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Early Success Cited by National Effort to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students

Using a Public Health Model, Project Applies Interventions Outlined in Today's NIAAA Report on College Drinking

Chicago — *A Matter of Degree: The National Effort to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students* (AMOD) today announced examples of early successes realized by applying many of the research-based interventions outlined in today's report on college drinking by the *National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism* (NIAAA).

The 10 campus-community partnerships of AMOD, a collaboration of American Medical Association and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, go beyond traditional prevention efforts that focus on the individual drinker, recognizing that there are powerful social influences that impact individual decision-making. These "town-grown" collaborations of college administrators, elected officials, students, parents, law enforcement officials, concerned bar owners and community residents are working together to address this complex public health problem. Developing campus-community partnerships is one of several recommendations noted in the NIAAA report.

"Trying to convince students not to binge drink doesn't work, particularly when they're surrounded by powerful social influences encouraging them to do just that," said Richard A. Yoast, PhD, Director of the AMA Office of Alcohol and other Drug Abuse, AMOD's national office. "Every night they are lured by cheap drink specials. Couple that with easy access to alcohol and glamorous, fun, sex-filled advertising imagery, and you have a very appealing message. Fortunately, we're learning that we can counter these influences through coordinated campus-community partnerships."

Examples of AMOD Successes:

1. At the University of Nebraska, binge drinking rates declined to 55 percent in 2001, compared to 64 percent in 1997, and more students are drinking less when they choose to drink. In 2001, 71 percent said they drank four *or fewer* drinks per occasion, compared to 53 percent in 1997. These findings are part of the annual Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study.
2. **Lehigh University** has seen a dramatic reduction in alcohol related crimes on campus. Overall, crime is down 51percent from 418 reports in 1998-99, to 204 in 2000-01. The percentage of Lehigh students negatively effected by high-risk drinking is dropping: students reporting that they got into a fight with a student using alcohol dropped 21percent; and the percentage of students who had study or sleep interrupted dropped 13 percent.
3. *Learning the Boulder Way*, of the **University of Colorado** and the City of Boulder, banned beer sales in its football stadium, which has resulted in a 69 percent reduction in fans being kicked out of the stadium and a 75 percent decline in arrests.
4. The *GT SMART Coalition* of the **Georgia Institute of Technology** and the City of Atlanta supported a successful statewide effort to create a keg registration law, which will help reduce underage access to alcohol. The campus has seen a 9 percent reduction in binge drinking, and 12 percent fewer students report driving after drinking.
5. *The Stepping Up Coalition* of the **University of Iowa** and Iowa City succeeded in preventing a landmark soda fountain near campus from becoming a liquor store, and the city council enacted an ordinance to improve the enforcement of state laws regarding sales to minors and intoxicated persons. The new law also prohibits some drink specials, such as free alcohol, 2-for-1 and all-you-can-drink specials.
6. The **University of Wisconsin** prohibits alcohol sales in the University's Kohl Center; representing a forfeiture of \$500,000 in alcohol revenues every hockey season. The project worked with the Madison Alcohol License Review Committee to only allow new liquor licenses in the campus-area if the establishment generates at least 50 percent of its revenue from food, effectively prohibiting large-capacity "drinking barns."
7. *The PAR Coalition* of **Florida State University** and the City of Tallahassee has eliminated alcohol advertising on campus and developed a strategic plan to reduce the impact of high-risk drinking in the community, including suspension of driver's licenses for underage drinking and incentives to owners of bars and other alcohol outlets to maintain responsible business practices.

8. *The Building Responsibility Coalition* of the **University of Delaware** and the City of Newark are members of the Mayor's Alcohol Commission, which has developed policy recommendations on the sale and consumption of alcohol in the community, particularly in the areas of law enforcement, land use and zoning. UD was the first university in the country to enact a parental notification policy, which requires that parents be notified if their student violates campus alcohol policies, and set specific penalties for infractions, including suspension from the University.

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9. *The Coalition to Create a Quality Living and Learning Environment* of the **University of Vermont** and The City of Burlington led the effort to develop a responsible alcohol beverage service training for bar owners, managers and servers, which is now part of the city's alcohol licensing review process.

10. In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, home of **Louisiana State University** and the *LSU Campus-Community Coalition for Change*, the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Council earlier this year unanimously agreed to restrict underage house parties, which members expect will reduce high-risk drinking at off-campus rental properties which essentially operate as uncontrolled "bars" for underage students.

Based in part on the findings of the original Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the AMA agreed to collaborate on the AMOD program, an eight year, \$10 million national demonstration project. In addition to reducing binge drinking rates, the ultimate goal of AMOD is to test the public health model on which the program is based, as well as to share the lessons learned with other colleges and universities. Under the direction of Henry Wechsler, PhD, Harvard is conducting an extensive evaluation of the AMOD program to identify additional successful interventions and to track reductions in binge drinking.

Additional AMOD Interventions:

- Tackling the difficult challenge of controlling the proliferation of bars and other alcohol outlets that ring their campuses, a common characteristic of college towns across America.
- Working with neighborhood associations, law enforcement and landlords to address loud house parties and the disruption they create.
- Eliminated alcohol-industry sponsorship of athletics and other campus social events.
- Limited tailgate parties to pre-game only; created alcohol-free tailgate zones; restricted alcohol sales at concerts and other campus events.

- Established higher standards for Greek organizations and linked rush privileges to their adherence; standards include academic achievement, community service and compliance with campus and community alcohol policies.

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