

## **What's Up With Alcohol**

March 12, 2008

**For immediate release**

Contact(s): Laura Sauve, Barron County Public Health 537-6580  
Donna Cordes, SSF Chairperson, County Board of Supervisors, 986-4697

The Barron County Safe & Stable Families Coalition invites the public to attend a town hall meeting: "What's Up With Alcohol". This town hall meeting will be held on Monday, March 31, 2008, from 7-8:30pm at the UW Barron County Megger's Hall and will focus on the impact of alcohol on our children.

"New research is showing how dangerous early alcohol use can be to our kids. From damage to their developing brains to an increased risk of alcohol dependence; alcohol use is hurting our families and communities" states Joe Willger, Marshfield Clinic Center for Community Outreach Prevention Specialist.

The 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey shows that 24% of Wisconsin students had their first full drink of alcohol before they were 13 years old. Of children who start drinking before age 14, 47% will become alcohol dependent at some point in their lives versus only 9% of those who wait until they are 21 to start drinking (Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine, 2006 Jul;160(7):739-46).

Barron County's town hall meeting: "What's Up With Alcohol" will be held Monday March 31, 2008 from 7:00 to 8:30pm at UW Barron County's Meggers Hall. State Representative Mary Hubler will moderate the evening. The event will include discussions on current trends in alcohol use by Detective Chris Fitzgerald, Rice Lake Police Department, physical effects of alcohol use and the impacts on children and adolescents by Dr. Barbara Ankarlo and Dr. Shehzad Niazi and opportunities for the community to discuss underage alcohol use.

"Parents, youth, educators, and community members: the meeting is open to everyone and we need everyone to participate. Keeping informed and working together is the best way we have to create an environment to help our kids make good choices and protect their futures" Donna Cordes, County Board Supervisor and SSF Coalition Chair comments.

The Town Hall Meeting: "What's Up With Alcohol" is free; no RSVP is necessary. Light refreshments and door prizes will be provided at the event. SSF Coalition invites you to get involved and make a difference in your community. For more information contact Laura Sauve at Barron County DHHS- Public Health Programs, 537-6109.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Federal Interagency Coordinating Committee on Underage Drinking (ICCPUD) are supporting up to 2,000 organizations in hosting town hall meetings during the week of March 31 - April 4. Barron County Department of Health & Human Services is also sponsoring the local event. The Underage Drinking Prevention Town Hall Meetings are part of a national effort to increase understanding and awareness of underage drinking and its consequences. For more information, visit [www.stopalcoholabuse.gov](http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov).

*Sample press release for town hall meeting courtesy of Barron County Safe & Stable Families Coalition, Barron County, WI; Northwoods Coalition member.*