

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

“What Colleges Need to Know Now: An Update on College Drinking Research”

In 2002, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism’s (NIAAA’s) Task Force on College Drinking published a landmark report which made evidence-based recommendations on addressing problems related to college drinking. Given the recent media and collegiate interest in opening a dialogue about the national minimum drinking age (see the *CESAR FAX* on the Amethyst Initiative, Volume 17, Issue 35), we thought it would be valuable to publish some of the highlights from NIAAA’s 2007 update of this report, *What Colleges Need to Know Now: An Update on College Drinking Research*.

- “[S]trategies that focus on preventing drinking and alcohol problems in individual students continue to have significant research support” (p. 3). Recent research suggests that teaching students about the risks of drinking, how to monitor and set limits on their drinking, and how to handle high risk situations are effective in reducing alcohol-related problems, even among students mandated to receive intervention or treatment.
- Participation in individual alcohol interventions may be increased by delivering interventions in settings where high-risk students are more likely to be seen (e.g., health and counseling centers), using trained student peers to provide interventions, increasing routine screenings, and using computer or web-based brief interventions to reach more students.
- “As more credible studies continue to show positive outcomes associated with campus-community partnerships, this strategy should increasingly be considered an essential component of any college drinking prevention and intervention effort” (p. 6). Campus-community partnerships are most effective when they use multiple components, such as focusing on reducing alcohol availability, raising prices, and limiting campus alcohol advertising.
- Interventions designed to make students aware of the true rate of student alcohol use—social norms approaches—work best when combined with other interventions and “may be least effective in schools where very high levels of drinking are found and those that are located in communities with high alcohol outlet density” (p. 7).

A full copy of the report is available on NIAAA’s *College Drinking—Changing the Culture* website (www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov). This website contains invaluable information on college drinking, including other reports from the Task Force, statistical data, a nationwide list of college alcohol policies, and information for high school students and parents.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), *What Colleges Need to Know Now: An Update on College Drinking Research*, November 2007. Available online at http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/NIAAACollegeMaterials/College_Bulletin-508Comp.pdf.

Amethyst Initiative Follow-Up: UMD to Hold Summit to Discuss Alcohol on Campus

The University of Maryland will hold a campus-wide Alcohol Summit to bring faculty, staff, and students together to learn about the latest research, hear student perspectives, and engage in an open discussion about the many facets of problem drinking. This free event is open to the community and will be held in the Colony Ballroom of the Stamp Student Union on Thursday October 30th, from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. For more information, visit www.alcohol.umd.edu/summit08.