

# Webb County Community Coalition Drug Prevention Bulletin

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## Coalition Update

March 10 - April 10

### The Webb County Community Coalition is In Full Swing.

The concerns of Coalition members regarding marijuana use by minors in the community resulted in implementing an evidence-based curriculum called *Keep a Clear Mind* for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students at a local private middle school. This curriculum is a take home drug education program designed for students between 8 to 12 years of age and their parents. The take-home materials consist of four weekly sets of activities to be completed by parents and their children together. The program also uses parent newsletters and incentives.

During the month of March, youth Coalition members made cigarette butt costumes to be used in a presentation for Kick Butts Day 2010. This year, the youth coalition members put together a presentation called "They Put WHAT in a cigarette!" The youth put together a presentation based on a list of ingredients that are found in cigarettes. They used household products such as ammonia, nail polish remover, and aerosol sprays for show and tell. The youth presented to Blessed Sacrament and St. Augustine School students on March 24, 2010. The youth also conducted an activity that involved taking a coffee stirrer and placing it in the youths' mouths and covering

their noses. Then they asked the students to jump, skip and jog in place while having the coffee stirrer in their mouths and their noses covered. The youth members explained that trying to breathe through the straws simulated the effects that smoking can have on lungs by reducing air capacity. This activity was meant to emphasize that smoking is very harmful to the body and will reduce its physical abilities.

Each year, April is recognized as Alcohol Awareness Month. On April 5<sup>th</sup>, a proclamation was read by the Honorable Mayor Raul Salinas along with Councilmember Juan Narvaez at the City Council Chambers. Following the proclamation, on Thursday April 8th, Alcohol Screening Day was observed at Laredo Community College Main and South campuses as well as at Texas A & M International University. Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors and Counselor Interns provided important information to students and conducted alcohol use screening surveys. These surveys were meant to inform and educate students about alcohol and its effects on physical and mental health.

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## Alcohol Awareness: Keeping Prom Night Safe

One of the reasons Alcohol Awareness Month is held in April is because it is the beginning of the prom and graduation season, a time when celebrations can turn dangerous for underage drinkers. Many communities conduct anti-drinking campaigns during the month aimed at curtailing alcohol use before, during and after the special events. In 2005, during Prom and Graduation Season (April, May, June), 676 students under the age of 21 were killed in alcohol-related traffic crashes, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Consequently, prior to prom, many schools plan programs aimed at educating kids about the dangers of drinking. These programs feature special speakers, presentations and even displays of crashed vehicles to emphasize the danger. Some groups utilize some form of a "sober contract," a promise that students sign agreeing to remain alcohol and drug free during the prom and graduation season. At the event itself, many schools across the nation have begun using breathalyzers to test the blood alcohol content of prom-goers and turning away at the door those who have been drinking.

### A Dangerous Season

Statistics show that Prom-Graduation season - the months of April, May and June - is the most dangerous time for teens. One-third of the alcohol-related traffic fatalities involving teens each year occur during those months. "Prom and graduation season is here again - this is a time for celebration," says Susan Molinari, Chairman of The Century Council. "Unfortunately, these happy occasions sometimes involve underage drinking which can result in tragedy. It is no secret that children under 21 years old are drinking. It is therefore critical that parents keep the lines of communication open when it comes to talking to their kids about the dangers of underage drinking and drunk driving. Source: <http://alcoholism.about.com>



Michelle Vega (senior) and Monica Ramirez (senior) have been Webb County Community Youth Coalition members for 4 years.

## Coalition Member Spotlight

This month we would like to draw attention to two Webb County Community Youth Coalition Members as our member spotlight- Michelle Vega and Monica Ramirez. Michelle (Chairperson 09-2010) is a senior at United South High School. She has been a member for 4 years with the youth coalition. In addition to her dedication to the coalition, she is also a member of the United South Lady Panthers Softball team (4 years) and the Student Council. Monica Ramirez is a senior at Martin High School and has also been a member for 4 years. Michelle and Monica are two vibrant students who believe in the coalition's mission. They have contributed many hours to the coalition. They have created the last two youth coalition brochures; have attended the Texas Tobacco Summit in Sandia, Texas,

the Texas Tobacco Summit in the Woodlands and have helped out in several projects in El Cenizo and Rio Bravo, Texas. In addition, they have been part of the Red Ribbon Parade and Rally (2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010) and Kick Butts Day Campaign Project (2008, 2009, and 2010). They were also selected to attend the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual CADCA Leadership Summit in Washington D.C. and took part in the Tobacco Sting operations with deputies from the office of Constable Rudy Rodriguez in March 2009. These two young women have proven to be leaders by sharing their ideas and utilizing their knowledge and personal experience in the coalition. They both continue to grow and understand the importance of drug prevention and why positive change is very important in our communities. They are both planning to attend college to pursue their educational goals in the Fall of 2010. **Thank you for being outstanding members and for all of your hard work!**

## Long-Time Marijuana Use Linked to Psychosis in Young Adults

Young adults who used marijuana as teens were more likely than those who didn't to develop schizophrenia and psychotic symptoms including hallucinations and delusions, an Australian study found. Those who used the drug for six or more years were twice more likely to develop a psychosis such as schizophrenia or to have delusional disorders than those who never used marijuana, according to research released online by the Archives of General Psychiatry. They were also four times as likely to score high on a list of psychotic-like experiences. The findings build on previous research and show that marijuana use isn't as harmless as some people think, lead study author John McGrath said yesterday in an e-mail. The study was the first to look at sibling pairs to discount genetic or environmental influence and still find marijuana linked to later psychosis, the authors said in the study. "This is the most convincing evidence yet that the earlier you use cannabis, the more likely you are to have symptoms of a psychotic illness," said McGrath, a professor at the Queensland Brain Institute in Brisbane, Australia, in a statement. "The message for teenagers is: if they choose to use cannabis they have to understand there's a risk involved."

**Smoked or Ingested:** Marijuana, produced from the cannabis plant, can be smoked or ingested. Its recreational use is illegal in the U.S. About 14 U.S. states have laws allowing for medical use of marijuana,

which advocates say can ease nausea for cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy or help stimulate the appetites of AIDS patients. Researchers in the study were looking for causes of schizophrenia, McGrath said. The researchers included 3,801 young adults who were born in Brisbane from 1981 to 1984. At the 21-year follow up, the participants, whose average age was about 20 were asked about marijuana use. The researchers also measured whether those in the study had psychotic symptoms. Of the 1,272 participants who had never used marijuana, 26 or 2 percent were diagnosed with psychosis. Of the 322 people who had used marijuana for six or more years, 12 or 3.7 percent were diagnosed with the illness. Overall, 65 people were diagnosed with psychosis, according to the study. The researchers also found that those who used marijuana the longest were four times more likely than those who didn't to have the highest scores derived from a list of psychotic-like experiences. Two of the questions posed to study participants, according to McGrath, asked: "Do you ever feel as if you are possessed by someone or something else?" and "Do you ever feel as if other people can read your mind?"

**Increased Risk:** McGrath said that even those who used marijuana for fewer than three years still had an increased risk of scoring higher than those who had not. "Apart from the implications for policy makers and health planners, we hope our findings will encourage further clinical

and animal-model research to unravel the mechanisms linking cannabis use and psychosis," the study authors wrote. About 18 percent of those in the study said they used marijuana for three or fewer years, 16 percent said they used it for four to five years and 14 percent used it for six or more years. Researchers don't know when symptoms emerged or how much marijuana study participants used over their lives, McGrath said. Those in the study were interviewed at the ages of 14 and 21, so the symptoms emerged between those two study periods, he said. **Sibling Findings:** The study also showed that among 228 sibling pairs, those who didn't use marijuana reported fewer psychotic-like delusions compared with those who used cannabis. That difference was statistically significant and reduces the likelihood that the psychotic problems were caused by genetics or environment, the authors said. The study also looked at siblings who both smoked pot and found that those who smoked it longer had a higher score for psychotic-like delusions than the other sibling who smoked for a shorter time. About 2.4 million American adults have schizophrenia, according to the National Institutes of Health. The disorder often appears in men in their late teens and early 20s, while in women it generally strikes in their early 20s or 30s. It is associated with delusions, hallucinations and disordered thinking, McGrath said. It is unclear what causes the disease.

(The study was funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia). Source: [www.businessweek.com/news/2010-02-26/long-time-marijuana-use](http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-02-26/long-time-marijuana-use)

## Candy-like Tobacco Can Cause Nicotine Poisoning in Kids

A recent study has found that smokeless tobacco products are the second most common cause of nicotine poisoning in children, after cigarettes. A new generation of flavored, dissolvable tobacco products is becoming increasingly popular among teens. But, a new study has warned that the novel tobacco product, which according to some critics too closely resembles Tic Tac breath mints, could be life threatening for children who mistake them for candy. Researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH), the Northern Ohio Poison Control Center, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) caution that candy like tobacco products could lead to accidental nicotine poisoning in children. They worry that the products could appeal to young people and lead to nicotine addiction as well.

R.J. Reynolds Tobacco, the nation's second-largest cigarette maker behind Phillip Morris, is marketing a dissolvable nicotine product called Camel Orbs since 2009. According to the company's promotional literature, this product contains 1 mg nicotine per pellet and is flavored with cinnamon or mint. The company claims Camel Orbs is a dissolvable tobacco product that does not require spitting and creates no secondhand smoke and no cigarette butt litter. The nation's second-largest cigarette maker's other dissolvable tobacco products are Camel Strips that contain 0.6 mg nicotine per strip; and Sticks, which contain 3.1 mg nicotine per strip. It is believed the tobacco industry is introducing such candy-like smokeless nicotine products in response to declining cigarette use and the rise of smoke-free air laws.

### Harmful for infants

But, the effects of these products could be potentially disastrous, particularly for infants and adolescents, reports CNN citing Professor Gregory Connolly, lead author of the study and director of the Tobacco Control Research Program at HSPH. "Nicotine is a poison, and now we're seeing smokeless tobacco products that look like Tic Tac or M&M's, which parents can leave on the counter and children can be attracted to," says Prof. Connolly, according to CNN. "This product is called a "tobacco" product, but in the eyes of a 4-year old, the pellets look more like candy than a regular cigarette. Nicotine is a highly addictive drug and to make it look like a piece of candy is recklessly playing with the health of children," he adds.

Connolly and colleagues reached their findings after reviewing data from 61 poison control centers. The analysis showed 13,705 cases of tobacco ingestion between 2006 and 2008, the vast majority of which were infants, under age 6. The study also found that smokeless tobacco was involved in 1,768 of the cases.

According to the study, small teabag-like "SNUS", which are marketed on the Camel website as a "smoke-free, spit-free" product and come in intriguing flavors, such as "frost" and "mello," are also potentially hazardous to health.

SNUS, pouches filled with tobacco that are placed between the upper lip and gum, is gaining popularity in the nation and it is already famous in Europe.

### Reynolds responds

Meanwhile, David Howard, a Reynolds spokesperson, has responded to the findings, insisting Camel Orbs were marketed only for adults and come in child resistant containers. He denied that they look like Tic Tac mints.



"Those packages don't at all look alike to me," Howard said in an interview Friday. According to him, their smokeless tobacco product can be found on the same shelves in stores as other tobacco products, requiring the assistance of a clerk to buy them. In addition, the product label carries the same health warning as all other smokeless tobacco products, and is taxed at the same rate as smokeless tobacco products.

Source:

<http://www.who.int/tobacco/wntd2010/en/announcement/index.html>

REPORT  
NO SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES  
ORDINANCE VIOLATIONS!



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Department  
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## World No Tobacco Day, May 31, 2010

### Theme: Gender and tobacco with an emphasis on marketing to women

The World Health Organization (WHO) selects "Gender and tobacco with an emphasis on marketing to women" as the theme for the next World No Tobacco Day, which will take place on May 31, 2010. Controlling the epidemic of tobacco among women is an important part of any comprehensive tobacco control strategy. World No Tobacco Day 2010 will be designed to draw particular attention to the harmful effects of tobacco marketing towards women and girls. It will also highlight the need for the nearly 170 parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to ban all tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship in accordance with their constitutions or constitutional principles.

Women comprise about 20% of the world's more than 1 billion smokers. However, this figure is bound to increase. Male rates of smoking have peaked, while female rates are on the rise. Women are a major target of opportunity for the tobacco industry, which needs to recruit new users to replace the nearly half of current users who will die prematurely from tobacco-related diseases. Data from 151 countries show that about 7% of adolescent girls smoke cigarettes as opposed to 12% of adolescent boys. In some countries, almost as many girls smoke as boys.

Source:

<http://www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/2010/announcement/en/index.html>

## Upcoming Events



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Working Together for a  
Drug-Free Community!

We're on the Web!  
[www.scan-inc.org](http://www.scan-inc.org)

- **ATOD Prevention Workshop**-An Advocacy Workshop will take place in July 2010 at the Border Region MHMR Community Center located at 1500 Pappas from 9:00a.m. to 12:00p.m. Free C.E.U.s (Continuing Education Units) will be provided. Refreshments will also be provided. More information will be provided at a later date.

- **Youth Leadership Conference**- Youth Coalition members will have a unique opportunity to learn how to develop their leadership skills at the annual Youth Leadership Conference. The goals of this year's conference are to help youth identify what a leader is and how to identify their own leadership skills. A special guest speaker will provide youth with first-hand insight about leadership. The workshop will take place on Friday July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010 from 9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m at the Gateway Community Health Center located at 1515 Pappas.

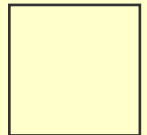
- **Nuestro Orgullo (Our Pride) Awards** – The Nuestro Orgullo (Our Pride) Awards

will be presented at a regularly scheduled WCCC meeting in July. The meeting will take place at the Gateway Community Health Center located at 1515 Pappas on July 6, 2010 from 11:30a.m.-1:00 p.m. The annual Nuestro Orgullo Awards are presented to individuals recognized as leaders in the field of drug prevention who made a significant impact on keeping Laredo and Webb County drug free.

- The next Webb County Community Coalition meeting will be held on June 1, 2010 at the Border Region MHMR from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. located at 1500 Pappas. *Please make plans to join us!*

- **Positive Youth Development (PYD) Workshop**- There are numerous definitions of positive youth development and what constitutes a youth development perspective, program, or organization. This approach aims to foster resiliency, focus on strengths and resources, identify youth as individuals rather than a generic group, view youth as full and equal partners in the community, and empower youth to become leaders. A PYD workshop for providers will take place at the Border Region MHMR Community Center on July 27, 2010.

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