

# 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.

### **It's Up to All of Us to Prevent Underage Drinking in Our Community**

Although the legal drinking age in the U.S. is 21, close to one quarter of youth aged 12 to 20 (24.3 percent) drank alcohol in 2012.<sup>1</sup> The consequences of underage drinking can be calamitous; each year, 4,700 people under age 21 die from homicides, suicides, car crashes, and drowning related to drinking alcohol.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, underage drinking is a problem shared by all communities. Underage drinking happens, but the good news is it's also preventable.

Many are familiar with media campaigns, such as the Office of National Drug Control Policy's (ONDCP) *Above the Influence* campaign and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) underage drinking campaign *Talk. They Hear You.*, that counteract the negative advertising that bombards youth every day. While these campaigns are incredibly important and effective, kids also deserve to hear these messages from people they know and who care about them, rather than just from the media. Just talking to youth about substance use and abuse and being involved in their lives can make a difference:

- Youth aged 12 to 17 who believe their parents would strongly disapprove of their using a substance are less likely to use that substance than are youth who believe their parents would somewhat disapprove or neither approve nor disapprove.
- Youth aged 12 to 17 whose parents always or sometimes engage in monitoring behaviors — like helping with homework — binge drink, use illicit drugs, and smoke cigarettes less frequently than those whose parents seldom or never engage in such behaviors.<sup>3</sup>

Every day, parents, caregivers, educators, and community leaders in Hancock County can make a difference by having conversations with youth about substance use, and modeling healthy choices. As individuals and a community, we can help prevent underage drinking by being involved in young people's lives; identifying resources, support systems, and alternatives for youth in the community; and raising awareness about the importance of prevention.

<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>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Alcohol Related Disease Impact (ARDI) application. Retrieved October 7, 2013, from [http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/DACH\\_ARDI/Default.aspx](http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/DACH_ARDI/Default.aspx).

<sup>3</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

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