

Alcohol on Campus

A Message to Parents

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Parents: You Can Help Influence Your Student's Decisions Regarding Alcohol Use at College

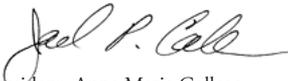
Dear Parents & Guardians:

The members of the Colleges of Worcester Consortium welcome you and your student to the Greater Worcester area.

The college experience is a time when students will make new friends, try new things, assume new responsibilities, and sometimes face peer pressure and difficult life choices. Among these difficult life choices is the use of alcohol. Many consider the use of alcohol during the college years as a "rite of passage." While the number of college students who choose not to drink continues to rise, heavy drinking by students remains a significant national concern for colleges and universities.

We are acutely aware that a parent or guardian plays an important and influential role in the life of a student throughout the college years. This brochure is designed to facilitate discussions between parents or guardians and their students about making educated and safe choices in regard to the use of alcohol. We hope you will find the information provided in this brochure helpful in these ongoing discussions.

Sincerely,



President, Anna Maria College



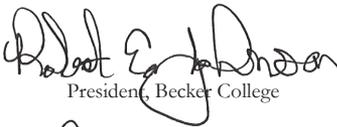
President, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences



President, Assumption College



President, Nichols College



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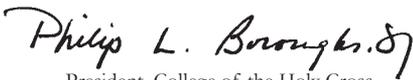
President, Quinsigamond Community College



President, Clark University



Chancellor, UMass Medical School



President, College of the Holy Cross



President, Worcester Polytechnic Institute



Dean, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University



President, Worcester State University

Alcohol Use and Abuse by College Students

National research indicates that some students choose not to drink. However, many college students (82%) do drink alcohol, and some of these students engage in heavy (high-risk) drinking.¹

High-risk drinking negatively effects academic success, involvement in campus life, and often includes behavior associated with physical violence. Colleges nationwide estimate that in 41% of crimes experienced by college students, the offender was perceived to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.²

Students tell us that as a result of their alcohol use, they have experienced memory loss (32%), done something they later regretted (34%), missed

a class (26%), or have been in an argument or fight (30%)³.

A study by the NIH has shown that first year women are more likely to be assaulted during their first six weeks of school.

The Department of Justice reports that one in five college women will experience dating violence during their college career.

These behaviors effect not only the user but also the moderate drinker and non-user. When others drink too much, second-hand effects experienced by the moderate drinker or non-user include: disrupted study or sleep time, the need to take care of an intoxicated person, and property damage.

Consider this formula:



Source:

¹CORE Survey data, 2011

²ACHA Campus Violence White Paper, 2/5/05

³CORE Survey, 2011



College students of the City of Worcester:

First of all, I would like to welcome you to the City of Worcester and congratulate you on your excellent choice of locations to attend college. Worcester is a great city and has quite a bit to offer each and every person who visits. As you are well aware, these next four years are the most important years of your life, and the choices you make during these years will be crucially important for your future.

As the head of the Alcohol Enforcement Unit for the City of Worcester Police Department we are charged with enforcing underage drinking laws as well as all alcohol related laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Officers assigned to the Alcohol Enforcement Unit are proactive and perform their duties in both uniform and plain clothes.

The statistics provided in this pamphlet give you a small snapshot as to why we in the City of Worcester Police Department put so much into enforcement of the underage drinking laws in Massachusetts. The reality is that about 5% of all four-year college students are involved with the local/city police or campus police as a result of their drinking and an estimated 110,000 students (nationally) between the ages of 18-24 are arrested for an alcohol related violation such as public drunkenness or DUI.

Unlike other large cities throughout New England and the Northeast, our city provides a full time Alcohol Enforcement Unit to enforce these laws and to educate the public and its students. Finally, enjoy your college years and make the most out of what this academic/social city has to offer. Please feel free to call us at any time with any alcohol or police related questions @ 508-799-8649.

Lt. James J. Johnson
Worcester Police Department
Alcohol Enforcement Unit
(508)799-8649



What Parents Need to Know

Alcohol & Academics

- ◆ Even small amounts of alcohol (.03 Blood Alcohol Concentration or BAC) can affect brain functioning for a period of time after drinking.¹
- ◆ Studies have shown that consuming 5 or more drinks in one night can affect brain functioning for up to three days, and two consecutive nights of 5 or more drinks can affect the brain for up to five days.
This means if a student drinks 5 or more drinks every Friday and Saturday night, their brain is just about back to optimum functioning by the following Friday... just in time for another weekend of drinking.²
- ◆ Nationally, students with an **A average** report they either choose not to drink, or they never drink more than 1 to 3 drinks in a week.³

College Students & Drinking Trends

- ◆ Most college students experience alcohol-related problems well below the level of legal intoxication (0.08 BAC). Lower levels of BAC lead to enough of a decrease in cognition and psychomotor skills that many students are experiencing serious negative consequences in health and safety areas.⁴

- ◆ Alcohol has a significant impact on academic performance, social relationships, risk-taking behaviors, and the health of college students who fall into the heavy drinking category (5 drinks in one sitting for men, 4 drinks for women)⁵
- ◆ Hard alcohol (vodka, rum, etc.) is replacing beer as “the drink of choice” for many college students. Additionally, some college students choose to pre-game (drinking before one goes out) and/or participate in drinking games. Students who engage in these behaviors are more likely to experience negative side effects associated with drinking, and are not as likely to use protective factors such as keeping count of their drinks.⁶
- ◆ The Department of Justice estimates that between **50% and 80% of dating violence on campus** is alcohol related.
- ◆ Students should be cautious about what they post in **social media sites** such as Facebook and Twitter. Colleges and future employers consider the social media background of applicants.

Source:

¹ Verster, van Duin, Volkerts, Schreuder & Verbaten, Alcohol hangover effects on memory functioning and vigilance performance after an evening of binge drinking, *Neuropsychopharmacology*, 2003

² University of Cincinnati, Possible brain damage in young adult binge-drinkers revealed in new study, *ScienceDaily*, 2011.

³ Presley, Leichter, Meilman, Alcohol and drugs on American campuses: Findings from 1995, 1996, and 1997. A report to college presidents, 1999.

⁴ Wechsler & Nelson, What we have learned from the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study: Focusing attention on college student alcohol consumption and the environmental conditions that promote it, *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 2008.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Outside The Classroom Survey Data, 2011

Reality vs. Perception

While many students perceive that everyone around them is drinking alcohol at high levels, the reality is quite different. National data shows the number of abstainers and low-risk drinkers entering college has been steadily increasing every year:

- ◆ The average college student drinks **4.6 drinks in a week.**⁷
- ◆ Not everyone is drinking every week... when the Class of 2015 was asked to self report their use of alcohol, 56% reported not drinking at all in the previous 2 weeks, and 16% reported Light/Moderate (1 to 3 for women, 1 to 4 for men) drinking patterns.⁸
- ◆ National data on the Class of 2015 shows 33% choosing not to drink alcohol at all.⁹

The Law

- ◆ If you use false identification you risk being charged with a felony in the state of Massachusetts.
- ◆ The City of Worcester and Worcester County holds students accountable for their behavior within the community. Encourage your student to be a good neighbor when they are at off-campus venues.
- ◆ In the state of Massachusetts it is illegal to transport alcohol in your vehicle if you are under the age of 21.
- ◆ Under the law, those who are incapacitated as a result of alcohol

or other drug consumption may never give consent to sexual activity (voluntary or involuntary).

Alcohol & Student Athletes

- ◆ The NCAA is committed to the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse. If your student is a student athlete, ensure that your student is aware how drinking can impact his/her ability to compete at the highest level.¹⁰
- ◆ Eighty-five percent of student athletes, who reported using alcohol in the past year, consumed an average of 2 – 3 times a week.¹¹

Top 5 Reasons NOT to Drink Reported by the Class of 2015:¹²

1. Drinking interferes with my school work (50%)
2. I am worried about being caught by authorities (46%)
3. People I care about would disapprove (43%)
4. I don't like being around others who are drinking (30%)
5. Drinking interferes with my athletic activities (27%)

It's Not Just Alcohol Anymore...

- ◆ 30% of college students report using marijuana in the past year and 17% report using in the past 30 days¹³
- ◆ 12% of college students have used an illegal drug other than marijuana in the past year, and 6% report using in the past 30 days¹⁴
- ◆ Nationally, colleges are reporting the increased illicit use of prescription medication use by college students.

Source:

⁷ Core Survey Data, 2011

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ Outside The Classroom Survey Data, 2011

¹⁰ NCAA Study of Substance Use Habits of College Student Athletes, 2006

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Outside The Classroom Data, 2011

¹³ Core Survey Data, 2011

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Tips for Parents

Talk with your student about the freedoms and responsibilities that come with being at college.

- ◆ Call your student frequently to find out how he or she is doing.
- ◆ Ask about the social environment on campus.
- ◆ Avoid sharing stories that glorify college drinking.
- ◆ Share with your student if there is a family history of alcohol or drug problems.
- ◆ Continue to encourage open dialogue with your student.

Learn what your campus has to offer and encourage your student to get involved. Some possibilities are:

- ◆ Clubs and organizations
- ◆ Community service
- ◆ Sponsored trips and events
- ◆ Intramural sports, fitness classes or wellness activities
- ◆ Faculty sponsored lectures, speakers, and workshops

If Your Student Chooses to Drink

To make informed decisions about drinking, students should know about the law, the policy at the school he or she is attending, and the risks associated with drinking. Can underage drinking ever be considered “responsible”?

However you answer this question for yourself, acknowledging that college students typically engage in underage drinking at some level sets the stage for a discussion between you and your child. To help your student avoid becoming sick or getting into dangerous situations if he or she chooses to drink, here are some tips to share:

- ◆ Set a limit before you start drinking and stick to it.
- ◆ Make sure you have eaten a full meal before you start drinking.
- ◆ Drink slowly.
- ◆ Alternate non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks.
- ◆ Avoid drinking shots and drinking games.
- ◆ Don't leave your drink unattended or accept drinks from strangers. Underage students who attend 18+ club events are particularly vulnerable to this happening.

- ◆ Don't go to or leave parties alone.
- ◆ Abstain from drinking if you are on medication.

If Your Student Chooses to Abstain

- ◆ Reinforce that you value and support his/her decision.
- ◆ Identify the core reasons behind that personal decision (health, religion, family history, athletics, etc.)
- ◆ Help your student develop some strategies that will help him/her negotiate the college drinking culture.
- ◆ Challenge the popular but untrue myth that “there is nothing to do in college except drink”. Encourage your student to seek others who socialize without alcohol and/or drugs.
- ◆ Recognize that college is about maturation and personal development. Your student's attitudes around alcohol may evolve with time and exposure.



Communication and Involvement

Some suggestions...

For many parents, talking with your student about alcohol is not easy. Although ultimately your student will make his or her own choice about alcohol use, research shows that teens' relationships with their parents affects their drinking choices.

One study reported that teens who have an excellent relationship with one parent have risk scores 25% lower for binge drinking and teens who have an excellent relationship with both parents have risk scores 40% lower for binge drinking.¹

Discuss your student's perceptions and your expectations regarding his/her choices about alcohol use.

- ◆ Set clear expectations that your student will focus on his/her academic work and maintain a reasonable balance regarding involvement in campus life and socializing.

Discuss how peer influence may effect decisions.

- ◆ Support your student in his/her efforts to not drink or drink moderately.

Work together to agree upon reasonable limitations and develop a plan for safety of self and others.

- ◆ Discuss how your student will make his/her decisions about using alcohol.

- ◆ Discuss what your student will do if he/she attends a party where only alcoholic beverages are available.
- ◆ Ask your student to watch out for his or her peers who may be engaged in dangerous drinking.
- ◆ Enclosed is a list of resources for you and your student to use if help is needed.

Emphasize to your student that excessive alcohol consumption can have serious consequences.

- ◆ Discourage dangerous drinking and drinking games.
- ◆ Encourage your student to socialize without alcohol.

Encourage involvement in other aspects of campus life.

Research shows involvement in campus life enhances retention, student satisfaction and academic success.²

- ◆ Talk to your student about how he/she can get involved in campus student organizations.
- ◆ College is an opportunity to join a club or sport, hold a leadership position or become involved in community service. Participation in these kinds of activities can lead to lasting friendships and increase leadership skills.

Source:

¹ Wechsler, H., *Dying to Drink*, 2002

² Astin, A.A. *What Matters In College? Four Critical Years*, 1997

Resources for Parents

To help you get through the years as a parent or guardian of a college student, we recommend these resources:

Campus Resources

For contact information at your student's college, please refer to the back page.

Internet Resources

The Higher Education Center helps college and community leaders develop, implement and evaluate programs and policies to reduce student problems related to alcohol and other drug use and interpersonal violence.

www.higheredcenter.org

Collegedrinkingprevention.gov

is your one-stop resource for comprehensive, research-based information on issues related to alcohol abuse and binge drinking among college students. This site is maintained by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA).

www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov

AlcoholScreening.org is a service of **Join Together**, a project of the Boston University School of Public Health. On this site individuals can assess their own drinking pattern and level of risk.

www.alcoholscreening.org

Facts on Tap is a program designed to enhance campus-based alcohol prevention efforts.

www.factsontap.org

The Core Institute is the leading research, assessment and development organization serving alcohol and drug prevention programs across the nation.
www.core.siuc.edu/

Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education

provides confidential information about prevention and treatment in Massachusetts.

Call 1-800-327-5050 or go to:

<http://www.helpline-online.com/>

Suggested Reading

Coburn, Karen and Madge L. Treeger. *Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years* (4th Edition), 2003.

Dowdall, George W. *College Drinking: Reframing a Social Problem*, 2009

Savage, Majorie. *You're on Your Own (But I'm Here if You Need Me): Mentoring Your Child During the College Years*, 2003.

Seaman, Barry. *Binge: What Your College Student Won't Tell You*, 2005

Wechsler, Henry. *Dying to Drink: Confronting Binge Drinking on College Campuses*, 2002

Zailckas, Koren. *Smashed: Story of a Drunken Girlhood*, 2005

Campus Alcohol and Drug Contacts

Anna Maria College

Linda Aronson, MSN, RNC, NP
Director of Health Services
50 Sunset Lane
Paxton, MA 01612-1198
508-849-3458
laronson@annamaria.edu

Assumption College

Tracey Pakstis-Claiborne, Ed.D.
Director of Alcohol and
Drug Education Programs
500 Salisbury Street
Worcester, MA 01609
508-767-7308
tclaiborne@assumption.edu

Becker College

Wendy Miles, Ph.D.
Director of Counseling
61 Sever Street
Worcester, MA 01609
508-373-9544
wendy.miles@becker.edu

Clark University

Jason Zelesky, M.Ed.
Associate Dean of Students &
Wellness Outreach Coordinator
Dean of Students Office
950 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01610-1477
508-421-3724
jzelesky@clarku.edu

College of the Holy Cross

Fran Taylor, M.A.
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1 College Street, P.O. Box D
Worcester, MA 01610-2395
508-793-2302
ftaylor@holycross.edu

Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University

Debbie Quinn, M.A.
Director, Student Advisory & Health Administration Office
Administration Building, Room 223B
200 Westboro Road
North Grafton, MA 01536
508-839-5302, x84263
debbie.quinn@tufts.edu

Nichols College

Brian T. McCoy, Ed.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs/
Dean of Students
130 Center Road
Dudley, MA 01571
508-213-2216
brian.mccoy@nichols.edu

Quinsigamond Community College

Antoinette Raymond
Coordinator of Health and Wellness
670 West Boylston Street, Box 216
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Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI)

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COLLEGE



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BECKER COLLEGE



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UNIVERSITY | Veterinary Medicine



Holy Cross



MASSACHUSETTS
COLLEGE of PHARMACY
and HEALTH SCIENCES

