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Dear Parents:



It seems we are always in the midst of celebrating one thing or another – prom, graduation, end of the

school year, summer, and more. This is good, but it can also be worrisome. We want to take this opportunity to remind you that as parents you have a particularly important role in shaping these events.

Please help keep your teen and his or her peers stay safe and alcohol-free.

Alcohol use is illegal by those in Minnesota who are under the age of 21 years. The only exception is that parents may provide alcohol to their own children in their own homes. Surveys of teens indicate that adults are teens' primary source of alcohol: at home, in bars and restaurants or on the street. To help reduce underage alcohol use, you can:

Refuse to supply alcohol to underage young people when you host your own celebration. Do not buy a keg of beer for teens at a high school graduation or other party. This is illegal and it also invites young people to drink illegally. Teen alcohol use is **not** a rite of passage into adulthood. In fact, alcohol has kept too many teens from becoming adults.

Make sure that alcohol is not available at events your teen attends. Talk with other parents and party hosts to ensure alcohol-free celebrations. Be proactive. When parents stand together on this issue, they present a united front to teens.

All law enforcement agencies within McLeod County are participating in the Zero Adult Provider program (ZAP). Law enforcement agencies will be actively investigating and prosecuting adults who provide alcohol to underage drinkers. The county has passed a Social Host Ordinance. It is a crime to knowingly provide a place where underage drinking occurs; up to 90 days in jail and up to \$1,000 fine. Please take an active role in assisting us in protecting your child.



Remember that as a parent, you play an important role in preventing underage alcohol use. In research studies, teens say that their number one reason for refusing

to drink alcohol is centered on worrying about what their parents would think. That is a powerful statement about the importance of your message and role modeling.

We care about young people. We want them to enjoy celebrations and to have fond memories of them. Please join us in this effort to help teens remain safe and sober.

CHEMICAL HEALTH TREND CORNER:

By Sarah T. Williams

The opioid epidemic (including heroin and prescription painkillers) is on the march in Minnesota, with increases in accidental overdose deaths and emergency-room and treatment admissions.

There was mixed news about synthetic drugs, with declines in exposures to both THC homologs and "bath salts." Exposures to LSD, however, tripled over the past year, from 15 to 45. Meanwhile, all indicators show an unabated increase in the number of deaths, overdoses and treatment admissions related to heroin and prescription painkillers. [Full article:](#)

Consequences of Underage Drinking Run Deep



District Court Judge Michael Savre

Why is underage drinking a concern? Here are some statistics:

- * People who begin drinking by age 15 are five times more likely to become alcoholics than those who begin drinking after age 20.
- * Drinking alcohol can stunt the growth of a still-developing brain, leading to learning problems and other mental disorders.

- * Kids who drink are more likely to: Get poor grades in school; Get in a car crash; Get in a fight; have unsafe sex, which can lead to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

- * Become the victim of a crime, such as rape, theft or assault.

What are the long term legal consequences for these convictions? Alcohol-related convictions go on the offender's criminal record, which can be accessed by the public, prospective employers, schools and colleges.

A conviction can negatively impact the offender's ability to:

- * Get a job;
- * Get into college and/or graduate school
- * Obtain a professional license, such as a license to practice medicine or law;
- * Obtain or retain a valid drivers' license.
- * Obtain affordable car insurance.

Every DWI conviction results in an automatic driver's license revocation and depending on the circumstances, could result in mandatory jail.

Motor vehicle crashes remain No.1 cause of death among ages 15-20. Twenty-eight percent of 15-20-year-old drivers who had been killed in motor vehicle crashes had been drinking.

Students' Health Habits Tied to School Success

A study showed that academic achievement is associated with health factors, including having access to healthy food and being physically fit. [Full article:](#)

Teens and Peer Relationships



Social and emotional maturity are intertwined. Therefore, as teens' emotional maturity increases their relationships with their peers change as they become more

vulnerable and emotionally intimate with their peers. This increased vulnerability and intimacy requires greater trust among peers. Thus, during the adolescent years, teen peer groups become increasingly important as teens experience more closeness in these friendships and more gratifying relationships with their peers as a result. Teens now turn to one another, instead of their families, as their first line of support during times of worry or upset. This increased reliance on friendships is yet another way that teens demonstrate their growing independence. [Full article:](#)

More Kids Being Poisoned By Prescription Drugs

As the number of adults taking prescription drugs has grown, so has the number of children being accidentally poisoned by them, a new study finds.

"We found that rates of pediatric exposure to adult medications were increasing," said lead researcher Dr. Lindsey Burghardt, from the division of emergency medicine at Boston Children's Hospital. [Full article:](#)

Nicotine 'e-liquids' A Serious Health Threat

The so-called "e-liquids" -- which are the key ingredients in e-cigarettes -- are extracted from tobacco and enhanced with flavorings, colorings and various chemicals, *The New York Times* reported.

The liquids, which come in small bottles that people keep on hand in order to refill their e-cigarettes, are not regulated by the federal government.



E-liquids are powerful neurotoxins that can cause vomiting, seizures and even death when small amounts are ingested or absorbed through the skin. A small child can be killed by only a teaspoon of even highly diluted e-liquid, according to *The Times*.

Experts warn that children are at special risk because they may be attracted by e-liquids' bright colors and appealing flavors such as bubble gum, chocolate and cherry.

"It's not a matter of if a child will be seriously poisoned or killed," Lee Cantrell, director of the [San Diego](#) division of the California Poison Control System and a professor of pharmacy at [the University of California](#), San Francisco, told *The Times*. "It's a matter of when."

Just 1.5 Hours of TV a Day May Disrupt Kids' Sleep, Study Says

Kids who watch as little as 1.5 hours of TV a day may get less sleep than those who don't watch as much television, according to a new study from Spain.



Moreover, as overall TV-watching increases, essential sleep time declines, the study of more than 1,700 youngsters found. "Television could modify the level of sleep in young children," said lead researcher Marcella Marinelli, who's with the Center for Research in Environmental Epidemiology, in Barcelona. Reduced sleep could be a risk factor for obesity and behavioral problems such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, she added.

It's known that TV-watching affects many functions in children, including school performance, weight and development, added Dr. Adriana Cadilla, a pediatrician at Miami Children's Hospital in Florida.

The remedy is to not use TV as a babysitter, to limit the amount of TV kids watch, and monitor the programs they see, these experts said. [Full article:](#)

Students Experience Less Bullying, Fear at School

by Nirvi Shah

Middle school students aren't hurling names and epithets like they used to or being targeted by hate-related graffiti at school as much as in the past. And they are less afraid of being attacked or harmed at school and less likely to avoid certain places within their schools for fear of an attack than they have been in the past, new studies show. [Full article:](#)

Five Things to Know About Opioid OD's

The abuse of opioids - a group of drugs that includes heroin and prescription painkillers - is having a devastating impact on public health and safety in communities across the Nation. With the amount of media attention focused on overdoses right now, it's important to know the basics about the opioid overdose epidemic. [Read more:](#)



Proposed rules from the USDA Would Ban In-School Advertising for Unhealthy Foods

"Presently there is food and beverage advertising in 70% of elementary schools and middle schools and 90% of high schools." [Read more:](#)