

Illinois Alliance on Reducing Youth Substance Use
December 10, 2024
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 AGENDA

2:30-2:45 Samantha Alonis, Deputy Director, IDHS Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery

Opening remarks were provided, and the format for the meeting discussion was described.

2:45-3:45 Group Brainstorm

- Ideas or strategies for meeting people where they are ahead of time frames where the risky use of alcohol, cannabis, and other substances tend to increase (e.g., binge drinking during big college party weekends)

Group Responses:

- *EIU used to have an Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) grant, and the funding supported desired outcomes. The police department would make a list of who had been given tickets over the weekend, and interventions were helpful for these selectively indicated populations.*
- *In some high schools, before prom, they have assembly-style programs and parent/child programs that go together to discuss the risks of underage substance use. Usually involves a speaker that has experienced negative side effects or has been impacted by underage substance use. Public Service Announcement contests created by high schoolers could also be an avenue, as it gets the students engaged in prevention using their own words.*
- *NHTSA has a messaging campaign related to cannabis-impaired driving, and attendees reported IDOT also has a cannabis-impaired driving message on the highways.*
- *Sticker shock campaigns are not as common anymore, but there is a group that is using substance use prevention messaging in prom dress stores in DuPage County. Other areas reported using window clings in the fridge/freezer sections of gas stations and grocery stores. One coalition put prevention messaging in flower/corsage boxes for prom. Concern was expressed about adults putting together campaign materials without youth input.*
- *Concern about community events where alcohol companies are sponsors and are branded on volunteer t-shirts and other promotional items. Potential solutions were using the Special Events Toolkit resource from the APRC and working with*

cities to change their ordinances and set up parameters for how/where beer tents can be set up. This includes limiting the time periods for when alcoholic beverages are served. The lack of training for volunteers serving drinks can also be improved upon to help prevent over-serving.

- *The YPRC Administrator shared a video from a youth council member who had a message to share relating to the brainstorming prompt. They shared that social hosting, breaks from school, and “pregaming” before prom or homecoming are times when youth substance use is high. Gen Z and Gen Alpha are very media/technology driven and they experience anxiety with social events and often drink to “take the edge off”. Proposed solutions included: having mocktails or other beverage options available, and reducing alcohol access (social host regulations), opening gyms or libraries during breaks so kids have a space if home is not a safe place for them. The YPRC reported that social hosting has been a big topic the council has focused on this year.*
- *Ideas or strategies for addressing interconnected issues (e.g., substance use and sexual violence)*
- *Samantha Alonis prefaced the discussion by showing a brief presentation on interconnected issues including maternal health, substance use, and ACEs.*

Group Responses:

- *Recent report regarding cannabis use and suicide indicated an increased rate of suicide for 14-16 year olds in states with legal cannabis programs. More research is needed to determine the relationship.*
- *Suicide prevention and substance use work could benefit from partnering together and working towards common goals.*
- *Impaired driving and traffic safety is another area that is impacted by substance use. Perceptions of harm for teenagers and cannabis use are permissive. Alcohol harms are better understood than cannabis by the public.*
- *Concerns about the rise of using antiquated and ineffective prevention strategies such as drunk goggles, scare tactics, and mock crashes were expressed. There are other, more effective strategies and policies that can be used; they just take time.*
- *Concerns were also expressed about individuals doing in-school interventions and the lack of training on how and why certain strategies are not effective.*
- *Based on the concerns raised, CPS commented that this would be a good time to discuss their new substance use policy and curriculum where they are providing harm reduction and fentanyl education in their high schools. They would also be interested in how to connect with law enforcement, as they have received concerns from law enforcement about it. This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.*

3:45-3:55 Group Announcements

- *The APRC shared about Alcohol Justice and their campaign information regarding the concern of alcohol-themed toys being sold at stores, including*

Target. They also shared about their upcoming webinar, "Alcohol Taxes Save Lives," on January 9th from 10-11 AM with Dr. David Jernigan.

- *The CPRC shared its upcoming webinar, "The Alcohol Retail Environment: Emerging Hazards to Public Safety," which will be co-hosted with the APRC on January 30th, 2025, from 2 to 3:30 PM.*
- *The YPRC shared its upcoming webinar, "Performance-Based Substance Use Prevention," on January 22, 2025, from 2-3:15 PM.*
- *Dominica Dybas from DEA stated they are noticing trends, especially in the Joliet community, that benzodiazepines are being perceived as safer than fentanyl, and she cautioned against the deadly mix of benzodiazepines and alcohol.*
 - o *Samantha Alonis recommended adding a discussion block at a future meeting to discuss polysubstance use and lesser-known substances.*
- *Samantha Gannon announced that mobile IDs are coming to IL in 2025, she has requested communication from the ILCC to learn more about what the impact of this may be. Mobile IDs are not currently covered in BASSET training.*
- *The next Illinois Alliance Meeting will take place on 3/11/2025 from 2:30-4PM.*

3:55-4:00 Samantha Alonis, Deputy Director, IDHS Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery

- *Closing remarks were provided, with the suggestion of adding a 20-minute discussion block during future meetings.*

SFY 25 Meeting Schedule

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

2:30 pm – 4:00 pm