

Celebrating 30  
Years of Providing  
Substance  
Abuse Prevention,  
Education,  
and Support  
for Personal  
Recovery!



# Prevention WORKS!

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY, INC.

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## FEATURE ARTICLE

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### The Importance of Advocacy



A Proud Affiliate of the



## The Importance of Advocacy

*Advocacy* means to speak up, to plead the case of another, or to fight for a cause. Derived from the Latin word *advocare*, which means “coming to the aid of someone.” It describes a wide range of expressions, actions and activities that seek to influence outcomes directly affecting the lives of the people served by the organization.

*Advocacy* should not be confused with *lobbying*. Lobbying, as defined by the Internal Revenue Service, involves attempts to influence legislation at the local, state or federal level. Advocacy is more about issues than specific legislation. Lobbying always involves advocacy, though advocacy does not always involve lobbying. Both are important tools for most non-profit organizations and our constituencies.

Government regulations and laws have a significant and powerful impact on every nonprofit organization and the people we serve.

This makes it imperative for nonprofits like NCADD to become involved with policymakers at the city, county, state and national levels who affect our organizations and constituencies. While the services we provide are critical to the various communities we serve, so is speaking out on the issues that concern those in need.

Nonprofits traditionally serve constituencies and issues that have a limited voice in the policy process. Nonprofits providing services frequently have the best, if not only, information on the social needs they exist to address.

NCADD is driven by its commitment to a broad community – all



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## Dear Friends,

Addiction Awareness Month 2010 is upon us. While each September we celebrate the individual's triumph over addiction and honor those institutions in the community that support personal recovery, April's focus is on the continued need for comprehensive prevention, intervention, and treatment services. This is the time of year when NCADD seeks to inspire advocacy, because we cannot carry the torch alone. This year we have more work than usual:

- The annual Monitoring the Future Survey released in December noted the first significant increase in youth substance abuse in half a dozen years;
- Safe and Drug Free Schools funding has been eliminated for many of our schools across the country;
- Funding for New Jersey's pilot needle exchange program has been cut;
- Healthcare Reform, which includes significant positive gains for addiction prevention and treatment, is on the verge of collapse; and
- Representative Patrick Kennedy, Congress's most vocal supporter of addiction services, has announced that he will not seek re-election this November.

NCADD's goal this year is to reignite the passion for advocacy. Our cover story outlines its importance, especially now. That article is aimed at you, our supporters who already are committed to our mission. The task now is to move from silent support to vocal advocacy.

For thirty years, NCADD has been at the forefront of advocacy grounded in the vision of Marty Mann, the founder of the NCADD movement decades ago. In the past six months alone, I have met personally with Fran Harding, the Director of the Federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) three times; Gil Kerlikowske, the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP); and Representative Patrick Kennedy. Yes, it is our birthday, and it is fitting that this year has the same focus as our first.



Steven G. Liga, CEO/Executive Director

*PS We need your support now more than ever. Please see the back cover of this newsletter to see how you can help.*

those who may be affected by the harmful consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. With the stigma still attached to substance abuse and addiction, those most affected are often the most silent – we must speak on their behalf!

Reduced to its most basic level, effective nonprofit advocacy is about communication and relationships. Usually changes come about slowly, and advocates need to exercise persuasiveness, persistence and patience in representing an issue. Effective advocates are flexible and resourceful, willing to compromise, negotiate, collaborate, and prioritize to accomplish our goals.

NCADD's advocacy work takes many forms.

While we do reach out to our elected officials directly, more frequently we aim educate the public by researching and reporting on addiction issues and problems facing those we serve, making effective use of the media through TV, radio, and newspaper coverage and inspiring others to act.

In recent years, NCADD has taken a lead role in advocating successfully for Lifeline legislation, which allows underage drinkers to call for help in a medical emergency without fear of prosecution; municipal private property ordinances, which hold underage drinkers themselves

accountable when police break up house parties instead of only the owners of the homes; and clean air legislation, allowing citizens to enjoy a smoke-free environment in all public facilities and many of our local community playgrounds.

Together, we can, and must, do even more.

We are once again looking for individuals to commit to joining NCADD's Advocacy Team.

Responsibilities primarily involve responding to select action alerts by contacting

local elected officials and writing letters to the editors of local papers. It also means you will commit to not only staying informed about the issues connected to NCADD's mission, but also spreading the word with those you know. If you are interested, contact Ezra Helfand at 732-254-3344 or via email at [ezra@ncadd-middlesex.org](mailto:ezra@ncadd-middlesex.org)

NCADD's 2010 Legislative event, scheduled for April 13th, is designed specifically to educate the Rutgers student community regarding both the opportunities and the need for advocacy regarding Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) policy issues and to inspire them to act once they are educated about how best to do so. This year's event is designed to highlight those issues at the state, county, municipal, and university levels that would benefit most from student advocacy.



# Prom and Prevention - Helping teens think before they drink

By Lindsay Rich, MSW, LCSW

Welcome to spring and the beginning of prom season! As the weather turns warm, students get excited about dressing up and attending parties as a part of a traditional end of the year high school experience. In addition to helping our youth through the stressful process of deciding who to ask and what to wear, it is our responsibility as adults to do everything possible to ensure that this time is not only festive but also safe.

It may not be such a coincidence that April is also Alcohol Awareness month in the U.S. Statistically, there are increased reports of underage drinking on prom night, and according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, prom-graduation season - the months of April, May and June - is the most dangerous time for teens in terms of alcohol related traffic fatalities. During April, May and June between six and seven hundred youth under the age of 21 are killed nationwide as a result of alcohol related car crashes. Thankfully, there is evidence that this number is decreasing in more recent years; however,

it is clear that underage drinking remains problematic (2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health).

## The Teenage Perspective

When we asked teens at Carteret High School what they plan to do to stay safe, they said that some kids will arrange for designated



drivers if they plan to drink on prom night, and some will even use "buddy systems" to make sure they will stay safe. However, these same students acknowledge that perspectives change once the drinking starts and people just don't care about the consequences. "Drinking is contagious" says one teenager, and "as long as one person starts it, it just spreads." Many students, and way too many parents, believe that kids will inevitably drink, so the most realistic safety plan includes knowing who to call in an emergency

and predetermining sleeping and transportation arrangements. The truth is that we can do more.

## What Can Parents Do?

While it often looks like their teens are not listening, studies show that teenagers feel most influenced by their parents' opinions when it comes to

making a decision to abstain from alcohol (Simpson, 2001). With this research in mind, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when parents assume their teens will drink, but that does not have to be the case. Parents should talk to their kids in advance of prom night about

the dangers and implications associated with underage drinking, as well as plan for safety. Things to consider:

- Offering their child a "no questions asked" ride home - It is not uncommon for teens to attend a party thinking they will be fine and then get uncomfortable when the drinking gets out of hand. They need to know they can come home and that their parents will respect the good decision they

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made to leave an unsafe situation rather than focus on the poor decision to attend a party where alcohol was provided and perhaps partake in alcohol themselves.

- Hosting after-prom activities that do not include alcohol – There are parents who will inevitably provide alcohol for their teen’s party. Other parents have to be willing to host a safe alternative so teens have a choice.
- Being aware of ways teens may obtain alcohol, including in their own home – The number one way for high school youth to obtain alcohol is to take from their own home or the home of a friend.
- Supporting police enforcement of underage drinking laws – When law enforcement breaks up an underage drinking party and teens must face the consequences, parents need to reinforce the fact that this was done out of concern for the safety of our youth. There is only so much law enforcement can do if they believe that parents will not support them.
- Not allowing your teen to go away unsupervised for a night or weekend after prom – Check out YouTube for yourself. Though your teen may beg to go and promise to be safe, unsupervised parties and overnights down at the shore invariably involve alcohol and sex. Once there, it is difficult to leave. Don’t allow your teen to walk into something they may seriously regret on Monday.
- Talking points such as :
  - “You may not even remember your prom if you drink.”
  - “Whatever good memories you create can be erased if you drink.”
  - And the very blunt, “If you vomit from drinking on your dress or tuxedo, how gross and embarrassing is that?”

Another new idea is being promoted by what most would consider an unlikely ally; the Century Council is a not-for-profit organization funded by distillers that works to prevent underage drinking and drunk driving. As part of its prevention campaign, the group implemented Text Message your Teen on Prom Night. Text messaging is an additional way to remind kids that parents care on prom night, utilizing an unobtrusive communication method that teens like to use.

Prom season should be a wonderful time for our youth. It is not something we adults can sit back and simply hope for; our words and actions can make it happen.

Sources

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# Substance Abuse Prevention for ... Older Adults?

By Laura Tittel, BA

When considering substance abuse prevention, many think only of how we can keep our youth from using and abusing drugs. However, there is a growing population of older adults who are in need of prevention education, as well. In the United States, 4.3 million adults over the age of 50 have used an illicit drug in the past year. About 1 in every 6 adults over 60 regularly abuse or misuse substances—primarily alcohol, prescription, or over-the-counter medications. Between 1995 and 2002, admission rates for substance abuse treatment rose 32% for older adults. When more recent data become available, it is projected that we will not only see this increase continue, but also see it rise at an even steeper rate.

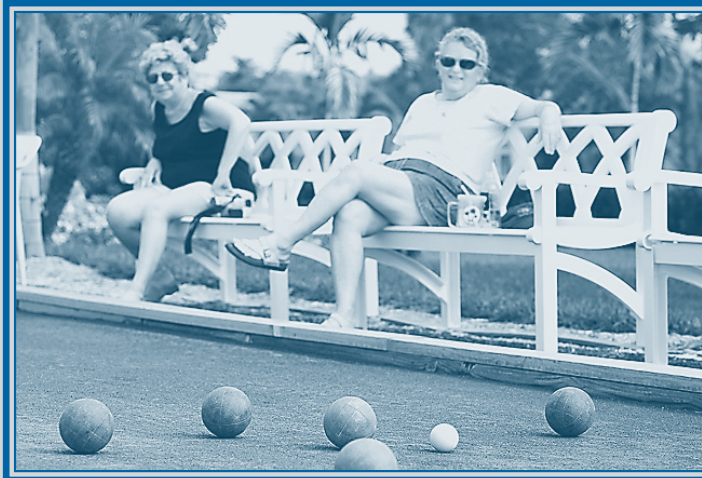
The older adult population is growing larger as the baby boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) ages. In New Jersey, the population over 60 makes up 17% of the total population. Moreover, one in four residents of Ocean and Cape May counties is over the age of 60. You may be surprised to learn that New Jersey is home to more senior citizens than Florida.

Adults are largely unaware that age changes the way their bodies are able to metabolize alcohol and drugs. The same glass of wine that had a minor effect at 40 years of age may have a much more profound impact at 60, due to the slowing of the body's metabolism.

A lack of recognition of the side effects of drug

therapies put older adults at an increased risk of adverse effects, particularly since older adults are more likely to be on multiple medications, which increases their risk of suffering negative drug-related consequences. All adults should understand how their prescription and over-the-counter medications interact with each other and with alcohol. Mixing alcohol with certain medications can be deadly.

Age-related stresses, including loss of a job or loved one, declines in physical and mental functioning, or feelings of depression or isolation increase the risk for alcohol



consumption in older adults. Many adults do not realize that consuming alcohol puts them at risk for “late-onset alcoholism,” a form of alcoholism that does not become evident until the user is over the age of 50.

Knowing these current facts and

statistics already calls attention to the serious needs of the older adult; but a recent report indicates that substance abuse treatment for those over the age of 50 is expected to double by the end of this decade. We can no longer afford to neglect the needs of the seniors. Prevention agencies can make a tremendous impact on this population and decrease their need for future treatment through proper educational activities.

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The New Jersey Prevention Network (NJPN) has created a program tailored to the specific prevention needs of the older adult: the Wellness Initiative for Senior Education, or WISE program. WISE offers a comprehensive approach to wellness in the older adult and celebrates healthy aging. Participants are given the opportunity to discuss a variety of issues relevant to the older adult and increase their knowledge on how aging can affect them. They leave the program armed with tools they can use to make healthier life choices and are empowered to share their new knowledge with friends and family.

The WISE program was awarded the 2009 National Exemplary Award for Innovative Substance Abuse Prevention Programs, Practices, and Policies by the National Association of State Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Directors. The program was also featured in an article in *The Journal on Active Aging*, which suggested, "If individuals understand how their lifestyle choices and behaviors impact their health, they will make more positive choices and experience better health."

In addition to the WISE program, NCADD offers five different one-hour education programs for seniors on topics including: Grief and Loss, Depression, Conflict Resolution, Alcohol and Medication Issues, and "Senior Jeopardy," which includes Nutrition and Stress Management. To learn more about these programs and to schedule a presentation at your facility, please call Alexandra Lopez, Deputy Director at 732-254-3344.

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- Merck Manual Home Edition, [www.Merck.com](http://www.Merck.com)
- U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA, [www.Samhsa.gov](http://www.Samhsa.gov), NSDUH, Dec. 29th, 2009, SAMHSA press release Jan. 8th, 2010
- Journal on Active Aging, Nov/Dec 2009

## Jason Surks Memorial Prevention Resource Center

NCADD is currently in the process of updating its Resource Center with new literature and DVDs. Check upcoming issues of NCADD TODAY! for more information. If you do not currently receive a copy of NCADD TODAY! via email, write to us at [mail@ncadd-middlesex.org](mailto:mail@ncadd-middlesex.org) and ask to be added to our database.

We have thousands of videos, DVDs, brochures and other pieces of literature to choose from at our Resource Center. We'd like to highlight a couple of items that might be useful to you on the topics of drug and alcohol abuse and the underage population.

### Videos

- ✦ **Healthy Aging: Redefining America**— This video explores how aging is being redefined by baby boomers. Segments include: physical fitness, mental wellness, social well-being and financial security.

### Pamphlets

- ✦ **Talking to Teens: Prom, Graduation and Alcohol**— This brochure explains why parents' opinions can influence teen drinking. It outlines how parental expectations that their children not drink alcohol have been associated with less alcohol use, better refusal skills and strong resistance to peer influence.

NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc. is a private, non-profit community-based health organization serving Middlesex County. Our mission is to promote the health and well-being of individuals and communities of Middlesex County through the reduction or elimination of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use problems.

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# Help Us Celebrate our 30th Anniversary With a \$30 Donation!

NCADD is proud of our many achievements and the fact that we have been in the forefront of efforts to stamp out the stigma associated with addiction and to marshal the energy and resources to confront a public health problem that has maimed and killed more Americans than all of our wars, natural catastrophes, and traffic accidents combined. We fully expect that the next thirty years will continue to reflect our commitment to prevention, education and advocacy. We would like to count on your continued support. Such support helps to insure that quality programs and services will continue to be provided throughout the county for years to come.

**YES! I want to support the mission of NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc. and help you celebrate your 30th anniversary.**

Donation enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Please make check payable to NCADD of Middlesex County, Inc.)

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You can also donate online on the NCADD website at [www.ncadd-middlesex.org/donate/](http://www.ncadd-middlesex.org/donate/)

Thank you for your support!

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