
Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community

A Case Study in Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Prevention

Background· Burlington is a diverse community with a high concentration of youth and young adults, both in college and recent graduates. College students' culture of excessive alcohol and drug use influences adolescents' perceptions of use, and excessive noise, public drunkenness, and related issues created by parties touch all community members. Alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs are easily accessible in Burlington, which has over 120 establishments licensed to sell alcohol. In 2006, the Chittenden County Substance Abuse Coalition chose to focus on Burlington, becoming the Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community (BPHC). In FY 2008, BPHC received a four-year federal Strategic Prevention Framework grant from the Vermont Department of Health to develop, strengthen, and maintain substance abuse prevention efforts.

Partners· BPHC creates and fosters diverse partnerships with Burlington residents, businesses, school and college representatives, students, parents, youth, medical professionals, substance abuse treatment providers, social service representatives, law enforcement officials, court representatives, ministry services and more — over 40 organizations in total. This broad reach incorporates the Resiliency and Recovery Oriented System of Care, which addresses the full spectrum of prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery.

Initiatives· BPHC uses community-wide environmental strategies to reduce alcohol consumption by those ages 25 and younger. Environmental strategies target community standards, institutions, structures, and attitudes that shape individuals' behavior.

- **Chittenden County Stop Teen Alcohol Risk Team (S.T.A.R.T.)**: BPHC, with coalitions throughout Chittenden County, initiated and helps sustain a successful S.T.A.R.T. coordination. S.T.A.R.T. hosted trainings for law enforcement on enforcement of underage drinking laws, increased compliance checks to insure that retailers are checking IDs, and identified high-risk times for underage drinking. In spring 2010, BPHC and other Chittenden County coalitions organized "Project Sticker Shock" events where young adults, accompanied by adult chaperones, placed stickers on alcoholic beverages or cooler windows at participating stores warning that it is illegal to provide alcohol to those under 21.
- **Responsible Retailer Program**: After organizing a collaboration between law enforcement, local businesses, the Church Street Marketplace, Department of Liquor Control, City Attorney's Office, the Cabaret Association, and local alcohol distributors, BPHC hosted trainings in responsible beverage service and hospitality operations security techniques for retailers in the area. BPHC worked with bars to test electronic scanners to check for fake IDs, and the Burlington Police Department to increase checks of alcohol retailers' compliance with ID checks. Recently, BPHC coordinated a media campaign encouraging drinkers to count their drinks and call for help before driving.
- **Social Norms Marketing**: BPHC is working with professors and students at the University of Vermont and Champlain College as well as a design studio to develop campaigns that reach students with messages to counter misperceptions of drinking behaviors.
- **Community Mobilization**: In 2009, BPHC worked with Burlington Parks and Recreation to create Smoke Free Zones in all youth oriented and confined areas of parks and beaches. In 2010, the Burlington City Council created a city ordinance that restricts smoking within 25 feet of all public beaches, playgrounds, shelters, and bleachers.

Additional Funding: In FY 2011, BPHC received a five-year, \$500,000 Drug Free Communities Support Grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to continue its coalition work, and a two-year Vermont Department of Health Tobacco Control Program grant to reduce point-of-purchase tobacco advertising and exposure to secondhand smoke.