



ISSUES IN PREVENTION

Statewide Coalitions and State Systems

Statewide Coalitions for Prevention

Statewide coalitions to address alcohol and other drug problems among college students that include colleges, universities, and state and community agencies are nothing new. Since the 1990s, the U.S. Department of Education’s [Higher Education Center for Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Violence Prevention](#) has worked to promote and sustain statewide and regional initiatives to support college alcohol, other drug, and violence prevention efforts. These initiatives feature the formation of campus and community coalitions that focus on changing the broader environmental conditions that encourage student substance use.

There are as many as 47 statewide initiatives that stimulate the development and evaluation of local campus and community coalitions working to change the environment in which students make decisions about alcohol and other drug use. Key areas of focus include providing alcohol-free social and recreational options and bolstering academic standards, changing social norms about alcohol use, reducing the availability of alcohol, eliminating inappropriate alcohol promotions, and increasing strict and consistent law enforcement.

[Research](#) has demonstrated that policy change at both the state and federal levels can reduce certain alcohol-related problems. For example, new laws and regulations have the potential to affect the community as a whole and can help perpetuate changes in social norms, thereby affecting student

alcohol use. Several potentially helpful laws and regulations can be considered, including distinctive and tamper-proof licenses for drivers under age 21, increased penalties for illegal service to minors, prohibition of happy hours and other reduced-price alcohol promotions, restricted hours of sales, reduced density of retail outlets, and increased excise tax rates on alcohol. According to a 2002 [paper](#) commissioned by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) Task Force on College Drinking, a state-level association of colleges and universities can provide the organizational mechanism for college presidents and other top administrators to speak out on these and other issues while also providing a structure for promoting the simultaneous development of several campus and community coalitions within a state.

According to [Building an Infrastructure for AODV Prevention: Coalitions and Statewide Initiatives](#), when several institutions step forward in unison as part of a statewide initiative when addressing common problems, it demonstrates that virtually all

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institutions of higher education face these problems. In addition, as experienced by the Louisiana Higher Education Coalition to Reduce Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (see p. 2, below), a statewide initiative can help attract additional funding from various departments of state government, the state alcohol beverage control agency, or private foundations.

A statewide initiative can also lead to the formation of an association of higher education officials who can present an academic viewpoint on various alcohol and other drug abuse and violence prevention policy proposals being considered at the local and state level. For example, according to the [NIAAA](#), there are several policy proposals that could have a sizable effect in reducing alcohol and other drug abuse and violence-related problems on campus by lowering underage students' access to alcohol and decreasing its misuse, such as vigorous enforcement of zero tolerance laws, other drinking and driving laws, and strategies to reduce the availability of alcohol. But one critical factor for the success of a statewide initiative is presidential leadership. An active college president or chancellor can help recruit his or her peers while also serving in a public role, articulating the initiative's goals and objectives, and attracting media attention.

For more information on statewide initiatives, visit <http://higheredcenter.ed.gov/prevention/coalitions/swi>.

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Louisiana Higher Education Coalition to Reduce Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

The roots of the Louisiana Center Addressing Substance Use in Collegiate Communities (LaCASU) go back to 1998 when Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's A Matter of Degree (AMOD) Initiative to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students. LaCASU oversees the Baton Rouge Collegiate Alliance

(BRCA) and the Louisiana Higher Education Coalition to Reduce Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (LaHEC).

AMOD grantees relied on the use of evidence-based environmental management strategies implemented through campus and community coalitions. The underlying principles guiding the AMOD projects were:

- Alcohol problems and solutions are shared by campus and community.
- Campus and community interact within a shared environment. Universities are part of a larger community.
- Identification, discussion, and solutions for problems must, therefore, be collaborative, involving city and campus governance, concerned citizens, law enforcement, and business.
- As campuses take measures to change their environments communities could also play a lead role.

According to Deanna Moore, project evaluator with the original AMOD grant and currently a consultant with LaCASU, after the AMOD grant ended in 2006 two state agencies that had worked with LSU were very interested in both supporting the environmental approach to prevention at other colleges and universities and continuing the work of the campus and community coalition in Baton Rouge.

“The Louisiana State Highway Commission provided funding to further develop the BRCA’s partners, which include several state and community agencies and other Baton Rouge campuses. The BRCA continues the environmental work that we did under AMOD, such as affecting policy, acting as a watchdog in the community, and trying to moderate alcohol use by college students,” said Moore. “The State Department of Health and Hospitals funds the statewide Core Alcohol and Drug Survey and the development of training based on the AMOD experience for other Louisiana schools, in order to help them to replicate that model and build prevention capacity in all areas in the state.”

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“One key factor in environmental prevention is to empower local communities to work with their colleges and universities. Communities play such a large role in both understanding and responding to alcohol and drug problems. By working with the entire state, LaHEC can provide a wealth of resources to assist smaller communities develop appropriate prevention strategies through professional development, training, and information,” said Bret Blackmon, associate director and head of LaCASU.

According to Moore, LaCASU is totally committed to the environmental model of alcohol prevention. “We know that prevention must work on all levels—where students live, work, and socialize. The problem doesn’t just exist within the gates of the campus,” she said.

Because the LaCASU model relies on evidence to support prevention strategies, beginning in 2007 the [Core Alcohol and Drug Survey](#) has been administered to more than 12,000 undergraduates at virtually every college and university throughout the state every other year to gather data on college students’ drinking and drug use behavior and related problems. Survey results are reported directly to college and university administrators for the purpose of addressing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems among their student populations.

According to the 2009 Core Alcohol and Drug Survey of 12,972 students conducted at 33 institutions of higher education across the state, 61.1 percent of underage students (younger than 21) consumed alcohol in the previous 30 days and 36.6 percent of students reported binge drinking in the previous two weeks. A binge is defined as consuming five or more drinks in one sitting. In addition, 24.9 percent of the students had used marijuana in the past year (“annual prevalence”), 14.5 percent reported current marijuana use (“30-day prevalence”), and 8.3 percent reported current use of illegal drugs other than marijuana (“30-day prevalence”).

In addition to providing Louisiana campuses with Core survey data and regional trainings, LaHEC

also holds an annual two-day professional summit in Baton Rouge, with the next to be held in July 2011. Among other topics, the 2010 summit featured a session on defending the age 21 minimum drinking age laws, creating and sustaining coalitions, and “pre-gaming” drinking on college campuses.

Blackmon encourages other states to develop statewide consortiums. “They are a very good starting point from which to organize. Two or three institutions or agencies just aren’t enough. A consortium can help bring resources to the community itself—the neighborhood associations and police departments and others—to get everyone working together as a whole. That’s what is most important,” he concluded.

Editor’s note: LaHEC welcomes participants from other states at its annual summit. For informant on the July 2011 summit, please contact Bret Blackmon, lacasu@lsu.edu, 225-578-5650.

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Statewide Initiative Grantees

In more than two decades of experience in supporting programs to prevent alcohol and other drug abuse at U.S. colleges and universities and in surrounding communities, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) has found that successful projects adapt strategies that are based on sound prevention theory, research, or effective programs and practices. One evidence-based approach calls for the formation of statewide coalitions to support the formation of campus and community coalitions as part of a comprehensive prevention strategy. Under a discretionary grant program in 2009, ED provided funding to “institutions of higher education (IHEs), consortia thereof, State agencies, and non-profit entities to prevent and reduce the rate of under-age alcohol consumption, including binge drinking, among students at institutions of higher education. Applicants were required to propose programs to develop, expand, or enhance a statewide coalition to prevent and reduce alcohol abuse by targeting under-age

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students at IHEs throughout the State, both on campuses and in surrounding communities.” Under that competition, ED awarded nine grants to various consortia across the country, including the following:

Project North Dakota Partners in Prevention:

This project is a component of the North Dakota Higher Education Consortium for Substance Abuse Prevention, which is based at the University of North Dakota. This ED-funded comprehensive initiative provides support for three components: late-night, alcohol-free, student-designed programming; eCHECKUP TO GO, personalized, evidence-based online prevention intervention; and Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS). For additional information, visit <http://www.ndus.edu/system/consortium-for-substance-abuse-prevention/>.

Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) Alcohol Coalition:

Housed in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, this ED-funded project focuses on reducing underage alcohol consumption and binge drinking at 14 campuses of the state system through a statewide coalition. Fourteen universities and other partners are targeting first-year resident students at the selected universities. The goal of the coalition is a 7 percent reduction in underage alcohol use as well as a 7 percent reduction in binge drinking by first-year students. For more information, contact Doreen Tobin at dtobin@po-box.esu.edu.

New Jersey Higher Education Consortium (NJHEC) for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention and Education:

Founded in the late 1980s as part of a national effort by ED to establish statewide and regional consortia to address campus problems with alcohol and other drug abuse, NJHEC is one of the oldest consortia in the United States. From an original group of 16 colleges NJHEC has grown into a network involving more than 40 colleges and universities. The ED-funded project supports the development of effective and sustainable environmental management approaches to substance abuse prevention at five IHEs throughout the state of

New Jersey. For additional information, visit <http://njhec.wpunj.edu/home/index.dot>.

Alliance of Coalitions 4 Change (AC4C):

Housed in the Iowa Governor’s Office of Drug Control Policy, the purpose of the AC4C is to create a unified group of coalitions across the state of Iowa working together to further reduce the effects of substance abuse on Iowans. AC4C shares resources, materials, and knowledge; creates a network of professionals that have a diverse knowledge, experience, and interests; provides information and support to state and federal legislatures and agencies on current and emerging trends and needs; and works with partners to create a statewide marketing campaign and resources. The goals of the ED-funded project are to expand the reach of the AC4C statewide coalition by adding five new sites, to develop and implement an underage drinking prevention and reduction plan at all sites, and to develop and implement a uniform data collection process to gather substance use information at each of the participating sites. For additional information, visit <http://www.ac4c.org/>.

Texans Standing Tall Statewide Coalition

(TST): This statewide coalition works to support and create healthier and safer communities for young people. It consists of community coalitions, individual adults and youths, state agencies, and other organizations. Its current efforts involve reducing and preventing youth substance abuse, with a particular focus on youth alcohol use. TST provides community coalitions with training and support to assist them in advancing positive change on the community level. For this ED-funded project, TST leverages its core competencies in data collection and dissemination, coalition building, collaboration with key stakeholders across the state, and utilization of evidence-based prevention strategies to reduce 30-day alcohol use and 30-day binge drinking among underage students at colleges and universities participating in the program. The goals of the program include increased awareness of evidence-based prevention strategies for colleges and universities and increased capacity of statewide coalitions as indicated by increased

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partnerships between IHEs and other key stakeholders. For additional information, visit <http://www.texasstandingtall.org/>.

Nebraska Collegiate Consortium to Reduce High-Risk Drinking (NCC): The NCC is a collective of all state-funded two- and four-year colleges and universities and a number of private IHEs in Nebraska, all working on reducing high-risk drinking among their student populations through comprehensive environmental strategies similar to those used at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. NCC is using funds provided by this ED grant to overcome difficulties and barriers in connecting with agencies and coalitions in their surrounding communities. This project enhances the ability of colleges and universities and their surrounding communities to combine or coordinate efforts to reduce underage and binge drinking. The goals of this project are to reduce past 30-day alcohol use and binge drinking among students at NCC schools. For additional information, visit <http://nebconsortium.theplasticfactory.us/index.html>.

California Coalition for Safer Universities (CCSU): This ED-funded project supports the development of a consortium of four-year colleges and universities committed to decreasing underage alcohol use and binge drinking among college students. Institutions within the 14 University of California and California State University systems are the founding cohort of the two-year project. Grant funds are being used to centralize communication and resource sharing, as well as sponsor two training events targeting needs identified by the core planning group. The grant also provides 30 mini-grants to participant institutions as well as opportunities for mentoring and sharing of best practices. For additional information, visit <http://californiacoalition.org/about.htm>.

Missouri Partners in Prevention (PIP): The coalition is composed of representatives from each of Missouri's 19 state colleges and universities, funded by the Missouri Division of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse with

supplemental funding from the Missouri Division of Highway Safety, Missouri Foundation for Health, and the Missouri Department of Mental Health. Through the ED-funded project, PIP enhances services provided to member colleges and universities and is expanding coalition services to six additional private IHEs. The statewide program is partnering with three state agencies to provide linkages with state and local resources to increase the capacity of campuses to address underage alcohol use and binge drinking in their communities. For more information, visit <http://pip.missouri.edu/about.html>.

Stay Dry! Mississippi Coalition of Partners in Prevention: This ED-funded campaign includes Mississippi State University, Mississippi University for Women, and the University of Mississippi, as well as Mississippians Advocating Against Underage Drinking and Mothers Against Drunk Driving. This statewide coalition targets alcohol use by underage students and youths in surrounding communities. It includes community-based organizations across the state and focuses on alcohol abuse education, peer education, media campaigns, and the promotion of alcohol-free social events on and off campuses. The goals of this project are to demonstrate a reduction in 30-day alcohol use among underage students and to demonstrate a reduction in 30-day binge drinking among underage students. For more information, visit <http://under21staydry.com/>.

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The Ohio College Initiative to Reduce High Risk Drinking

In 1996, leaders from 19 four-year colleges and officials from a number of state organizations came together to address high-risk drinking on Ohio college campuses. They formed the Ohio College Initiative to Reduce High Risk Drinking under the leadership of [Ohio's Drug Free Action Alliance](#), which now includes 45 Ohio four-year residential colleges that enroll more than 330,000 students.

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The Ohio College Initiative assists its members to implement an environmental management approach to prevention. It promotes a collaborative community approach to modify the physical, social, economic, and legal culture to reduce the prevalence of high-risk drinking through systemic change at the institutional, community, and public policy level.

The initiative provides technical assistance and trainings to campuses through meetings, retreats, networking, consulting services, a Web-based toolkit, linkages with state and national organizations, and effective communications strategies between all partners and supporting organizations. The Drug Free Action Alliance collects and reports data gathered from all the college partners.

The presidents of member campuses signed a letter of commitment and appointed a designated liaison to the initiative; the liaisons are referred to as project directors. These liaisons are either actively engaged in initiative activities or identify others who get involved in activities, such as participating in training opportunities, conducting or updating campus needs assessments, forming or sustaining campus and community coalitions, and implementing one or more of these five environmental strategies:

1. Improve social, recreational, and academic options.
2. Create a health-promoting environment.
3. Limit alcohol availability.
4. Restrict marketing and promotion of alcohol.
5. Increase consistent enforcement of laws and policies.

The Ohio College Initiative also promotes the strategic use of the [NIAAA 3-in-1 Framework](#) as a tool in addressing environmental strategies. The framework calls for the use of comprehensive, integrated programs with multiple complementary components that target (1) individuals, including at-risk or alcohol-dependent drinkers; (2) the student population as a whole; and (3) the college and the surrounding community.

“The initiative brings together people who are doing the same sorts of things and have the same concerns. They share their different campus situations, needs, and problems and help one another tremendously. For example, someone at a school in southeastern Ohio can literally pick up the phone and talk to a person on another campus who had a similar problem and work through the issues. One of the biggest benefits of the initiative is building a network of people to draw on for resources and support,” said Marcie Seidel, project manager for the Ohio College Initiative at the Drug Free Action Alliance.

“Another benefit of the initiative is that the campuses give a great deal of feedback regarding issues and concerns that are rising to the top on their campuses. As the convener of the initiative, we take that information to identify experts and resources to help campuses through trainings, sending materials, or e-mail blasts,” added Seidel.

According to Seidel, the initiative’s primary purpose is to support member colleges in building campus and community coalitions and then use environmental approaches to respond to problems.

“At some campuses that approach works very well. For example, Ohio University, which is located in a rural community, has developed a campus and community coalition that works really well together. There is a strong sense of community, with the involvement of law enforcement agencies, business leaders, and other community members that work together to develop and implement different strategies to impact high-risk drinking by students,” said Seidel.

In 2010, the initiative offered five training and meeting opportunities for its project directors, including two regional meetings, one in northeast Ohio, the other in northwest Ohio. Also, two meetings with a focus on the smaller campuses—those with 5,000 or fewer students—took place at Otterbein College (Westerville) in the fall and Oberlin College (Oberlin) in the spring.

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The initiative tracks state legislation regarding alcohol and other drugs. According to Seidel, information on such legislation is disseminated to make sure that individuals, campuses, and community coalitions know how they can help advocate for sound policy and have the tools they need to do that.

“We are fortunate in the state of Ohio because the state agency, Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, sees a tremendous benefit in supporting the Drug Free Action Alliance’s College Initiative. All states could benefit from statewide coalitions that reach out with prevention efforts to the 18- to 25-year-old group through environment strategies developed by campus and community coalitions. States would benefit in time, money, and cleanup costs,” concluded Seidel.

Higher Education Center Resources

Publications

- [*Building an Infrastructure for AODV Prevention: Coalitions and Statewide Initiatives*](#)
- [*Campus and Community Coalitions in AOD Prevention*](#)
- [“A Campus-community Coalition to Control Alcohol-related Problems Off Campus: An Environmental Management Case Study”](#)
- [*Catalyst \(Summer 2007\) Vol. 9 No. 1: Coalitions and Partnerships*](#)
- [*Prevention File, Special Fall 2003 Edition*](#) (pp. 7–9)

Web Page

- [Statewide Initiatives](#)

Photo Credit

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