



**DRUG-FREE ACTION
ALLIANCE**

For Immediate Release:
April 23, 2008

Contact: Brad Reynolds
(614) 540-9985
breyolds@DrugFreeActionAlliance.org

Drug-Free Action Alliance Participates in National Alcohol Awareness Month

Underage Drinkers Face Lifetime of Alcohol Abuse and Health Risks

(Columbus, Ohio) April is Alcohol Awareness Month and Drug-Free Action Alliance is stressing the importance of understanding the disease of alcoholism and the harmful health risks associated with problem drinking.

The misuse of alcohol affects every demographical and cultural sector of our society. Each year, approximately 5,000 young people under the age of 21 die as a result of alcohol-related consumption; this includes about 1,900 deaths from motor vehicle crashes, 1,600 as a result of homicides, 300 from suicide, as well as hundreds from other injuries such as falls, burns and drowning.

“Underage drinking presents a very real and proven health risk to children in Ohio as well as throughout the nation.” noted Patricia Harmon, Executive Director of Drug-Free Action Alliance. “Studies have proven that memory and learning capabilities can be damaged and decision-making and reasoning areas of the brain can be compromised when adolescents use alcohol. We need to send the message that underage drinking is illegal, not safe, unhealthy and unacceptable.”

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 40% of children who start drinking before the age of 15 will become dependant on alcohol at some point in their lives. Delaying the use of alcohol until the legal age helps avoid many of the associated problems. This is the reason why the United States Surgeon General’s Office issued a *Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking*. The *Call to Action* presents a compelling foundation for change to the accepted culture and attitudes towards underage drinking in America and asks parents, communities and educational systems to take a stand to work for a solution. More information on the *Call to Action* may be accessed at: <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/underagedrinking/about.html>

Underage drinking can lead to a sudden drop in grades, loss of friends and lack of interest in favorite activities. Underage drinking can also lead to unexplained mood swings, lying and stealing. Altered behaviors will help alert parents of possible problems their child may be having involving alcohol. It is important that parents play an active role in their child’s life, such as getting to know their friends and talking to them about the dangers and consequences of underage drinking. This will help set clear boundaries for their child. If a parent suspects a problem, they should immediately reach out for help.

Drug-Free Action Alliance is a statewide non-profit organization providing leadership to promote safe and drug free communities by bringing together individuals, groups and resources to prevent the abuse of alcohol and the use of other drugs. More information can be obtained from the Ohio Resource Network Clearinghouse located at www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org.

###

Red Ribbon Celebration

College Initiative to Reduce
High Risk Drinking

Ohio Resource Network
Clearinghouse

Statewide Prevention
Coalition Association

Parents Who Host, Lose The Most:
Don't be a party to teenage drinking

Ohio Center for
Coalition Excellence

Know!

Youth Philanthropy
Council

www.DrugFreeActionAlliance.org