



## SUMMARY REPORT OF ACHC PARENT SURVEY

October-November 2007

Oakland County youth report high rates of illegal alcohol use. During surveys in 2005<sup>1</sup>, 53.8% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, 36.4% of 10<sup>th</sup>, and 13.8% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students reported they had used alcohol in the past 30 days from the date they completed the survey. ACHC and its member coalitions mobilize their communities to reduce underage drinking. One of our goals is to help parents be more effective in protecting their children from the risk of underage drinking. The ACHC Parent Survey completed during October-November 2007 assessed parents' awareness and some actions that would protect their youth.

Through collaboration with community coalitions and many school district and city newsletters and website links, 4975 parents completed the survey. Those who participated generally reflect the demographics of the communities served by ACHC member coalitions.

### **Most parents are actively involved in protecting their youth from the harm of underage drinking.**

Most parents (80.4%) have talked to their youth in the last three months about alcohol use and 54.7% said they frequently talk to their youth about alcohol facts, reasons not to drink, and ways to avoid drinking in difficult situations. Nationally, research shows that parental disapproval of underage drinking is a major factor in reducing underage drinking; 91.6% of Oakland County parents have told their children that they strongly disapprove of underage alcohol consumption.

Yet, their responses also reveal that **parents need increased awareness of how easy it is for youth to access alcohol.** During 2005, 95% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students said it was easy or very easy to access alcohol. Of parents of students in grades 6 through 12, 48.7% said they didn't know if alcohol is accessible to youth, and only 37.6% said they knew alcohol is easily available. The data does show that parents become more aware as their students age: i.e., 25.2% of 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents said alcohol is easy to get compared to 55% of parents of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students.

In the last student survey (2005), youth reported that underage drinking at all grade levels occurs most frequently at home, at a party or at a friend's house. Parents agree, but assume that more use occurs at a party or at a friend's home, and only 12.8% stated that youth use most often occurs at home. **Parents need to be more aware of youth access to alcohol in their homes.**

**Most parents (75.3%) are unaware of parents who host parties where alcohol is available or served to teens.** Yet, the students reported parties to be a source of alcohol for underage drinkers.

**Parents can protect their youth from the risk of underage drinking by building bonds, communicating and spending time, staying involved and monitoring, setting clear limits and enforcing rules.** Most Oakland County parents (71.4%) have talked to their children about attending parties where alcohol may be available. If the parents knew that their child was going to a friend's party where alcohol was going to be provided to teens, 92.3% would not let them go, and 90.6% would not let them go even if the party was to be chaperoned by a parent. Fewer parents report that they would call the police<sup>2</sup> when they know of parents who host parties where alcohol is available or served to teens.

**ACHC member coalitions have sent the message to high school parents that "Parents Who Host Lose the Most: Don't be a Party to Underage Drinking."** Most of the messages were during prom and graduation seasons, including many sent to parents of graduating seniors. Based on parent responses to this survey, the message is remembered by 42.5% of current 12<sup>th</sup> grade parents, 39.1% of 11<sup>th</sup> grade parents, 38.2% of 10<sup>th</sup> grade parents, 37% of 9<sup>th</sup> grade parents, decreasing to 33.4% of 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents.

Thank you for participating in this survey. Please contact your local coalition to offer your support in reducing this important public health problem. If there is no coalition in your community, contact Donnis Reese, Executive Director, ACHC at [donnis@achconline.org](mailto:donnis@achconline.org). ACHC wants every community to be effective in reducing underage drinking.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.oakgov.com/health/assets/Documents/chpis2/atod\\_summary\\_report.pdf](http://www.oakgov.com/health/assets/Documents/chpis2/atod_summary_report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> "If you know parents who host parties where alcohol is available or served to teens, do you call the police?" 38% yes; 31.1% no; and 30.9% don't know.