

CDC Town Hall Teleconference

Teen Drinking and Driving: A Dangerous Mix
Q&A

October 9, 2012
2:00pm – 3:00pm EDT

Judith Monroe: This is Judy Monroe again. Thank you, both to Katy and to Ruth for those excellent presentations. You know, Katy, as you were talking about seizing the opportunity in the face of tragedy, I remembered that in West Virginia a few years ago, after a coal mining accident - where they really did seize that tragedy. I think within a three-day period the state legislators in West Virginia had already passed laws for better safety with coal mining.

And I think your story about, you know, the missed opportunity and the tragedies that are taking the front-page news are prime opportunities for folks to seize upon those to help change policy and drive safer environments. We're going to move on to questions here, so I'd like to remind everyone that you can get in the queue to ask a question by pressing star 1.

You'll need to record your name when prompted, and then you will be announced into the conference by the operator when it's your turn to ask a question. I do encourage you to take advantage now of this opportunity to share your strategies, lessons learned, challenges and success stories.

So while the operator is getting our questions ready, I have a question, Ruth, for you on the map that you showed us. There were a number of white states where we do not have data. What can be done about that? Are there some strategies to be able to get that data? Was that on the youth risk, the YRBS that that data was determined?

Ruth Shults: Yes, yes. It was the 2011 YRBS. And there are a number of reasons why we don't have data from those nine states, and they include, a couple of states do their own survey. They don't do the YRBS; they do something similar. A couple of states actually did the YRBS survey, but their response rate wasn't high enough to be included in the CDC data.

And lastly, a couple of states did the YRBS, but they didn't ask the drinking and driving question. So there are opportunities to increase the number of states that report that question.

Judith Monroe: Yes, so that'd be great. Anyone from any of those states that don't have the data, it would be great to see some strategies put into place to try to increase that number of states where we have data. So let me turn to the operator. Do we have questions in the queue?

Coordinator: And at this time we have no questions in the queue. And again, once again, for those on the phone if you'd like to ask an audio question over the phone please press star 1 on your touch-tone phone, and please record your name clearly when prompted. One moment as we wait for our next questions.

And we do have a question joining, one moment as it joins the queue and let me grab the name. And our first question comes from the line of Cindy Campbell. Your line is open, ma'am.

Cindy Campbell: Hi, good afternoon. I'm calling from the Massachusetts Highway Safety Division, and we run a lot of programs to help to curb underage drinking. And I just wanted to get your thoughts, one of the things that we do every year is we appeal to student athletes.

And we have conferences every year for student athletes, and what we do is we try to empower them as maybe some kids in the school look up to them, and empower them to sort of be good role models for their peers. But I wanted to just kind of throw the question out: Does anyone else target student athletes as a particular segment of the population?

Ruth Shults: This is Ruth Shults, and I'm not aware of any published studies that have specifically targeted student athletes, but I'd like to hear from anyone on the line who may have a program. I think that the evidence is gathering on the effectiveness of social norms approaches, and this sounds like a type of social norm approach.

And there is some effectiveness data out there on social norm approaches, particularly in the college age students, less maybe in the high school age students.

Judith Monroe: This is Judy Monroe. As folks are waiting, one of the things, when I was a State Health Officer in Indiana before coming to CDC, we engaged Payton Manning, the quarterback of the Colts at that time. Of course, now he's with Denver, so that's another story.

But we engaged Payton Manning to help us with some of our health messages, which was, you know, very powerful because so many of our youth as well as adults looked up to him as an icon. So, maybe a corollary to that suggestion too. I love the idea of engaging the student athletes. That'd be interesting to pair that with professional athletes that are, you know, notable in each of the jurisdictions.

Katherine Gonzalez: And this is Katy. Just to piggyback on that, I think it's really important if you are going to go through messaging, you know, for student athletes and

using them as role models, to complement that with working with their parents and adult figures in the community because, you know, students are really responsive to peer pressure and social pressures and things.

And so another line of defense is just making sure that, you know, parents aren't permitting alcohol within the home and letting people drive and things. And so having a multi-faceted approach which targets both the parents - or the students and then the parents would be really effective.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from the line of Ms. Tutrecia Giles. Your line is open.

Tutrecia Giles: Yes, I'm with the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department in Washington State, so one of the states you mentioned that you didn't have any data from as far as that one survey. But we do the Healthy Youth Survey here.

But my comment is more about when you look at preventing access at parties. I looked at some research around community party programs, where the community identifies locations where they have chronic youth, well parties where youth are receiving alcohol, and identifying those locations for police officers so that they could come there and, you know, disperse the party.

But if the party occurs often, that they're put on the list, and they're able to kind of be reimbursed for the time that officers have to come to their home. And has anybody had any experience with that type of a program?

Ruth Shults: This is Ruth Shults, and I am aware of a program that I helped actually get evaluated in the State of California looking at the State University system using an intervention similar to that. It's targeting homes and locations where the off campus parties occur and alcohol is drunk.

And the primary approach is to increase the penalties for repeat offenders. And it's found to have been effective in college students. Again, we don't have data on high school students.

Tutrecia Giles: Thank you.

Coordinator: And at this time we have no other questions in the queue.

Judith Monroe: This is Judy Monroe again. You know, it was probably before the host liability issue, but I can remember an incident in Indiana where a rather prominent family actually had allowed drinking in their home.

This was a few years ago, and then some of the kids left, and they were in a pretty bad accident. I think there may have been a death involved. And that was, made such news at the time. I'm wondering, with the new host liability - anyone on the call -- are they in the news? Are they publicized, when the host is held liable? How much attention does that get, publicly?

Coordinator: And again if you'd like to comment please press star 1 on your touch-tone phone and please record your name clearly when prompted.

Katherine Gonzalez: While we wait for some responses, I will say that in Michigan some of the things that we hear the most about in the media are educators. So maybe a high school student or someone in the school district who, you know, their kids are drinking or holding a party, those are the ones that really make the news.

But unless there's a major tragedy we don't hear too much about social host issues or penalties associated with that.

Judith Monroe: Yes, because I'm just wondering, I mean, if that can be publicized that there's, you know, there is liability for those that may help decrease that. So the question becomes how to, you know, how to make that more public. And I guess maybe a corollary question to that then is with this whole topic of teens and drinking at the local level. I think you mentioned some of that.

I'm trying to think of that age group, 16.... You're getting a little bit out of the scouts, maybe out of the Girl Scout and Boy Scout range, but I'm wondering who else? Or, who have been really good partners to help carry the message outside of the schools?

Coordinator: And we do have a party in queue. Our next party - next question or comment comes from the line of Cindy Campbell. Your line is open.

Cindy Campbell: Hi. Yes, I just wanted to add, when you were talking about the social host law and, you know, wondering about how much this is actually publicized in the press, I can tell you there have been some cases in Massachusetts, but it sort of seems to be something that they focus on for a day or two and then it just kind of goes away.

I think one of the most prevalent aspects of all of this, is that it may not be taken as seriously as it could have is because I think that we need to get more lawyers involved to do presentations at various conferences where we bring partners together and we really talk about what is the social host law? A lot of the conferences we do, many of the students don't even know what it is. And who's to say whether their parents do?

And then the second comment I wanted to make was that at least here in Massachusetts, when we do round tables, forums speaking with parents about their kids' drinking, a lot of times parents think that their kids are safer in their

own home being "supervised" than they are being somewhere else and drinking.

I think the line is that people think that if kids are going to drink then they want them at their own home, which is obviously counterproductive, but it is unfortunately things that parents think.

Judith Monroe: I would agree with that. I think that's probably a pretty prevalent thought, yes, that they're safer in their homes. Yes, so it does seem like more presentations reaching the adult audience, the parents of the teens to make them aware of this liability, and the role that they're playing in allowing the activity.

Coordinator: And at this time we have no other queues - no other parties in the queue at this time.

Judith Monroe: Okay, we'll give folks another minute or so to see if they have other questions or comments...

Coordinator: And we do have another question joining. One moment, let me grab the name. Actually we have two, one moment. And our next question comes from the line of Bobbi Brooks. Your line is open.

Bobbi Brooks: Yes, I'm with Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service, and we work with 4-H to carry the message about alcohol awareness across the State of Texas. So they may be too old for the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, but we've found that we work well with 4-H.

Judith Monroe: So that's a great suggestion. And then, you know, as I think about it too, the Land Grant Universities would be natural partners as well, then -- like with the extension offices, thinking about 4-H. That's a great idea.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from the line of Laura Dean Mooney. Your line is open.

Laura Dean Mooney: Hi, it's Laura Dean Mooney. I'm also from Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service at Texas A&M University. And one of our objectives for next year is doing screening and brief intervention training for healthcare professionals. We've found that that is, and it's a best practice, and it's actually a five star effectiveness program.

But we're trying to figure out ways to do that since we are not medical professionals ourselves. I was just wondering if there are any ideas other than, of course, using the NIAAA tool for the Practitioner's Guide, but to reach out to those medical professionals coming from us as non-medical professionals. Any help?

Judith Monroe: So I'll jump in - this is Judy Monroe, and then turn to others that may have ideas. One of the things that we're, we've actually started here in OSTLTS, the Office of State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support, is an outreach to residency programs in primary care. And this particular topic would be very - this would be prime to reach out to residency programs.

So maybe we can talk further off line about what we're engaging in. We also have interest from nursing and a number of other professions that would like to join in. One of the ways we do that is through some conference calls like this.

I'm not sure if we have any primary care physicians on the call today from residency programs, but this is exactly the type of education that we're trying to, that has public health impact that we want to drive to the providers. And I

believe, you know, it certainly can be packaged and communicated in a way that it shouldn't be prohibitive that it's coming from - as long as it's coming from knowledgeable sources, it shouldn't be prohibitive.

So maybe we talk of line further about this.

Laura Dean Mooney: Perfect, great idea.

Coordinator: And once again, if you'd like to ask an audio question or make a comment please press star 1 and please record your name clearly when prompted. One moment as we wait for our next comments or question.

Judith Monroe: While we're waiting, Ruth, do you have anything to add about that, with the health professionals? Because I'm a family physician by training, myself and I, certainly as I was looking through the materials, I mean, it does drive home what the health professionals, the role that they can play if they in fact are doing the screening and bringing this up in visits.

Ruth Shults: I'm thinking back on projects that (NSSA) has done. I know that they have had an association with the Organization of Emergency Room Nurses. So that's one other group who might be available to do that kind of parent education in the community.

Coordinator: And we do have another question in the queue. Are you ready to take at this time? And it does come from the line of Ms. Tutrecia Giles. Your line is open.

Tutrecia Giles: Okay, thank you. Another, I guess, question I have is our state just - Washington State just privatized the sale of alcohol. And we've been looking at the environment that this, of the stores and try and take into consideration theft

and different things that might increase access to alcohol for our youth population.

Anyone have any, I guess, any efforts that they're doing as far as reaching out to retailers around alcohol sales, or prevention of access?

Ruth Shults: This is Ruth Shults, and I might mention that the Community Guide has a review looking at enhanced enforcement of many (illegal) drinking age laws and this typically involves people who are, look like they're age 21, typically they are 21 years old, going in and trying to purchase alcohol at outlets. And there's good evidence that those kinds of activities do reduce consumption among young people. So there is some evidence for that.

Tutrecia Giles: Thank you.

Katherine Gonzalez: And this is Katy. We are also going through some similar efforts here in Michigan. I know they're loosening some of the recommendations around our alcohol control, and I know for the State of Washington it's really concerning because big box stores or big warehouse stores like Costco, their profits are actually very, very small, and so how they generate a lot of money is by selling a high volume.

So in terms of alcohol, the research has demonstrated that that really is detrimental in terms of, you know, once availability increases and consumption goes up, then a lot of these alcohol related negative outcomes, you know, also increase too. So we are sort of following the, you know, the changes that are happening here in Michigan and working closely with the retailers.

Obviously, you know, it's constantly evolving, and I think one of the best things that we can do is just measure the impact of change, how the policy affects outcomes, and then, you know, keep educating the community and policy makers about the impact of that.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from the line of Mr. Tom Perry. Your line is open, sir.

Tom Perry: Thank you. In South Carolina, we use a lot of compliance check data. We work very closely with local law enforcement. They use underage buyers to go into these problem areas -- that could be a store -- it could be a Wal-Mart, like you were talking about, the big box stores.

And if there is a sale that occurs, those people are cited. There is a hefty fine, and they also have to go through an educational program in order to keep their jobs, many times. So it, that data is out there. It's showing a decrease. And I think if you do partner with your local law enforcement along those lines, that you can get some positive results.

Katherine Gonzalez: I think that's a good point. This is Katy again. One of the things that we're finding here in Michigan is that the compliance checks, you know, most of our retailers actually do pretty well. They're at 90% or higher for sales to a minor or for an on-premise retailer, you know, sale to an intoxicated individual and so...

Tom Perry: Exactly.

Katherine Gonzalez:...One of the things that we've been, you know, recommending or pushing communities to do is that for local fairs and festivals, which server training isn't required, so a volunteer could serve alcohol, is to have compliance checks happen on those days, because those...

Tom Perry: Yes.

Katherine Gonzalez:...seems to be an issue in terms of serving not only to minors but also to intoxicated people as well.

Tom Perry: Very much so.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from the line of Pat Morgan. Your line is open.

Pat Morgan: Yes, I'm with the Institute for Public Strategies in Southern California. I wanted to touch a little bit on social host liability. Several cities out here have enacted social host ordinances, and I would say probably the number one partner that communities need in this is law enforcement, because these ordinances really have no effect or any teeth without, you know, law enforcement agencies who are willing to go out and enforce those ordinances.

And while some of them have, you know, normally relatively low fines associated with them, some law enforcement agencies do go through the cost recovery process. In other words, in addition to any fines that the host would face, they would also be faced with having to, you know, foot the bill for the cost to law enforcement for coming out to these calls.

And that would especially affect, I guess, repeat offenders. And as far as the argument by some parents that they want their teenagers to drink at home because it's safe, we've found also that there are other parents who are very vocal in their opposition to other parents making that decision for their own teens.

That what may be okay for, you know, it may be okay for a person to have their own teen and make that decision, but other parents, you know, don't want their teen going over to a friend's house and being able to have access to alcohol and potentially be involved in drunk driving and that sort of thing. So that's sort of the big argument against sort of that attitude of sort of rite of passage and offering a safe environment.

Katherine Gonzalez: This is Katy. I think that's a great point, because not only is it, you know, could possibly, if enforced correctly and regularly it, you know, could deter parents that, you know, repeat offenders from hosting parties and supplying alcohol, but it could also make up some of this lost revenue possibly for local law enforcement, depending on the fees and fines. So, you know, it's a win-win situation, ideally.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from the line of (Dr. David Headley). Your line is open.

(David Headley): I'm in family practice here in Indiana, and this isn't related to exactly the teenage drinkers, but I might say that a number of years ago, our county hospital administrator threw a Christmas party in his house. And he had this punch, Christmas punch. And the different staff, medical staff, of the hospital were invited.

There weren't any teenagers there, to my knowledge, although I think he had some kids. But anyhow, he spiked the punch, and it was unbeknownst to all of us, I guess. I don't drink alcohol myself. But the punch tasted good, and I understand that I got a little happy there.

But I can see that after it all happened that to drink something that's spiked and you don't know it, you might, if they do that to teenagers, why that would

be certainly risky. I didn't have to drive. Some people may have had to drive a distance, but anyhow, it - that surreptitious spiking of a punch might be - that sounds a little illegal, too. So I just thought I'd throw that in.

Judith Monroe: Well, thanks for that. And a story from Indiana, no less.

(David Headley): Yes, thank you.

Judith Monroe: Yes, thanks.

Coordinator: And our next question comes from the line of Patty McClure with the, I think it's the Oregon DOT. Your line is open, ma'am, and please take your phone off mute.

Patty McClure: We did a survey in a county of about 25,000 people, and the question - we had a couple of questions on underage drinking with teens. And one was, where do you think your child gets their alcohol? Seventy-seven percent said that they got it at home. The other question was, do you lock up or monitor your alcohol, and it was only 3%.

So maybe that's another avenue in which we should be looking as far as educating the parents to make sure they lock up their liquor and monitor their beer in their fridge.

Judith Monroe: Boy, that's an excellent point. Both of those, the last two comments, very good.

Ruth Shults: Yes, and this is Ruth Shults, I might just add to that. Thank you, Patty, I appreciate your comment. And one of the things that we have seen through the YRBS survey of (retirements) that high school students are somewhat moving away from beer, to drinking spirits.

And I think that plays into the issue that you were talking about, that parents aren't maybe being as vigilant as they should about watching their own alcohol supply. And teens find it easier to transport spirits. There are a lot of conveniences with spirits over beer, and I think it's a pattern that we need to be aware of and make parents aware of.

And I might just take one other closing comment, something that I've appreciated about today's discussion is just how important it is that the efforts go on at the community level and community by community, every state and community needs to have their own information about teen drinking and driving and alcohol consumption, and adaptive programs (to lead a) local community.

Coordinator: And at this time we have no other questions in the queue.

Judith Monroe: Okay, well thank you, and we are coming to the top of the hour here, so a few closing comments as well. Actually, before we close, please take a moment and look at the next to the last slide in the PowerPoint presentation, that would be Slide 26. And on this slide you'll find a number of ways to stay connected and integrate Vital Signs into your Web sites and social media channels for free.

One, you can become a fan on Facebook, you can follow us on Twitter. I highly recommend that you syndicate Vital Signs onto your own Web site so that it automatically will appear and update on your sites, and that's all for free. Additionally you can download interactive Web buttons and banners for your sites to help us spread the word about Vital Signs and the important messages that come out each month.

Lastly, please let us know how we can improve these teleconferences to be more beneficial to you, and please feel free to email your suggestions to ostltsfeedback@cdc.gov, that's O-S-T-L-T-S, feedback, all one word, at cdc.gov. Thanks again to our presenters and all of you who participated on the call today, great call. Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you, and at this time your call has concluded. You may disconnect at this time. Once again, your call has concluded, you may disconnect at this time. Thank you and have a great day.

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