LIVINGSTON COUNTY
HUMAN SERVICES COLLABORATIVE BODY

Health and Human Service Needs
FACT SHEET **No. 2**

Underage Alcohol Use in Livingston County

April 2008

What is Alcohol? Alcohol is a drug. It works like a sedative, attacking the central nervous system and acting like a downer. It is found in beverages such as beer, malt liquors, wine, wine coolers, and liquor. It is also found in many over-the-counter medications.

How Does Alcohol Affect Young People? Young people who drink alcohol are more likely than adults to drink to get drunk. Young drinkers become dependent on alcohol more rapidly than adults. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), youth who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking at age 21, the legal drinking age. The consequences associated with teen drinking may include school problems, legal problems, and health problems. In addition, teens that use alcohol are more likely to engage in other risky behaviors.

Are Livingston County Youth Drinking Alcohol? Clearly underage drinking is a problem in our community and the related costs are staggering. Data regarding underage drinking indicates that:

- Alcohol is the number one drug of choice for teens.
- According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), first use of alcohol is typically reported to begin around age 12.
- By 8th grade, 52 percent of U.S. teens have had their first alcoholic drink.
- According to the NIAAA, one in five 8th graders reports drinking alcohol within the past month.
- 50 percent of Livingston County high school seniors have consumed alcohol in the past month (Michigan Alcohol and Other Drug Survey: Livingston County Aggregate Data).
- 71 percent of young teens say that alcohol is easy to get (NIAAA).
- The typical American young person will see 100,000 beer commercials before he or she turns 18 – that is more than for sneakers, gum, and jeans (Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking - MCRUD).
- Alcohol is a factor in the four leading causes of death among persons ages 10 to 24: motor vehicle crashes, unintentional injuries, homicides, and suicides (MCRUD).
- Across the country, about three out of ten (28.5%) high school students had ridden in a car or other vehicle at least once with a driver who had been drinking alcohol (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - CDCP).
- During 2004-2006, there were 108 motor vehicle crashes involving Livingston County residents 16 to 20 years old who were driving under the influence (Michigan State Police).
- Among currently sexually active high school students, just under one in four (23.3%) reported being under the influence of alcohol or drugs during intercourse (CDCP).

- Binge drinking is defined as consuming 4 to 5 or more drinks on any one occasion. 32 percent of Livingston County 12th graders reported ever binge drinking (Michigan Alcohol and Other Drug Survey: Livingston County Aggregate Data).
- Youths aged 12 to 17 in rural areas reported higher rates of past month and binge alcohol use, lower levels of perceived risk from alcohol use, less disapproval of alcohol use, and less perceived parental disapproval of youth alcohol use than those in nonrural areas (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration). Livingston County has many rural areas.

What are the Services in Livingston County to Help Prevent Underage Drinking? There are several local agencies and organizations to assist youth and families with substance abuse issues. Each service has eligibility requirements and should be contacted directly.

- Complete Counseling 517.546.4445
  Substance abuse counseling
- Health Services ACCESS 517.546.4126
  Telephone screening, information on community resources, and referrals for substance abuse services for Livingston County residents with Medicaid or no insurance
- Karen Bergbower & Associates 810.225.9550
  Substance abuse prevention, education, assessment, and treatment; individual, group, and family counseling for adolescents and adults
- Key Development Center 810.220.8192
  Substance abuse assessment, referral, counseling, case management, dual diagnosis, MIP Program, and alcohol and other drug education programs for youth and adults
- Livingston County Catholic Social Services 517.545.5944
  Individual, youth, and family counseling, Substance abuse assessment, referral, counseling, dual diagnosis, Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol
- Livingston Family Center 810.231.9591
  Counseling services for children, adolescents, and adults; The Connection Youth Services
- Women's Resource Center 517-548-2200
  Counseling services, substance abuse prevention workshops, parenting classes and referrals for adult and teen women and their families

What can the Community do to Help? Underage drinking within the community is everybody's business. The cause is not from any one source and the solution cannot come from any one source. As a community, Livingston County must embrace its youth and work together to prevent underage alcohol use. This is a community problem that requires a community-owned solution. Following are some ideas of how to get involved:

- Work with your township, municipality, school district, and/or local law enforcement agency to recommend policies and/or ordinances to decrease youth access to alcohol.
- Volunteer, run, or walk in the 5th Annual Run Drugs Out of Town Run on September 13, 2008 at Howell City Park. This is a great way to enjoy a healthy, drug-free event that raises money for local substance abuse prevention efforts.
- Join the Livingston County Community Alliance (LCCA), a workgroup of the Human Services Collaborative Body. LCCA is a broad-based coalition that works to establish healthy community norms regarding alcohol and other drug use through education, public policy development, and community services.
- Take a stand to change underage drinking. Be a positive role model. Never purchase or provide alcohol to minors. Network with other parents/adults.
- Check out other resources:

www.myrealitycheck.org www.mcrud.org www.familiesanonymous.org
www.theantidrug.com www.niaaa.nih.org www.stopalcoholabuse.gov
www.faceproject.org

For more information or to get involved, contact Daydra Cormican, LCCA Coordinator at 517.545.5944 or daydra@sbcglobal.com.