

The Solution



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Message From The Chair

I am personally pleased and honored to be writing this as your new Chair of the Coalition. I hope that I can be as efficient and effective as Dr. Howerton was during her tenure as Chairperson.

We are at a very exciting point in our evolution as a community group. Our commitment to “collaborating to impact our community” is increasingly being recognized and supported. As announced in the last issue, we received an important and prestigious \$500,000 federal grant over the next five years to support our organizational structure.

It is my pleasure to announce that the Harris Foundation of Charlotte has awarded us a \$100,000 grant, payable over three years, to facilitate our research efforts. We are grateful for this generous support. The Mecklenburg County ABC Board has also given us a grant to support the SPIDA youth efforts while the North Carolina Initiative Against Underage Drinking has supported another round of our alcohol purchase studies and Town Hall Meetings to be held later this Spring. We owe this to your steadfast commitment to the concept of a coalition and your energy and service to that end.

What distinguishes us as a group is the value we place on collaboration and on empirical research. Drug and alcohol abuse, whether by youth or adults, is a complex problem with no simple solution. It will take all of us, working together, to best focus our resources for the most effective impact.

The strength of the coalition is the openness and collaboration of our 80 plus agencies and organizations. The sharing of data and access to individual agency data allows the coalition to compile collective indicators of issues and to develop a “Big Picture” perspective. Last month we released the *Indicators Report*. That report, for the first time, included longitudinal data and trends, some were positive but many were negative and require our collective wisdom to address. While the data suggest that there has been some reduction in the amount of binge drinking, underage drinking remains a serious problem. In addition, around 70 percent of persons arrested for any charge test positive for some drug – generally marijuana or cocaine, but an increasingly significant number test positive for methamphetamine. What is most startling is that the greatest increase in use/abuse is for females and minorities – areas where we may need to focus more prevention and treatment efforts.

We have collectively done a lot to evolve ourselves into a recognized and respected community entity. With our baseline data in place we now have an opportunity to “get ahead of the curve” and begin to identify “potential” problems and to document them. It is your insight and your creativity that will enable us to increase the number of positive changes in the next *Indicators Report*.

Coalitions are fragile entities. As a coalition we exist for the purpose of collaboration and the sharing of information to affect positive community change – to assist the community and its political leaders to make choices based on facts rather than rhetoric. As has become our slogan: Some choices are forever...choose wisely!

Paul Friday, Ph. D.
Chairperson
pfriday@uncc.edu

Join the Solution...

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Circle of Meth

Methamphetamines affect everyone in our community. They have a second-hand effect, endangering neighborhoods and families while draining resources. Meth 360 is a national training program created by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. The training is delivered by teams made up of local law enforcement, prevention, and treatment providers. These professionals allow the program to provide a true “360-degree” view of the issues surrounding meth abuse. If you want more information or to schedule a Meth 360 presentation, call 704-375-DRUG or 704-376-7447.



Harris Foundation

In November 2007, the Coalition received a generous \$100,000 grant payable over three years from the Harris Foundation. This grant will help continue our data-based approach by enabling continual data collection and the annual production of our Indicators Report. We will be able to continue monitoring our community's capacity and gaps in service thus being better able to advocate collectively for resources. It is our intent to maximize our existing resources through the inter-agency linkages provided by participation in the Coalition.

Charger Goes to School

In the Fall of 2007, the Prevent Underage Drinking sub-committee explored ways to reach adults with messages about the dangers of underage drinking. Committee members volunteered to hand out refrigerator magnets containing information on how to report underage drinking to adults entering CMS high school football games. The Mecklenburg County ABC Board contacted the following high schools through their resource officers: Myers Park, South Mecklenburg, and North Mecklenburg and explained the intent of the Committee. They were welcomed by CMS and the ABC marked police unit joined to help send a message to parents that underage drinking is not a rite of passage; it's illegal.

Youth Lead Town Hall Meeting

Students Preventing and Informing on Drugs and Alcohol, SPIDA, is off and running again this school year. SPIDA has been meeting monthly at Vance High School and developed a Town Hall Meeting depicting the dangers of underage drinking for both youth and adults. It is March 6th at 6:00 pm at the McLeod Training Center located at 515 Clanton Road. For more information about SPIDA activities or the town hall meeting, please call 704-375-3784 ext 21.

Keeping Communities Safe

SAFE HOMES is a parent pledge program geared to raise awareness about alcohol and substance abuse among youth and encourage parents to join together to address this problem. The heart of the program is the parents' pledge to supervise youth at home and to forbid the use of alcohol, drugs, and firearms. The SAFE HOMES program will provide the community with a much needed approach to prevent underage drinking by directly decreasing the number of parents who provide their children with alcohol. Substance Abuse Prevention Services in collaboration with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department Neighborhood Watch Program will work together to implement Safe Home neighborhood talks while working to achieve a common goal—to create safer communities and decrease illegal activity. For more information on SAFE HOMES or to schedule a talk, please call 704-375-3784.



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“Some choices are forever . . .”

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Drug Free Coalition announced plans for a "Choose Wisely" promotion campaign at the press conference for the Substance Abuse Indicators Report on January 18, 2008. The campaign's tagline, "Some Choices are Forever...Choose Wisely", is designed to raise awareness of substance abuse problems and available services in the community. As part of the campaign, the Coalition will feature a redesigned website that will target parents/adults, students/youth, and community members.

To watch the progress, visit www.drugfreecharlotte.org.



CMS “Rocks”

For more than a decade, Substance Abuse Awareness Month (SAAM) in Charlotte - Mecklenburg County has been fun-filled but always with a serious Drug Free message. Students, parents, young adults, and senior citizens supported the first Anti-Drug Pep Rally and football game at Quail Hollow Middle School. Waddell High, McClintock Middle, and Idlewild Elementary won the annual SAAM Scrap Book Contest Award given at the game. These events coincided with First Lady Mary Easley's launch of a statewide Underage Drinking Campaign for both middle and high school students. Read the full article in “My School Rocks” at www.myschoolrocks.com.



Here's a hot TIP!

Training in Intervention Procedure, TIPS, is an educational program designed to communicate the skills and knowledge individuals need to make sound decisions about alcohol sales and service. Research has documented that areas with TIPS trained staff yielded significantly lower DUI's and consumers of alcohol had lower BAC levels (see <http://www.gettips.com/success.shtml>). On November 28 and 29, 2007, the Wellness Promotion Department at UNC Charlotte hosted a TIPS train the trainer program for 3 of its staff and 4 members of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Drug Free Coalition. The training was provided by Gig Robinson, a Master Trainer of the TIPS program. This 2-day training certified all of the participants as trainers of the TIPS program. Individuals responsible for the sales and distribution of alcohol (bartenders, waiters, waitresses, etc.) in the surrounding campus community are the targeted populations. The team of newly certified TIPS trainers will solicit area bars in which UNC Charlotte students frequent in the hopes to provide the TIPS training to at least 50 servers and to 4 or more establishments.



District Attorney Peter S. Gilchrist III (left) and Assistant Public Defender Bob Ward (right).

Join the Solution...

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Dr. Paul Friday

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Substance Abuse
Prevention Services

Newsletter Committee

Chair: Tonda Wilde

Andrea Anselmi

Mary Ward

Mary Howerton

Patrick Vaca

Leslie Dill

Terrence Elliott

Dates to remember . . .

- SPIDA Town Hall
Date: Thursday, March 6th 2008
Time: 6:00pm - 8:00pm
Location: McLeod Training Center, 515 Clanton Road
For more information call 704-374-3784 ext. 12
- A&E TV Town Hall Meeting featuring Interventionist Speaker Jeff VanVonderen
Date: Wednesday, March 12th 2008
Time: 5:30pm
Location: ImagineOn Wachovia Playhouse, 300 E. 7th St.
RSVP: 704-378-2688
- Prevent Underage Drinking Town Hall
Date: Tuesday, April 1st 2008
Time: 6:30pm-8:00pm
Location: Lake Norman Baptist Church, 7921 Sam Furr Road, Huntersville
Limited space is available. Please RSVP to 704-374-3784 ext. 12



Join the Solution...

The Charlotte Mecklenburg Drug Free Coalition
1117 East Morehead Street, Suite 200
Charlotte, NC 28204
704.375.3784
www.drugfreecharlotte.org