



THE MARYLAND COLLABORATIVE

TO REDUCE COLLEGE DRINKING AND RELATED PROBLEMS

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MARYLAND COLLEGES COME TOGETHER TO TACKLE EXCESSIVE DRINKING

Maryland health and higher education leaders announced today the formation and first products of a new Maryland Collaborative to Reduce College Drinking and Related Problems. The products include a comprehensive report on what colleges are doing in the state on this issue, and a *Guide to Best Practices* accompanied by an interactive website.

Hosted jointly by the University System of Maryland and the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, the collaborative leadership brings together presidents of ten institutions across the state, co-chaired by Chancellor Brit Kirwan of the University System of Maryland and President Ronald J. Daniels of Johns Hopkins.

“Like universities across the country, we are aware of the significant problems that underage and excessive drinking can cause for our students, our campuses, and our communities,” said Kirwan. “In Maryland, we are strongly committed to addressing these problems responsibly and effectively.”

Excessive drinking is a significant problem on campuses across the country. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism estimates that each year, drinking on college campuses is responsible for 1,825 deaths, 599,000 unintentional injuries such as car crashes and falls, 696,000 physical assaults, 97,000 sexual assaults, 150,000 alcohol-related health problems, 400,000 incidents of unprotected sex, and 3,360,000 incidents of driving while drunk.

According to the collaborative’s report, Maryland college students drink at levels similar to the national average, though the highest risk drinkers in Maryland appear to drink more heavily and are less likely to use services than their national peers. In Maryland, 19% of underage and 22% of 21- to 24-year-old college students meet criteria for either alcohol abuse or dependence, and almost one-third of underage Maryland college students drove under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

While most Maryland schools offer alcohol education programs and basic training in how to identify and refer students with drinking problems, the collaborative's *Guide to Best Practices* recommends supplementing these efforts with actions that are more effective at changing individual behavior and modifying the settings that influence students' drinking decisions.

"We're proud to participate with other university leaders to share best practices, and to work together to improve conditions for our students so we can ensure a safer and healthier future for them," said Daniels.

Participating schools will develop "multi-level" interventions, which will aim to incorporate more evidence-based practices in activities targeting individual students, parents, and the larger communities and environments in which college student drinking occurs.

The collaborative is also creating a measurement system to help colleges measure progress towards their goals and assess the effectiveness of new strategies on multiple campuses.

The collaborative's work will ultimately benefit all post-secondary institutions in Maryland. Initially, the two host institutions and the remaining schools represented on the collaborative's Governance Council have volunteered to be involved in intensive training and technical assistance activities in the coming year. These schools include: Allegany College of Maryland, Frostburg State University, Loyola University Maryland, McDaniel College, Notre Dame of Maryland University, Towson University, United States Naval Academy, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Maryland's Department Health and Mental Hygiene provided seed funding to establish the collaborative and its initial activities.

"We really appreciate the work of the collaborative to address this important public health issue", said Maryland Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene Dr. Joshua Sharfstein. Dr. Sharfstein's department provided seed funding to support the establishment of the Collaborative and its initial activities.

The collaborative's website and two new reports are available at www.marylandcollaborative.org.

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