



Southeast Harris Community Coalition



Bringing the pieces together to protect our youth and communities from substance abuse

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## **COMMUNITY-WIDE CAMPAIGN AIMS TO RAISE AWARENESS OF BINGE DRINKING**

A new binge drinking awareness campaign has been launched by the Southeast Harris Community Coalition (SEHCC) to encourage the public to think about how much they drink and to know the limits when it comes to alcohol. The goal of this campaign is to reduce binge drinking and other alcohol-related problems in the community. The National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking that brings a person's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 grams percent or above. This typically happens when men consume 5 or more drinks, and when women consume 4 or more drinks, in about 2 hours.

The campaign will raise awareness through hard hitting advertising that highlights the impact that this style of drinking can have on health. These posters will be placed in bathroom stalls at various retail establishments that sell alcohol and also on college campuses throughout Southeast Harris County.

"Many of us on college campuses and in the local communities where our institutions are located have been focusing on the problem of high-risk binge drinking for awhile now," said Howard Bushart, Division Chair Allied Health Division of Lee College. "But if we are going to succeed in addressing this public health issue, we need the interest and support of the general public."

"We have long recognized that students sometimes indulge in excessive drinking, particularly first-year students who are experiencing new freedoms and responsibilities for themselves. This is not a simple problem and there is no simple solution."

Bushart noted that "it is not unusual for students who come to our colleges and universities to already be experienced binge drinkers. It may be too late for some of those students if we wait until they begin college to address the problem. Too many students are ending up in the emergency rooms of local hospitals. Students are dropping out of college before graduating, and much of the crime involving college students—including assaults, vandalism, disorderly conduct and sexual assault—are related to the excessive consumption of alcohol.

"If we can reduce the amount of high-risk drinking taking place," said Vanessa Ayala of the Southeast Harris Community Coalition, "we can save lives and we can make our community a safer place."

Ayala also noted that it is "important to understand that the kind of drinking going on today is very different from what parents might remember when they attended high school or college. For some young people, it is drinking with the sole purpose of getting intoxicated."

Funding for this media campaign has been provided by the Department of State and Health Services.

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