

# PATH TO PREVENTION

CENTRAL

AN ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUG PREVENTION PROGRAM

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>More Youth Abusing Cough Medicine</i>	1
<i>What Parents Can Do...</i>	1
<i>Increased Drug Use Among Girls</i>	2
<i>Parents and Prevention</i>	2
<i>STOP Underage Drinking Act Passes in Congress</i>	3
<i>Social Host Ordinances To Help Reduce Underage Drinking</i>	3
<i>Project PATH Updates</i>	4

*Committed to helping Central Orange County communities eliminate problems associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.*

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## More Youth Abusing Cough Medicine



Many teens across the nation have been abusing over-the-counter cough medicines to get a so-called “cheap high.” A study recently released in the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine showed that 15 times more teenagers in California abused dextromethorphan (DXM), a semi-synthetic narcotic, in 2004 than in 1999. DXM is a cough-suppressing ingredient commonly found in over-the-counter cold and cough medications. Common products include Delsym<sup>®</sup>, Pertussin<sup>®</sup> DM, Robitussin<sup>®</sup>, Sucrets<sup>®</sup>, Triaminic<sup>®</sup>, Vicks<sup>®</sup> and Coricidin<sup>®</sup>. The effects of DXM

closely mimic those of the hallucinogens PCP and LSD, including loss of coordination, impaired judgment, dizziness, nausea, seizures, panic attacks, brain damage and addiction.

According to studies, the recent increase in abuse is occurring in children aged 9 to 17. In 1999, 23 cases were reported to the California Poison Control System, while 375 cases were reported in 2004. This increase in abuse is a huge concern for parents, teachers and administrators because cold medicines are often readily available in homes and local drug stores. Principal Carl Fickle, of The Union Mine High School in El Dorado, said use of cough medicines “caught a lot of people by surprise.” In October, seven students were rushed to the emergency room after one student began to vomit during class. The students had each ingested five to eight Coricidin<sup>®</sup> tablets during a morning break.

In September, Lucia Martino, a junior at Canyon Hills High School in Anaheim, ingested 20 Coricidin<sup>®</sup> pills. She was taken to the emergency room after bouts of vomiting. Her liver was malfunctioning and she slipped into a coma four days later. At her funeral, her parents left her casket open so other teenagers could see the damage caused by the tablets. In an effort to end abuse of over-the-counter cold and cough medicines, some grocery stores and drug stores have placed dextromethorphan-containing drugs behind pharmacy counters.

*For more information regarding Dextromethorphan (DXM) visit [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)*

## What Parents Can Do...

### Educate Yourself

⇒ Educate yourself about cough medicine abuse; make sure you’re aware of the signs of abuse and what to watch out for.

### Communicate with Your Teens

⇒ Make sure your teen understands that abusing cough medicine—just as abusing illegal drugs—can be very dangerous.

### Safeguard Medications at Home and Other Places

⇒ Know what medicines are in your home and pay attention to quantities.  
⇒ Keep all medications out of reach and out of easily accessible places like medicine cabinets.

*Resource: The Partnership for a Drug-Free America™ Partnering with Families*

# Increased Drug Use Among Girls

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A study conducted in 2006 by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) revealed an increase of illegal drug and alcohol abuse among girls. Over the past two years, girls have surpassed boys in abuse of marijuana, alcohol, over-the-counter and prescription drug use.

According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA), body image and low self-esteem can contribute to this trend. Researchers found that girls tend to abuse substances to help deal with problems, reduce sexual inhibitions, increase self confidence or lose weight. Teen girls who use drugs are at greater risk of becoming addicted and depressed. They are also more likely to contract a sexually transmitted disease or become pregnant.

Prescription and over-the-counter medications appeal to youth because they are easily accessible and are perceived to be safer than street drugs, mostly because they are legal and FDA-approved. However, when medicines are abused, they can be as addictive and dangerous as street drugs. In the most recent annual study from the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, adolescents stated that medicine cabinets were their primary source for these medications.

Other factors contributing to girls' abuse of drugs include:

- ⇒ History of physical or sexual abuse
- ⇒ Excessive dieting
- ⇒ Friends who use drugs
- ⇒ Parents or other adult role models who use drugs
- ⇒ Depression or anxiety
- ⇒ Early puberty
- ⇒ Frequently moving

*For more information regarding youth drug use please visit [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org) and [www.stopdrugs.org](http://www.stopdrugs.org)*

## Parents and Prevention

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Research shows that communication is the most effective tool parents can use to prevent their teens from abusing drugs. Take time to learn the facts about drugs and talk to your teen about its harmful effects on health, social skills, learning and mental health.

Some prevention tips include:

- ⇒ Talking with your teen
- ⇒ Regularly spending time together as a family
- ⇒ Setting rules and limits with clear consequences for breaking them
- ⇒ Knowing where your teen is, who they are with and what they will be doing
- ⇒ Occasionally check on your teenager to make sure they are where they say they will be and that they are spending time with whom they say they are with
- ⇒ Keep them busy—teens who are involved in constructive, adult-supervised activities are less likely to use drugs than other teens
- ⇒ Get to know your teen's friend and their parents

*For more tips and information please visit [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com)*

# STOP Underage Drinking Act Passes in Congress

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The Sober Truth on Preventing (STOP) Underage Drinking Act was passed by Congress on December 7, 2006. According to MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), this is the first stand-alone federal legislation that authorizes funding for underage drinking prevention and intervention. The STOP Act was first passed in the House of Representatives on November 14, 2006. After the Senate made further technical amendments, they unanimously passed the bill on December 6th and 7th. The bill was then signed into law by President Bush on December 20, 2006.

There has long been a need for funding to combat underage drinking in our nation. This bill provides \$18 million in federal funds to help prevent and reduce underage drinking. Some legislation includes, but is not limited to, a national adult-oriented media campaign; the provision of grants to institutions of higher education, states and non-profit organizations; and the support of research on the health effects of underage drinking.

According to Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro of Connecticut, this bipartisan, bicameral bill is the first major national legislation that addresses the public health crisis of underage drinking in our country. Along with DeLauro, the STOP Act is sponsored by Representatives Tom Osborne of Nebraska, Frank Wolf of Virginia, Zach Wamp of Tennessee and Congresswoman Roybal-Allard of California. In addition, many public health and alcohol beverage industry groups have taken part in the endorsement of the STOP Underage Drinking Act.

*For more information regarding the STOP Act please visit [www.cspinet.com](http://www.cspinet.com)*

## Social Host Ordinances to Help Reduce Underage Drinking

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Underage drinking has become a national concern and as a result, many cities have passed ordinances to address Social Hosting Laws. Social Hosting refers to the availability of alcohol to minors through homes or parties, where adults serve or provide alcohol. The Social Host ordinances have been proposed to increase adult responsibility for house parties that involve underage drinking. San Diego, Ventura and Sonoma Counties have taken action in implementing such Social Host ordinances. These ordinances focus on reducing underage drinking through the reduction of access to alcohol.



It appears that alcohol has become more accessible than ever, thus resulting in minors drinking at an earlier age. The Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center recently published an article concerning a study conducted by the U.S. Marine Corps in San Diego. The study included 41,482 male participants. Results from the study demonstrated that individuals who began drinking at 13 years of age or earlier were 5.5 times more likely to engage in risky drinking. It is important to prevent early alcohol consumption in an effort to reduce the risk of problem drinking later in life.

Other factors associated with risky drinking include engaging in smoking, enduring childhood sexual or emotional abuse and experiencing alcohol abuse or mental illness in the household. Social Host ordinances aim to combat these problems by reducing alcohol consumption among minors. Social Host ordinances also promote the public health safety and general welfare of community residents.

*For more information regarding Adult Accountability for Underage Drinking please visit [www.publicstrategies.org](http://www.publicstrategies.org)*

# Project PATH Updates

## Driving While Under the Influence

Project—PATH recently participated in a Huntington Beach Police Department Sobriety Checkpoint in collaboration with community law enforcement to raise the perceived risk of being pulled over while driving under the influence. This was an extra effort made by the HBPD to make the streets of Huntington Beach safer for everyone.

The DUI Checkpoint took place on December 15, 2006, from 10:00 pm—2:30 am, at the intersection of Beach Boulevard & Blaylock Drive.

DUI Checkpoint Results revealed:

- ⇒ 2160 vehicles passed through the checkpoint
- ⇒ 373 vehicles were screened
- ⇒ 9 individuals were arrested for DUI
- ⇒ 6 individuals were cited for being unlicensed/suspended
- ⇒ 16 vehicles were impounded

*For more information please visit [www.hbpd.org](http://www.hbpd.org)*

## Underage Drinking Prevention Task Force

Project—PATH has formed an Underage Drinking Prevention Task Force in collaboration with community members to address the risks associated with the social availability of alcohol in the City of Santa Ana.

Attendees at the January 29, 2007 meeting included the Santa Ana Unified School District, the Santa Ana Police Department, Latino Health Access, Immaculate Heart of Mary Youth Ministry, Juvenile Truancy Court, Coast Mountain Youth Academy and the Orange County Department of Education. The meeting highlighted sexual assault, substance abuse and alcohol consumption data in Santa Ana. Policies to reduce underage drinking were presented, as well as the various types of social host ordinances.

The next meeting will take place on February 26, 2007 from 12—2pm at the Community Service Programs, Inc. corporate office.

*For more information please call 949.757.1096*

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