

## SAMHSA NATIONAL PREVENTION WEEK

### MAY 18-24

National Prevention Week is a SAMHSA-supported annual health observance dedicated to increasing public awareness of, and action around, substance abuse and mental health issues. National Prevention Week 2014 is about Our Lives. Our Health. Our Future. We'll be highlighting the important role each of us has in maintaining a healthy life and ensuring a productive future.

### **Help Make Alcohol Abuse in Our Community a Thing of the Past It's Our Health, Our Future**

Alcohol abuse is a widespread issue in the United States. In 2012, 17.7 million people aged 12 and older were classified with alcohol dependence or abuse in the past year.<sup>1</sup> Even though it's legal for individuals aged 21 and older to purchase and drink alcohol, many consume alcohol at levels that pose safety and health risks to themselves and others. Excessive alcohol use can lead to serious health problems including diabetes, cardiovascular problems and chronic disease; it's also associated with approximately 80,000 deaths per year.<sup>2,3</sup>

To prevent alcohol abuse, it's important to recognize that alcohol use tends to begin at an early age:

- In 2012, the majority (58.3 percent) of people who tried alcohol for the first time were younger than age 18.
- Adults aged 21 or older who had first used alcohol at age 14 or younger were more than seven times as likely to be classified with alcohol dependence or abuse than adults who had their first drink at age 21 or older (15.2 vs. 2.1 percent).<sup>4</sup>

There's no better time than right now for parents, educators, and community leaders in Hancock County to have open conversations about alcohol use and abuse, and to model healthy choices for our young people. Parents and role models' behavior makes a big difference in curbing alcohol use that could turn into alcohol abuse later in life. For example, youth aged 12 to 17 who believed their parents would strongly disapprove of their using specific substances, such as alcohol, were less likely to use those substances.<sup>5</sup> Even one person's actions can have an important effect on a loved one's health and future.

<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2013). *Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-44, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 12-4713. Rockville, MD. Retrieved September 25, 2013, from <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2012SummNatFindDetTables/NationalFindings/NSDUHresults2012.htm>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Alcohol-Related Disease Impact (ARDI). Atlanta, GA: CDC. [http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/DACH\\_ARDI/Default/Default.aspx](http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/DACH_ARDI/Default/Default.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). (2012). Medical consequences of drug abuse. Committee on the Prevention of Mental Disorders and Substance Abuse among Children, Youth, and Young Adults: Research Advances and Promising Interventions. Retrieved March, 25, 2011, from <http://drugabuse.gov/consequences>

<sup>4</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2013). *Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-44, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 12-4713. Rockville, MD. Retrieved September 25, 2013, from <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2012SummNatFindDetTables/NationalFindings/NSDUHresults2012.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:  
<http://beta.samhsa.gov/prevention-week>