



Welcome Back to School!

The Chemical Health Initiative of Goodhue County (CHI) would like to **Welcome YOU Back to the 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR!**

We are excited to start another school year in our effort to reduce youth substance use. We also recognize that our schools in Goodhue County play an integral part in decreasing youth drug, alcohol and tobacco use, and for this we thank you for your continued support and contributions and we value the impact schools make on our communities!

We are also excited to announce that the CHI has been awarded an additional five years of federal funding¹ to continue our county-wide efforts through 2015! During the next five years we will be focusing on reducing marijuana use, prescription drug abuse and youth alcohol use. These three substances were indicated² as those most abused or had the largest increases in use by our Goodhue County youth. Needless-to-say, this will take hard work and continued assistance from our community members to accomplish this task.

The Chemical Health Initiative will continue to work with each of our community sectors so everyone plays a part in reducing youth substance use. Because schools are often looked at as a key institution to educate and build awareness in our communities due to the number of contact hours our schools have with the youth every day, we want to be sure schools are not looked upon as **THE** key source of prevention. However, having said this, the schools *do* play a strong role in educating and sending prevention messages to our youth and parents. To assist the schools, the CHI School-based Chemical Health Specialist will help coordinate messages and educational opportunities the schools would like to provide to their community. In order to determine the needs in each school and community, the Chemical Health Specialist will continue to work with the Chemical Health Assessment Teams (CHAT) in each school district. If your school district does not have a CHAT formed yet, the Chemical Health Specialist will continue to work with each school district to determine next steps for implementation. If you are interested in being a part of your school district CHAT or would like more information on CHAT contact Julie Hatch, School-based Chemical Health Specialist, at 651-385-3307 or Julie.hatch@chi-goodhue.org.

¹ Federal Drug Free Communities Support Program and funding is a collaborative Federal program sponsored by Office of National Drug Control Policy and administered in partnership with Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Administration. For more information go to www.oncdp.gov/dfc

² Based on trend data from the 2004 Minnesota Student Survey Results and the 2008-2009 CHI Student Survey Results. For more information go to www.chi-goodhue.org

RESOURCES

JUST for TEACHERS!

Based on feedback from school staff in Goodhue County the CHI has updated the resources and lessons plans for teachers and school staff on its main website at www.chi-goodhue.org. Take a look and see what's NEW!

For PARENTS!

Check out the CHI Parent Network Website to connect with drug and alcohol prevention information just for PARENTS at www.chi-parentnetwork.org.

Safe Homes Parent Network!

The Safe Homes Parent Network is a parent pledge program that joins parents together to support one another in providing a safer social environment for our youth. It does not require any extra time, just a commitment to provide an alcohol and drug free environment when hosting youth in your home. The goal of Safe Homes Parent Network is to link committed parents together through the CHI's Parent Network website.

To join the Safe Homes Parent Network go to <http://www.chi-parentnetwork.org/2.html>

ARTICLE

Substance Use: It's Academic

Assistant Deputy Secretary Kevin Jennings

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It may be obvious but, as students across the country head back to school and colleges this fall, it bears repeating: young people who use alcohol and other drugs are much more likely to fail at school than those who don't. Tragically, many are addicted to failure.

I'm hardly going to win a Nobel Prize for making that statement, but some cold hard facts from the Centers for Disease Control's [Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) paint a very stark picture:

- Young people who are getting D's and F's are about twice as likely to be current alcohol users than those who get A's are (62% versus 32%, respectively)
- Young people who are getting D's and F's are about five times as likely to be current marijuana users than those who get A's are (48% versus 10% respectively)
- Young people who are getting D's and F's are a stunning 13 times as likely to be current cocaine users than those who get A's are (13% versus 1% respectively)

Now the researchers will say we cannot infer causation from these data associations. It is true that drug or alcohol abuse may be a symptom of mental health conditions, stress, or family problems but common sense tell us it's hard to study effectively if you are drunk or high.

The long-term consequences for these students of school failure are devastating. In twenty-first century America, success is going to depend increasingly on having a sound education. Jobs that a generation ago required only a high school diploma now require college degrees: "good jobs" that require little in the way of education are going to be as easy to find as a needle in a haystack. When a young person flunks out because of substance use, it's going to cost them for decades to come in terms of diminished prospects and lowered earnings. And it's going to cost our nation as young people who could have been productive, contributing members of society instead fail to achieve their potential.

At back to school time, it's worth reminding everyone that substance use is an education issue, as it undermines the ability of young people to succeed.

Kevin Jennings is Assistant Deputy Secretary for the U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools.

“One of the greatest gifts we can give our kids is a healthy, alcohol and drug free youth”