

Contact

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Town Hall Meeting on Underage Drinking and Marijuana Use – May 23

Tiverton, RI: May 8, 2012. Tiverton has “a lot of work to do” if it wants to reduce the number of its teens who are drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana, according to findings from the Tiverton Health and Wellness Survey, which was administered to 498 Tiverton High School students in February.

The survey found that 48 percent of students in grades 9 – 12 reported they consumed alcohol in the previous 30 days. Among 11th graders, past 30 day use rose to 51 percent; among 12th graders, it jumped to 60.5 percent. By comparison, the percentage of Tiverton teens who reported drinking in the past 30 days was higher than both the State and national averages. In addition, 44 percent of all students reported smoking marijuana during the previous 30 days, again higher than the national average of 25 percent, according to [Monitoring the Future](#), a survey commissioned by the National Institute on Drug Abuse .

“This is our baseline,” said Rebecca Elwell, Coalition coordinator. “In prevention, statistics are neither ‘good’ nor ‘bad.’ Annual surveys are required under our (Drug Free Communities) grant so that we can evaluate our efforts and measure our progress. This is our starting point for the five-year grant — and the reason why we got the grant, as well. That said, Tiverton does have a lot of work to do and we’ll begin by starting a community conversation about underage drinking in Tiverton.”

The Coalition has scheduled a Town Hall Meeting, at the Tiverton Town Hall, on May 23 to present complete survey findings and to begin a discussion of strategies the town can use to reduce the number of youth who are now drinking, and “to prevent younger children from starting,” Ms. Elwell added. Parents, school administrators, teachers, police, elected officials, faith community leaders, alcohol vendors, coaches and other youth workers are encouraged to attend.

The program will include the use of an [“audience response system”](#) that enables instantaneous, anonymous polling of the audience. Presenters include Ms. Elwell and Coalition consultant Ray Davis, a Certified Prevention Specialist Supervisor; John Mattson, the DFC grant evaluator who designed the survey and wrote the report; and Ed Parr of O’Toole + Parr, The Coalition’s communications consultants.

The Town Hall Meeting runs from 6:30 to 8 pm. Doors open at 6. Seating is first come, first served until hall capacity is reached.

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