

Illinois Alliance on Reducing Youth Substance Use

May 28, 2026

2:30 pm – 4:00 pm

The Illinois Alliance on Reducing Youth Substance Use allows stakeholders to:

- Share current youth substance use prevention efforts being implemented in the State of Illinois.
- Share information on best practices to reduce youth substance use.
- Share data and research on efforts to reduce youth substance use.
- Review the Illinois STOP ACT report.
- Unify prevention efforts in the State of Illinois.

MEETING MINUTES

2:30-2:35 Samantha Alonis, Associate Director, Office of Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Behavioral Health & Recovery IDHS

Opening Remarks

- Currently in strategic planning process for the block grant to better meet the needs of community members. Anticipate 5 years from now the current system will look very different. Increase flexibility, expand types of services offered. Most are restricted to school, ebp, universal, and many people are missed when those are the primary focus. Working on building relationships with IPN to bridge the gaps and silos across the coalitions and SAMHSA-funded programs.
- Division integrated into IDBHR; Now the office of Prevention and Health Promotion; process to define what Prevention and Health Promotion means. Can promote even if they have already initiated or have a mental health condition.
- Recently applied for adult Zero Suicide grant to attempt to gradually grow in that space to think across the continuum and integrated services between mental health and substance use.
- Received state SPF PFS Grant. Kickoff meeting happened last month, still processing state grant agreements, but excited for the opportunity to serve communities on the West and South sides of Chicago.

2:35-3:05 Discussion – Alcohol and other substance use across generations

- Samantha – Millennial, Gen X – economic pressures. Gen Z and Younger – Screens in front constantly, which is causing an actual change in their brains
- Joanne – theories – break in social time, fewer opportunities to gather.
- Jody and Jake – potential solutions – social norming, standard drink norming, taxation, marketing restrictions.

3:05-3:20 Illinois Council on Problem Gambling

- ICPG is an IDHS Grant Funded agency providing free training on problem gambling and offering problem gambling counselor certification
- Dave Wohl presented an overview of gambling in Illinois:
 - 3.8% of the US population roughly meets criteria for gambling disorder
 - 55 problem gambling counselors in the state, 300-500 professionals in Illinois
 - 16-20% have attempted suicide or have thoughts of suicide. 80% calling hotline reported thoughts of suicide, 2/3 of those who have attended gambling support group
 - Over 50% of adults visited a casino in 2025
 - 6.4 billion in IL 2025, up from 5.4 in 2023
 - 90% of adolescents exposed to gambling content online
 - 18% of youth gambled in past 12 months
 - ~33% of boys age 11 had in past 12 months, 50% by 17
 - Conference June 4-5 in Joliet. ICPG.org
 - Screening tool – EDGE SBIRT

3:20-3:30 Jody Heavilin, APRC Senior Administrator, Prevention First Resources and Summit Highlights

Resources –

- The APRC has a new resource this week! Parental provision of alcohol. According to the Illinois Youth Survey, social access for twelfth graders decreased by 18 percent from 2018 to 2024. For tenth and eighth graders, it decreased by 22 percent and 17 percent, respectively. However, during that same time frame, the percentage of youth getting alcohol from their parents with permission increased by 9 percent for twelfth graders, 5 percent for tenth graders, and 25 percent for eighth graders. This resource provides ideas for helping parents and guardians make the best choice for their child.
- Right now, there's a lot of really great research on Norming, especially when it pertains to parents providing alcohol to their child. Normative feedback and social norms campaigns are two strategies suggested in the new resource.
- The Alcohol & Cannabis Prevention Policy Summit was held in Palatine on April 13 and in Urbana on April 14. Our goal with the Summit was to bring prevention and enforcement together so we could learn from and appreciate what we have to offer each other. Dr. Matthew Rossheim opened the Summit with his keynote on Retail Availability & Prevention Gaps. Amy Miles was the closing keynote. She is a forensic toxicologist for Wisconsin and Illinois' NHTSA representative. Her presentation on Cannabis Impaired Driving was extremely informative and very well received by the participants. Both Summits' evaluations were fantastic. A big thank you to all our workshop speakers: Kenny Williams, Lieutenant Hector Alejandre, Master Sergeant Justin Siders, Tony Poole, Elaine Wooton, Deputy John Shallenberger, Maria Kovell,

and Shannon Alderman. Jake Levinson and Jody Heavilin also presented. A prevention coalition and law enforcement panel followed the workshop sessions. This group answered participants' questions about collaboration and the importance of leadership support. We are looking forward to hosting the Summit again next year.

- Both bills I was following for this year have stalled.
 - HB4333 (lowering the BAC to .05) has five sponsors, but has not moved out of the House Rules Committee.
 - SB2085 (removing frozen desserts containing alcoholic liquor from "alcoholic liquor" and "alcohol-infused products") has two sponsors and is still in committee, and was re-referred to Assignments on May 22.

3:30-3:40 Jake Levinson, Director of Resource Centers, Prevention First

- Introducing Melanie Crews, new Administrator of CPRC
- Policy – HB5784, Cannabis Omnibus. Changes to reflect Hemp and Rescheduling changes, and other business regulations changes.
- Upcoming resources on rescheduling, suicide and cannabis. Recorded 5/21 webinar available next week.

3:40-3:55 Group Announcements

Prevention First Connections in Prevention Conference, Bryant Laiche –

- Workshop applications being accepted, comes with 2 complimentary registrations for successful applications.
- Offering 4 scholarship opportunities to cover the cost of registration. Requirement that you work for an NGO, coalition, non profit, and have an annual operating budget under \$1 million. Apply through the website.
- Is credentialed through ICB – 6.5 CEUs last year.
- Registration is open. If needed, can register now to claim spot and choose to be invoiced after July 1.
- Continuum, mental health, violence prevention, school, community organizations, harm reduction.
- 30 Workshops being offered
- Rotating discussion sessions – different topics.
- conference@prevention.org for any questions
- Group discounts for 5+ registering together

Angela Towne, working with 5 Southern Agencies.

- Open door smart recovery group, recovery tools
- Open to anyone, LGBTQIA+ and ally inclusive space
- Registration - <https://redcap.siumed.edu/surveys/?s=3XDJPCCHJWWCN3DH>

3:55-4:00 Samantha Alonis, Associate Director, Office of Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Behavioral Health & Recovery, IDHS

Closing remarks

- Exploring impact of screen time, social media, gambling, gaming
- Would like to gather feedback on coalitions and how we can create more of a space for sharing the work you are doing, how we can partner
- If would like to present at the next meeting, reach out to Jody and Samantha

SFY 27 Meeting Schedule

TBD