

Peak Time For Youth To Experiment With Alcohol

Emergency Room Stats Verify Risks of Underage Drinking in Manhasset

BY MANHASSET PRESS STAFF

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The holidays are a wonderful time for family gatherings and neighborhood parties. But did you know that underage drinking peaks in December with more than 11,000 youth in our nation using alcohol for the first time? Whether you're a parent, grandparent or guardian, Manhasset CASA asks you to be proactive by keeping track of your child's plans and connecting with other parents to ensure your t(w)een's health and safety this holiday season.

As a Drug Free Communities Grantee, Manhasset CASA implements the Bach Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment Survey biannually in grades 8, 10 and 12 at Manhasset High School. The survey provides an in-depth look at Manhasset youth problem behaviors including alcohol and drug use and exposure to risk and protective factors that influence these behaviors. While 30-day past use of alcohol has decreased since 2008 by 13 percent for eighth, tenth and 12th grade students, binge drinking (or

having 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row in the past two weeks) still exceeds national norms for our youth:

- 12th grade Manhasset students report binge drinking at 2.5 times the national rate and
- 10th grade Manhasset students report binge drinking at almost 2 times the national rate.

Emergency room statistics confirm the consequences of drinking for Manhasset teens. In 2013, 25

youth between the ages of 12-21 were treated and released from a New York State emergency room for alcohol and other drug related issues (SPARCS - New York State Department of Health).

The Flower Hill Women's Club recently partnered with Manhasset CASA to host a community forum, Underage Drinking: The Emergency Department Perspective presented by Lara Reda, MD, director of Quality Management, Department of Emergency Medicine at North Shore University Hospital. Dr. Reda provided parents with a comprehensive overview to why teens drink; how teen drinking is different from adult drinking; what is happening to our teens after a night of drinking; and how parents can prevent this dangerous teen behavior.

Dr. Reda discussed the importance of talking with their teens about the dangers of underage drinking. She noted the extent of Manhasset youth ending up in the emergency room and the importance of teens and adults calling 911 - as this just might save a life. Dr. Reda explained that when youth are brought to the emergency

room, the primary goal is their safety; there are no judgments and staff do not gossip. Dr. Reda stated that today's teens are mixing alcohol and other drugs. Co-ingestion increases the effect of alcohol and can lead to respiratory failure. Drugs such as benzodiazepines, opiates and club drugs can also cause further injury, sexual assault, depression/anxiety and suicide attempts.

Dr. Reda also emphasized that serving alcohol to minors is against the law under the Nassau County Social Host Law as well as the importance of parents connecting with each other to prevent underage drinking in the community. The presentation noted proactive parenting strategies in the prevention of underage drinking: Be a good role model; Be involved in your teen's lives; Make it easy for teens to share information about their lives; Know where and who your teens are with; Help them find ways to have fun without alcohol; Be open with them about dangerous situations; and help them get professional help when needed.

For more information about talking with your t(w)een about underage drinking, go to manhassetcasa.org.



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