consequences of 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th offenses; also this brochure includes information on the ignition interlock system, open container laws, and what happens if you are a DUI offender and under the age of 21. Included as well, is information on A.R.D. (Accelerated Rehabilitation Disposition) and the eligibility requirements and discussion on how the effects of a DUI arrest can carry on for years.

For more information or to obtain your free copy of "D.U.I. Arrest in Pennsylvania", please contact the Community Prevention Department at The Coad Group at (610) 363-6164 or 1-866-286-3767.

Mark Your Calendar



NATIONAL OBSERVANCES:

February 12-18, 2006

Children of Alcoholics Week: www.nacoa.org

March 19-25, 2006

National Inhalants and Poisons Awareness Week: www.inhalants.org

Check out these websites. Health professionals, teachers, community groups, and others can use these special events to sponsor health promotion activities, stimulate awareness of health risks, or focus on prevention. Materials available from websites range from a single flyer to packets of promotional materials.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRAININGS/CONFERENCES:

January 6, 7, & 8 - Youth to Youth Conference

Chester County Youth are invited to stay the night at Unionville High School and participate in this 6th annual event. Youth who are committed to leading drug-free lives will meet other youth in the county who are doing the same. Join in the family group discussions, see hip-hop dance troops, attend workshops, and make new friends. Contact Kate Nolt (KNolt@coadgroup.com) for more information. Sponsored in part by the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services.

Location: Unionville High School

January 11, 2006 – Guest Speaker Dr. Jeffrey Wigand shares his experiences as the whistleblower on the tobacco industry and what his life has been like since then. He discloses the truths and dispels the myths about tobacco products and how the tobacco industry targets our youth to become replacement smokers for the thousands who die every year from tobacco related illnesses. Dr. Wigand will also facilitate a workshop for youth following his keynote address. Contact Kate Nolt (KNolt@coadgroup.com) for more information or to register your group.

Location: Immaculata University

FAST FACT

If you are a victim of drunk driving in need of assistance, please call MADD's toll-free help line at 1-877-MADD-Help to speak with a counselor who is ready to help you.

Drunk Driving Penalties in Other Countries

Costa Rica: Police remove license plate from car.

South Africa: A 10 year prison sentence and the equivalent of a \$10,000 fine or both.

Drunk Driving Penalties in Other Countries

Malaya: The driver is jailed. If he is married, his wife is jailed too.

El Salvador: Your first offense is your last. Execution by firing squad.

FAST FACT

The 17,013 fatalities in alcohol-related crashes in 2003 represent an average of one alcohol-related death every 31 minutes.

Drunk and Drugged Driving Among Our Youth and Young Adults

by Meg Polvino

The 2003, Chester County and PA Youth Surveys asked our 12th grade students the following two questions: (1) "How often have you driven a car while or shortly after drinking" and (2) "How often have you driven a car while or shortly after smoking pot"? Here are the results:

Chester County

Driving after Alcohol Use: 12th grade – 23.8%

Driving after Marijuana Use: 12th grade – 25.2%

Pennsylvania Statewide

21.4%

20.3%

Almost one-fourth of our 12th graders are driving under the influence of alcohol or marijuana; and I would predict that for every youth driving under the influence, there are at least one or more individuals riding in the car with them. Alcohol and/or drug use combined with teens' inexperience on the road and peer pressure can, and does, lead to disaster on our roadways.

Due to their inexperience in driving, nearly one in five 16 year-old drivers is involved in a collision their first year of driving (www.TheAnti-Drug.com), add alcohol and/or other drug use – and you have the following:

- Nationally, in 2002 and 2003, 21% of persons aged 16 to 20 reported that they had driven in the past year while under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs (National Survey on Drug Use and Health).
- Twenty-nine percent of the drivers' aged 15 to 20 who were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2002 had been drinking alcohol (NSDUH).
- Impaired driving is a leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 15 and 20 (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).

As was discussed in the Director's Article on page one - *alcohol and drug related traffic fatalities are senseless and preventable* - so what can we, as parents, do to stop this? One solution is simple: talk to your kids and get involved.

Parents can make a difference. According to the national Anti-Drug Campaign, car crashes were less likely to occur among teens with strong parental monitoring. Additionally, "two-thirds of youth, ages 13-17 say that upsetting their parents or losing the respect of family and friends is one of the main reasons they don't smoke marijuana or use other drugs".

Some starting points parents can use with their teen drivers include setting clear rules and knowing where your teen is, and whom they are with. Both of these strategies have been linked to safer driving and less alcohol and other drug use. Additionally, you can talk to your children about various studies that have been conducted. For example, research has shown that "smoking pot affects concentration, coordination, and reaction time - many of the skills required for safe driving, and effects can last up to 24 hours" (www.TheAnti-Drug.com). Facts such as this may influence your child's decision to drink and drive or accept a ride from a friend who is under the influence.

We encourage parents to become more knowledgeable about the consequences of drinking and drugged driving. For more information on this topic please contact The Coad Group, Community Prevention Department at 610-363-6164 or 1-800-866-286-3767 or log onto: www.TheAnti-Drug.com



The Exchange is sponsored by: The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services, P.O. Box 2747, 601 Westtown Road Suite 325, West Chester, PA 19380-0990.

For more information or to be on the mailing list for this newsletter, contact the Community Prevention staff at: The Coad Group, 930 East Lancaster Avenue Exton, PA 19341. 610.363.6164 or 1.800.917.1117

This newsletter is made possible by funding from the Department of Health, Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Chester County Commissioners.

The Department of Health and Chester County Commissioners specifically disclaim responsibility for any analyses, interpretations, or conclusions herein.

The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services, P.O. Box 2747
601 Westtown Road, Suite 325
West Chester, PA 19380-0990

The Exchange Winter 2005

For More Information...

Join Together (617) 437-1500

www.jointogether.org

National Institute on Drug Abuse

www.nida.nih.gov or clubdrugs.org

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health

www.cdc.gov/tobacco

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug Information

1-800-729-6686 www.health.org

Partnership for a Drug-Free America

(212) 922-1560 www.drugfreeamerica.org

PA Dept. of Health, Research & Info. Clearinghouse www.padohric.org

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters.

(800) 344-2666 or (800) 356-9996.

www.al-anon.alateen.org

The Coad Group

www.coadgroup.com

You can view or print this newsletter by visiting Chester County's Website: www.chesco.org and following the links for Human Services to Drug & Alcohol Services.