



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2017

THIS GRADUATION SEASON, REMEMBER: THINK BEFORE YOU LET TEENS DRINK

Oceana County (May 1, 2017) – Graduation is a time to celebrate. Along with the diploma comes another graduation ritual – underage drinking. The Oceana County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (OSAP) is urging parents to not fall into the social hosting trap this graduation season. The term “social host” refers to people that host parties where alcohol is being served. It does not matter whether a parent or guardian is home or not home, aware or unaware – If people under age 21 consume alcohol on your property, you can be held accountable for giving alcohol to a minor under the social hosting law of Michigan. This applies whether you knowingly provided or not.

Alcohol is Oceana County youth’s number one drug of choice. OSAP wants to make sure our teens are safe and know the dangers of underage drinking. It is important to continue to have regular discussions about the consequences of underage drinking and to never supply or support underage alcohol use. Social hosts face up to 30 days in jail and/or a fine of up to \$1,000. Please remember to think before you let teens drink; your actions have consequences.

“Many parents say they would prefer their child drink at home in a “safe” environment rather than in an unsupervised setting. However, there is no such thing as a safe environment for underage drinking,” states Kortni Garcia, a Health Educator with District Health Department #10 and member of OSAP. “As a social host, you cannot predict the behavior of a minor under the influence of alcohol and parents also bear the primary responsibility for their teens’ misconduct. Teens are at risk of alcohol poisoning, sexual assault, violence and physical injury when under the influence of alcohol. Parents and other adults need to remember that they are the greatest influence on their teens’ decisions to drink alcohol or not.”

If you are hosting a group of teens this graduation season, promote an alcohol- free celebration. Check-in regularly and remove alcohol from your home or lock it up that evening. Make sure they know that you expect them to stay sober not only on graduation night but every night.

Remember, the stronger the parental message against underage drinking, the less likely teens are to drink underage. Talk early, talk often, talk sooner. Find more information about social hosting, the dangers of underage drinking, and how to start the conversation with young people in your life at www.talksooner.org or contact OSAP by phone 231-902-8539 or by email at kgarcia@dhd10.org.

About DHD #10

District Health Department #10 (DHD #10) is Michigan's largest geographical health department, mandated to promote and protect the public from unsafe and hazardous conditions and provide methods of promoting good health and disease prevention. Some of the vital programs provided by

DHD #10 include Immunizations, Infectious Disease Control, STI Testing and Counseling, WIC, Children's Special Health Services, Hearing and Vision Screening, Family Planning, Cancer Screening, Worksite Wellness, Smoking Cessation, Substance Use Prevention, Chronic Disease Prevention, and Environmental Health Services. DHD #10 serves Crawford, Kalkaska, Lake, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Missaukee, Newaygo, Oceana, and Wexford counties. For more information, visit www.dhd10.org.

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