



Medical Amnesty:
Considerations in
Policy Development



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Overview

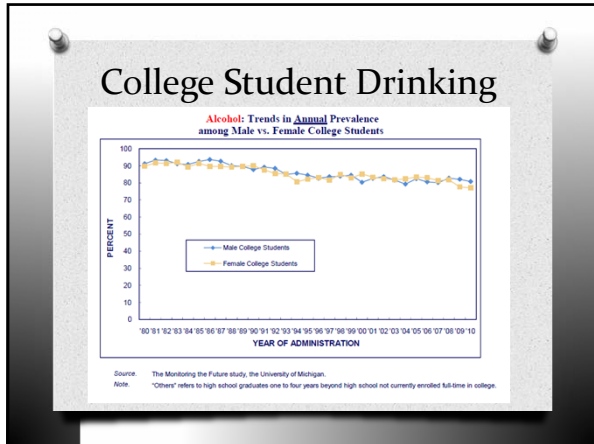
- o College Student Drinking
- o Alcohol Overdose
- o Medical Amnesty Policies
 - o Advantages/Disadvantages
 - o Policy Development
 - o Evaluation

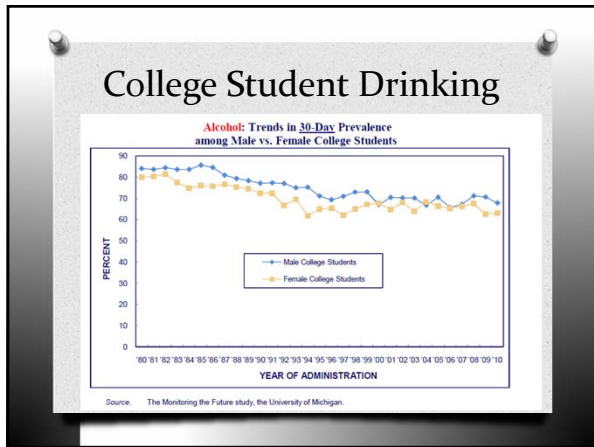


Objectives

- o After this presentation, participants will be able to:
 - o List relevant advantages and disadvantages to a medical amnesty policy
 - o Describe beneficial strategies to shaping a medical amnesty policy on a college campus







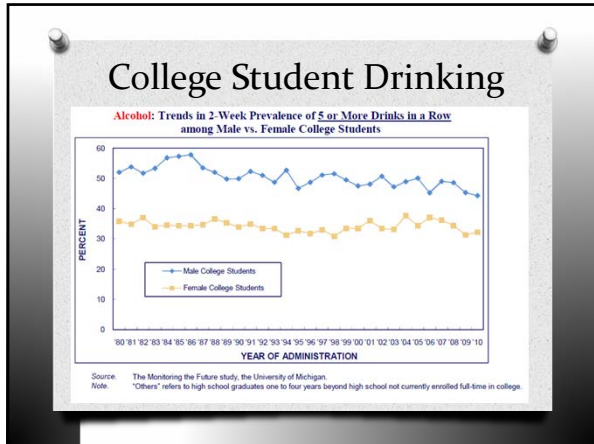
High-Risk Drinking

* 5 or more drinks in one sitting for men



* 4 or more drinks in one sitting for women





Health & High-Risk Drinking

Alcohol is involved nationally in ...

- o 599,000 student injuries
- o 1,825 student deaths annually


Hingson et al., (2009)

Signs of Overdose

- o Passed out or semi-conscious
 - o Is this the same as blacking out?
- o Vomits while sleeping or passed out and does not wake up
- o Rate of breathing seems slow or irregular
- o Cold, clammy, pale or bluish color skin
- o What's wrong with this public service announcement?
 - o <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISJHDupC5d4>


Emergency Response

- What should you do if you think someone has overdosed?
- Recovery position (if passed out or semi-conscious)
- Call for help
- Stay with the person until help arrives




Emergency Response

- Sometimes help isn't called
 - Why?
- Barriers to help-seeking behavior



Medical Amnesty Defined


- "Medical amnesty" or "Good Samaritan" policies are health protection strategies used on some campuses to encourage students to seek medical attention for a fellow student suffering an alcohol or other drug (AOD) overdose
- Under these policies, students are not sanctioned by the university for AOD violations



The U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center, September 2011.

Medical Amnesty


- o Many campuses use the terms "Medical Amnesty" and "Good Samaritan" interchangeably
- o Generally speaking, the policies provide protection from campus sanctions for violating AOD policies to one or more of the following:
 - 1) the individual in distress,
 - 2) a bystander who seeks medical assistance for an intoxicated student,
 - 3) a campus organization or group that calls for help for a member or guest



The U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center, September 2011

Medical Amnesty

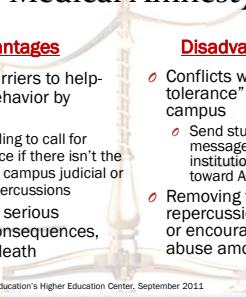
- o These policies and their application differ from campus to campus, based on each institution's individualized needs
- o Medical amnesty and Good Samaritan policies concern only campus-based policies and sanctions
- o Students may still be subject to legal consequences for violating AOD laws



The U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center, September 2011

Medical Amnesty

<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Reduce barriers to help-seeking behavior by students<ul style="list-style-type: none">o More willing to call for assistance if there isn't the threat of campus judicial or legal repercussionso Help avoid serious adverse consequences, including death	<p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Conflicts with "zero tolerance" policies on campus<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Send students mixed messages about the institution's attitude toward AOD use.o Removing the repercussion may enable or encourage future abuse among students
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The U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center, September 2011

What the literature says...

- o Inconclusive!
- o Should be considered within the context of environmental management framework
 - o Several strategies working together
 - o Comprehensive approach
- o Each institution is unique

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Creating A Policy

- o Build a committee
 - o Develops partnerships
 - o Increases available resources
 - o Helps gain support and in the end, acceptance of the medical amnesty policy
- o Potential members
 - o ATOD Prevention Specialist
 - o Student organizations
 - o Student government
 - o Administration
 - o Judicial staff




Creating a Policy

- o Best practices
 - o Draft a potential policy
 - o Allows stakeholders and their respective constituents to see progress and provide revisions as appropriate
 - o Increases ownership in the policy when more people have input. Ultimately, this results in the best possible policy and acceptance from students, staff, and faculty




Creating a Policy

- o Best practices
 - o Language considerations
 - o Who will be protected?
 - 1) the individual in distress,
 - 2) a bystander who seeks medical assistance for an intoxicated student,
 - 3) a campus organization or group that calls for help for a member or guest
 - o Standards to address habitual use




Creating a Policy

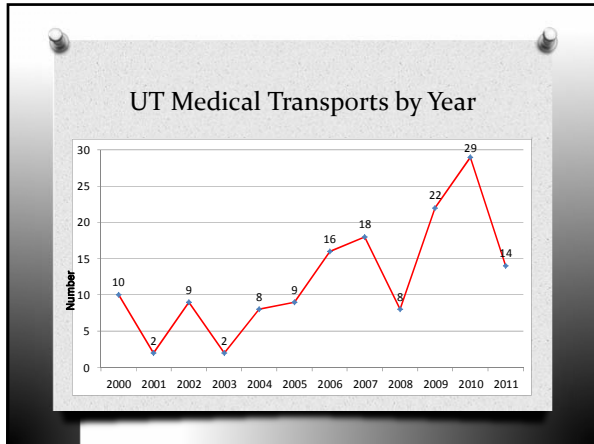
- o Making the policy public
 - o Increases awareness
 - o Opportunity to educate on AOD issues
- o Avenues to publicize through
 - o School newspaper
 - o School website
 - o Facebook/Twitter/blogs
 - o Events
 - o New Student Orientations



Evaluation

- o How can a policy like this be evaluated?
 - o Campus surveying
 - o Office of Student Conduct
 - o Track transports
- o Medical Transports
 - o May result in an initial rise in this number





Conclusion

- Eliminating barriers such as fear of consequences could potentially save young lives
- Providing students with clear guidelines of when to seek emergency help for persons who have over consumed is one step in preventing alcohol overdose deaths

Questions?

References

- Hingson, R., Zha, W., & Weitzman, E. (2009). Magnitude of and trends in alcohol-related mortality and morbidity among U.S. college students ages 18-24, 1998-2005. *Journal Of Studies On Alcohol And Drugs. Supplement*, (16), 12-20.
- Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M., Bachman, J.G., & Schulenberg, J.E. (2011). *Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975-2010: Volume II. College students and adults ages 19-50*. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan.
- The U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center. (n.d.) Medical Amnesty and Good Samaritan Policies. Available at: <http://www.higheredcenter.org/services/assistance/topics/medical-amnesty-and-good-samaritan-policies>. Accessed September, 2011.
