To: Local News Media
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RE: Teenage Binge Drinking
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TEENAGE BINGE DRINKING

Peer pressure, wanting to fit in, and wanting to do what the “older kids do” are reasons that many parents hear when it comes to buying the latest fashion trends, newest video game, or going to a party, but these are also reasons that, for many high school kids, can lead to drinking. The CDC estimates that 7.4 million high school students drink alcohol and that 2.4 million of those are “binge drinkers”.

Binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks within a few hours. When compared to nondrinkers, teen binge drinkers were:

- 19 times more likely to be smokers
- 4 times more likely to be in a physical fight
- nearly 4 times more likely to have been raped or a victim of dating violence
- 4 times more likely to attempt suicide
- more than 5 times more likely to be sexually active
- more likely to use marijuana, cocaine, and inhalants

These findings shed a very sobering light on this past time, but scarier yet is the risk of alcohol poisoning when teens are binge drinkers. When the body is exposed to large amounts of alcohol, the portion of the brain which controls breathing and heartbeats can become sedated. This then can lead to your brain failing to tell your body to breathe or your heart to beat.

Symptoms of alcohol poisoning include:

- vomiting
- bluish, pale skin and hypothermia
- slow, irregular breathing (10 seconds or more between breaths)
- slow breathing (8 or fewer breaths per minute)
- seizures
- inability to be roused
• mental stupor
• coma

If you see someone with symptoms like any of these, call 911 and get help. If left untreated these symptoms can progress and cause the victim to: choke on his/her own vomit, to stop breathing and/or to stop the heart from beating, they may experience hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), and to suffer seizures if not treated. Severe dehydration can also lead to brain damage. All of these conditions have the potential to be fatal. So, what seems to be a harmless way in which to have fun can actually have severe physical and emotional repercussions. For more information or help with talking to your teen, please call the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence at 1-800-622-2255.

This article has been brought to you by the Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon Counties. Visit our website: www.cmdhd.org

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