



## SAFE SCHOOLS/HEALTHY STUDENTS GRANTEES REPORT REDUCED ALCOHOL USE AMONG STUDENTS

Alcohol use among children and adolescents can result in severe consequences, for example it can lead to serious health problems and accidental death and present risk for school failure and delinquent behavior.<sup>1,2,3</sup> Such alcohol use also brings financial consequences for society in the form of medical expenses, destruction of property, automobile accidents, work losses, loss in quality of life, and criminal justice costs.<sup>4</sup>

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) Initiative seeks to create healthy learning environments which help students thrive, succeed in school, and build healthy relationships. A central goal of the initiative is to prevent children from consuming alcohol and other drugs, and the implementation of evidence-based programs such as Class Action, Family Matters, and Project Alert helps achieve this goal. The initiative also supports a variety of prevention activities involving families and communities such as “Safe Home Pledges” that ask parents to commit to maintaining a safe and alcohol-free environment (e.g., not serve alcohol to minors) and public forums and town hall meetings on drug and alcohol abuse.

The results demonstrate the initiative has been successful in reducing alcohol consumption among students at participating SS/HS school districts. Between Year 1 and Year 3 of the grant, the percentage of students who reported drinking declined from 25.4 percent to 22.4 percent (according to Government Performance and Results Act [GPRA] data). This represents a decrease from 27,521 students drinking in Year

1 to 24,270 students drinking in Year 3. Further, more than 80 percent of school staff reported the SS/HS grant helped reduce alcohol and other drug use among students.

This reduction in reported alcohol use might yield significant cost savings. Based on the average estimated 30-day societal cost per juvenile drinker of \$457 (derived from annual estimate adjusted for inflation<sup>5</sup>), the reduced alcohol use across cohorts results in cost savings

The average cost of underage drinking for just 1 month is estimated at \$457 per person.

of \$1,471,121 over a 30-day period.

Assuming the behavior 30 days prior to taking the survey is indicative of behavior for the previous 6–12 months, the total cost savings could range from \$8.8 million to \$17.6 million.

These monetary figures represent the drinking habits of more than 100,000 SS/HS students. The graph below depicts the cost savings associated with their reduction in drinking at 30 days, 6 months, and 12 months.

One Texas grantee’s district police department attributed a drop in reported alcohol use—from 26 percent in Year 1 to 12 percent in Year 3—to the SS/HS partnership. This reduction in alcohol consumption represents a potential cost savings of \$360,000.

### REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Komro, K. A., Williams, C. L., Forster, J. L., Perry, C. L., Farbaksh, K., & Stigler, M. H. (2000). The relationship between adolescent alcohol use and delinquent and violent behaviors. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Substance Abuse, 9*(2), 13–28.  
<sup>2,4,5</sup>Miller, T. R., Levey, D. T., Spicer, R. S., & Taylor, D. M. (2006). Societal cost of underage drinking. *Journal Studies on Alcohol, 67*(4), 519–528.  
<sup>3</sup>Miller, T. & Hendrie, D. (2008). *Substance abuse prevention dollars and cents: A cost-benefit analysis*, HHS Pub. No. (SMA) 07-4298. Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

### KEY FINDINGS

#### FEWER STUDENTS REPORTING ALCOHOL USE IN THE PAST 30 DAYS

Reported 30 day alcohol use decreased nearly 12 percent from year 1 to year 3 of the grant (25.4 percent to 22.4 percent) for the 2005-2007 cohorts.

This correlates to approximately 3,250 fewer students drinking in year 3, enough to fill 130 classrooms\*

#### COST SAVINGS OF ALCOHOL PREVENTION

The 30-day savings of \$1,471,121 is enough money to provide alcohol and drug prevention programming to more than 6,600 students.

The savings across 1 year would equal \$17.6 million, enough to provide this programming to more than 80,000 students.\*\*

\*Estimated U.S. class size 25 students

\*\*Based on average per pupil cost of \$220

COST SAVINGS FROM REDUCED ALCOHOL USE IN MILLIONS\*



\*Use data based on Year 3 GPRA data provided by the 2005 to 2007 cohorts; cost data reflect estimates from Miller (2006) study with adjustments for inflation.

