

**Implementation of
Research-Based Strategies to
Reduce Downtown Drunkenness
and Related Crime and Violence**

**Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc.
Madison, Wisconsin**

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Introduction

Wisconsin leads the nation in risky and heavy drinking. Drinking and drug use is the fourth leading cause of death and hospitalization in the State, and drinking is by far the leading contributor. Downtown Madison, including the UW-Madison campus, suffers from concerning rates of alcohol-related violence, rape, property destruction, disturbances, and other crimes. In any given month, 70% to 80% of Central Police District calls are related to alcohol. Many individuals who cause and suffer from alcohol-related health and academic problems, as well as alcohol-related crime, are underage drinkers.

Prevention scientists from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) have summarized on a website, www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov, the research as of July 2007 on the effectiveness of various strategies to prevent alcohol overconsumption and alcohol-related crime and violence on campuses and surrounding communities. NIAAA has identified seven prevention strategies for which there is sound scientific evidence.

NIAAA emphasizes that implementing one or two of their recommendations is bound to fail. Because alcohol overconsumption and alcohol-related violence and other crimes have multiple and complicated causes, and because the best prevention strategies confer only modest benefit, NIAAA recommends that colleges and communities implement a comprehensive prevention program that employs as many research-based strategies as possible. Such strategies should be targeted at the interaction between campuses and communities, the campus and community environments, and individual young people.

The intent of this document is to promote the implementation of research-based alcohol prevention strategies, which would lead to improved health and safety for all Downtown Madison residents, including UW-Madison students. In this document, we briefly describe each NIAAA-recommended strategy. Then we describe the current implementation of each strategy by the UW-Madison, the City of Madison, and the State of Wisconsin. Finally, we offer possible approaches for enhancing implementation of each strategy and offer benchmarks for January 2009 as starting points for further discussion. An appendix briefly describes the “best-practice” implementation of these strategies in other locales.

While this report is constructed to address accountabilities of, and propose benchmarks for, the City of Madison, the State of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin, we acknowledge that we, as citizens of Madison and residents of downtown also have accountability for an environment that encourages and specifically does not now sufficiently discourage overconsumption of alcohol.

While we feel that we, as a neighborhood association, have made significant progress through our Alcohol Issues Committee and our “Madison’s Culture of Alcohol” programs, we should redouble our own efforts to **create an environment in which alcohol can be enjoyed without negatively affecting public health, public safety, and quality of life.**

And, we want to collaborate with the City, the University and the State to establish meaningful citizen-based benchmarks, which can complement and strengthen the efforts of our academic, municipal and state partners.

Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc.

Effective Strategy on the Interaction between Campuses and Communities

NIAAA-Recommended Research-Based Strategy 1

Form a campus–community collaboration

Background

Campus-community collaborations have demonstrated their ability to address alcohol-related issues in many localities, including many college towns. Such collaborations can help illuminate gaps in prevention programs, identify creative responses, and advocate for necessary funding and political support.

Current Implementation

We commend University and City leaders for jointly creating and funding an alcohol policy position on the Mayor's staff. However, even the most successful alcohol policy coordinator could never match the accomplishments of a successful campus-community collaboration. The lack of such a collaboration has impeded progress on the implementation of research-based alcohol prevention strategies. A collaboration would be most effective if it focused on research-based alcohol prevention strategies, served as a vehicle for setting and tracking progress on implementation, and promoted policy change to support its work.

Participants could include:

- UW-Madison/City of Madison Alcohol Policy Coordinator
- The UW-Madison's Chancellor's Office
- The UW-Madison Dean of Students Office
- The UW-Madison Housing Office
- The UW-Madison Campus Police
- UW-Madison alcohol prevention and intervention experts
- UW-Madison Faculty Senate
- UW-Madison Student Government
- Associated Students of Madison
- UW-Madison Pan-Hellenic Association
- UW-Madison Athletic Department
- UW-Madison Alumni Association
- Edgewood College
- Madison Area Technical College
- City of Madison Mayor's Office
- City of Madison Common Council
- City of Madison Police
- City of Madison Attorney's Office
- City of Madison Municipal Court
- Alcohol License Review Committee
- Madison Metropolitan School District
- City/County Health Department
- Dane County Executive Office
- Dane County District Attorney's Office
- The Circuit Court Judiciary
- State Legislature
- Business representatives
- Various neighborhoods of downtown Madison and the campus environs
- Representatives of outlying neighborhoods
- Other interested individuals and groups

To facilitate the collaboration's success, collaboration members who are effective advocates for research-based alcohol prevention should sit on appropriate City Boards and Committees, including those with representation from the hospitality industry.

Possible Approaches

Approaches that could be taken, as part of a comprehensive prevention program, are:

- That a campus-community collaboration form and meet monthly with the goal of fostering the comprehensive implementation of research-based alcohol prevention strategies in and around Downtown Madison
- That the collaboration be served by a professional facilitator and staff who are hired by CNI with funds provided by the City, the participating colleges, and CNI in proportion to their annual budgets
- That participants who are in a position to implement research-based prevention strategies publicly set measurable policy, process, and outcome objectives and report at least annually on their progress toward these objectives
- That the collaboration educate appropriate policymakers on research-based alcohol prevention strategies
- That the City appoint collaboration members or other effective citizen-advocates to serve on City Boards and Committees that affect the implementation of research-based alcohol prevention strategies

Subject to further discussion, we suggest the following benchmarks for January 2009:

- The collaboration has been meeting monthly since at least April 2008
- All appropriate participants publicly announced their research-based alcohol prevention objectives by July 2008
- The collaboration has produced at least one report for policymakers
- Collaboration members or other citizen-advocates serve on all City Boards and Committees that affect the implementation of research-based alcohol prevention strategies
- The Collaboration ensures that appropriate baseline and follow-up data are collected for gauging progress toward the benchmarks proposed in this document

Effective Campus-Based and Community-Based Strategies

NIAAA-Recommended Research-Based Strategy 2

Increase enforcement of minimum drinking age laws

Background

Increasing the legal age for purchase and consumption of alcohol has been highly successful in reducing underage drinking and alcohol-related problems. Most studies suggest that higher legal drinking ages reduce alcohol consumption, and over half have found that a higher legal drinking age is associated with decreased rates of traffic crashes. Several studies have shown that a legal drinking age of 21 prevents substantial numbers of deaths of 18- to 20-year-olds. Studies also indicate that minimum drinking age laws are less effective if they are not consistently enforced. Moreover, the certainty of consequences is key in deterring undesirable behavior.

Current Implementation

Most individuals who break alcohol laws and regulations in downtown Madison and on the UW-Madison campus have little or no fear of legal or disciplinary sanctions. For example:

- State law prohibits alcohol outlets from serving underage individuals who are not with parents or spouses of legal age. The City is responsible for enforcing these laws. Some alcohol outlets near campus adhere strictly to this law. Others have a tacit policy: if an individual can produce a reasonable fake ID, the outlet can avoid legal action, so the individual is served. The result is that many underage individuals possess fake IDs and have no difficulty obtaining alcohol at nearby alcohol outlets.
- When the Madison or UW Police cite underage drinkers, they frequently discover fake IDs. Many underage individuals who have received citations for underage drinking indicate that the police are lenient on issuing citations for fake IDs when individuals cooperate with the police.
- We salute the Madison Police for its success in reducing the numbers of large house parties. When the Madison Police discover that alcohol is being dispensed illegally at house parties, party hosts who are not cooperative with the police and their safety procedures are charged for many infractions, while hosts who are cooperative are often charged minimally. In most cases, underage party attendees are not charged if they cooperate with police and do not live at the house. Current enforcement does not deter underage individuals from attending house parties.
- When the Madison Police encounter large groups of disorderly and/or underage drinkers, most individuals are not cited. One reason for spotty enforcement is that the police wish to maintain good will, so that people will not hesitate to call for help in future emergencies. Another reason is that the police often lack the staff, especially on weekends, to safely issue numerous citations while maintaining availability for other police calls. We salute the City for its Downtown Safety Initiative and for its plans to expand its police force. Perhaps some of these resources can be applied toward increasing enforcement of underage drinking laws.
- UW regulations permit drinking in residence halls by legal-age students, but underage students may not drink or possess alcohol. The UW reports that orientation of new freshmen includes discussion of campus alcohol regulations by housefellows, but the majority of 200 students

who attended a particular class at UW-Madison reported that their housefellow delivered alcohol orientation in a cursory or frivolous manner, and some reported receiving no alcohol orientation at all.

- The UW reports that housefellow in residence halls are responsible for enforcing alcohol regulations. There are no reports on the numbers of underage students who have been reported by housefellow for possessing or consuming alcohol in residence halls.
- Prosecutorial and judicial leniency contribute to underage drinkers' perceptions of impunity. Such individuals perceive that enforcement of alcohol laws and regulations is soft at all levels. Police frequently do not issue citations or cite for single offenses when multiple offenses have been committed. Prosecutors often reduce charges. Judges and Deans have been lenient.
- When individuals are cited and appear before Municipal Court, judges often "hold open" a case for a 12-month period, and penalties are forgiven if no second offense occurs during that period. While a possible benefit of this strategy has been a low rate of recidivism among these relatively few individuals, a possible negative impact has been the lost opportunity to convey to thousands of other individuals that first-time alcohol violations are not tolerated. Another effect of prosecutorial and judicial leniency has been frustration and further decreases in enforcement by police.

For law enforcement to succeed as an alcohol prevention strategy, potential violators must perceive that penalties will be applied swiftly and consistently. When individuals have little or no fear of legal or disciplinary sanctions, the potential deterrent effect of law enforcement as an alcohol prevention strategy is diminished.

Possible Approaches

An approach that could be taken, as part of a comprehensive prevention program, are:

- That enforcement of current laws and regulations be strengthened so that individuals believe that breaking laws and regulations incurs substantial risk of significant legal or disciplinary sanctions.

Subject to further discussion, we suggest the following benchmarks for January 2009:

- There has been a doubling of the numbers of individuals who are cited by the Madison Police and penalized for underage drinking and for possessing false identification
- There has been a doubling of the numbers of individuals who are cited by the UW Police and penalized for underage drinking
- There has been a doubling of the numbers of students who are disciplined by the University for drinking-related infractions that have occurred inside and outside of residence halls
- An alcohol court is established to enhance prosecution of underage drinking laws, and its purpose and proceedings are widely publicized

NIAAA-Recommended Research-Based Strategy 3**Restrict alcohol retail outlet density**Background

Studies on the number of alcohol licenses or outlets per population size have found a strong relationship between the density of alcohol outlets, risky and heavy alcohol consumption, and related problems such as violence, other crime, and health problems. Numbers of outlets may be restricted directly or indirectly through policies that make licenses more difficult to obtain such as increasing the cost of a license.

Current Implementation

Madison's new ordinance that restricts the density of licensed bars in the downtown and campus area is a positive step forward. However, density is likely to remain at the current high level for the foreseeable future. Therefore, a very high percentage of police calls will continue to be for alcohol-related offenses, and downtown crime and violence will continue to be a concern.

An additional concern is that some establishment owners have circumvented licensing regulations by obtaining licenses for restaurants that operate as bars, and overall downtown capacity to serve alcohol during late-night hours has continued to grow. Continued circumvention of Madison's distinction between bars and restaurants, and continued expansion of late-night alcohol service capacity in restaurants threaten to make the current density cap ineffective. The Alcohol License Review Committee needs to be mindful that increasing alcohol service capacity downtown will inevitably bring more crime and violence.

Possible Approaches

Approaches that could be taken, as part of a comprehensive prevention program, are:

- That a subsequent ordinance substantially reduce the density of alcohol outlets in areas with high rates of alcohol-related crime and violence
- That the City develop a mechanism to ensure that restaurants continue to operate as restaurants, not as bars, especially during late-night hours
- That the City develop a mechanism to ensure that there is no further expansion of the total downtown capacity to serve alcohol during late-night hours, whether in bars or restaurants
- That the City aggressively pursue alcohol license revocation for restaurants that operate as bars and take advantage of such opportunities to decrease late-night, downtown alcohol service capacity

Subject to further discussion, we suggest the following benchmarks for January 2009:

- Total late-night, downtown alcohol service capacity has decreased by 5%

NIAAA-Recommended Research-Based Strategy 4

Increase prices and excise taxes on alcoholic beveragesBackground

A substantial body of research has shown that higher alcoholic beverage prices are associated with lower levels of alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems, especially among young people. Taxes on alcohol can serve a dual role of curtailing heavy consumption and offsetting alcohol-related economic costs to general taxpayers, such as the costs of law enforcement and the costs of treatment services and healthcare services for medical complications of drinking by uninsured and underinsured individuals.

Current Implementation

The state of Wisconsin's alcohol excise tax is about six tenths of a cent for each 12-ounce bottle of beer. This tax has lost 82% of its value to inflation since it was last raised in 1969. In the US, only Wyoming has a lower beer tax. State law allows only the State to levy alcohol taxes, thwarting local governments that wish to raise alcohol taxes as an alcohol prevention strategy, and leaving such governments to pay for alcohol-related law enforcement problems and other expenses. Madison's license fees for alcohol retail outlets are already at the state's maximum.

Local governments could establish special taxing districts or other assessments that would increase outlets' operating expenses and, in turn, prices of alcoholic beverages. The City of Madison has not taken advantage of this strategy.

Possible Approaches

Approaches that could be taken, as part of a comprehensive prevention program, are:

- That the State substantially increase alcohol taxes and share revenues with local governments, which pay for alcohol-related law enforcement and alcohol treatment
- That the State abolish the cap on license fees for alcohol retail outlets
- That University and City officials vigorously support efforts to increase statewide alcohol taxes and licensing fees
- That the City investigate and pursue other options for levying additional taxes and fees from alcohol retail outlets in the downtown area

Subject to further discussion, we suggest the following benchmarks for January 2009:

- Downtown prices of alcohol have increased by at least twenty percent in the downtown areas of highest density of alcohol-related crime and violence
- Legislation is introduced to bring Wisconsin's alcohol excise taxes more in line with the cost of alcohol to society

NIAAA-Recommended Research-Based Strategy 5**Promote responsible beverage service policies**Background

Studies suggest that bartenders, waiters, and others in the hospitality industry would welcome written policies about responsible service of alcohol and training in how to implement them appropriately. Policies could include serving alcohol in standard sizes, limiting sales of pitchers, cutting off service of alcohol to intoxicated patrons, promoting alcohol-free drinks and food, and eliminating last-call announcements.

Servers and other staff could receive training in skills such as slowing alcohol service, refusing service to intoxicated patrons, checking age identification, and detecting false identification. To prevent sales to underage patrons, it is important to back identification policies with penalties for noncompliance.

Electronic scanners can help establishments detect underage, tampered, fake, and shared IDs. Scanner systems can print custom wristbands, which can help identify unauthorized patrons. Systems can store picture of patrons. Information gathered by scanner systems could be turned over to the police to aid in investigating and controlling alcohol-related crimes.

Current Implementation

Currently the State of Wisconsin requires very basic training and prohibits communities from requiring additional training for licensing. It has been a positive step forward that Madison's Alcohol License Review Committee elicits commitments to participate in more rigorous server training from some establishments who have broken alcohol service laws. The City could require all licensed establishments to use electronic scanners to detect fake IDs, but has only done so on a case-by-case basis.

Possible Approaches

Approaches that could be taken, as part of a comprehensive prevention program, are:

- That a subgroup of the campus-community collaboration investigate and produce a report on scanner options for consideration by policymakers and alcohol establishment owners
- That the State strengthen the minimum requirements for server training
- That the State allow local governments to tailor server training to their unique environments
- That the State, County, or City require licensed outlets to authenticate customers' IDs with electronic scanners
- That UW-Madison use scanners at all permanently licensed venues

Subject to further discussion, we suggest the following benchmarks for January 2009:

- Fifty percent of all downtown establishments use electric scanners for patrons after 10pm
- All UW facilities with permanent alcohol licenses use electric scanners
- Legislation to allow more local control of server training is introduced in Wisconsin

Effective Strategies for Individual College Students

NIAAA-Recommended Research-Based Strategy 6

Implement universal alcohol screening and brief intervention

Background

It has been demonstrated that risky and problem drinkers who receive brief, personalized, face-to-face motivational enhancement sessions reduce their alcohol consumption. This strategy also reduces negative consequences of excessive drinking, such as driving after drinking, riding with an intoxicated driver, citations for traffic violations, and injuries.

The initial component of a brief intervention program involves brief verbal screening of all individuals, not just those who manifest obvious risky behavior. Individuals whose screens suggest risky drinking receive brief interventions.

An ongoing study by UW-Madison researchers is finding that brief interventions are effective for students at five campuses, including UW-Madison and two other UW campuses.

Current Implementation

The University has reported that all patients at University Health Services are being screened, and those with screens “will receive brief interventions.” Currently the delivery of brief interventions is said to be contingent on the skills, interest, and time constraints of individual healthcare providers, and many students with positive verbal screens are currently not receiving brief interventions. Experts have found that such services are provided systematically in most clinical settings only when dedicated staff is available to deliver such services.

UW-Madison reports that the relatively small proportion of students whose drinking comes to the attention of police, housing personnel, deans, and advisors are referred for brief interventions. This selective approach may help prevent recurrent episodes of problem drinking but will not prevent initial episodes.

UW-Madison students are asked to complete an online alcohol screening and intervention program, but completion rates and effectiveness are unknown.

Possible Approaches

Approaches that could be taken, as part of a comprehensive prevention program:

- That UW-Madison systematically provide alcohol screening and brief intervention services to all students
- That the State or the UW System require all of its colleges and university to provide such services, since risky and heavy drinking by such students generates economic and other costs for all state residents.

Subject to further discussion, we suggest the following benchmarks for January 2009:

- 75% of all UW students have undergone brief verbal screening for risky or problem drinking
- 75% of all those students who screened positive have received a brief intervention

NIAAA-Recommended Research-Based Strategy 7**Challenge students' alcohol expectancies**Background

Students who receive a particular kind of alcohol education are left with more balanced and realistic perceptions of the positive and negative consequences of risky and heavy drinking. In this particular kind of education, students are asked first about their perceptions of what will happen if they drink to intoxication. They then receive objective information and listen to stories of other students who suffered problems from their drinking. These educational programs prompt many students to change their perceptions and engage in less risky drinking.

Current Implementation

UW-Madison reports that it challenges student assumptions about drinking via written letters from the Chancellor and other UW officials, and via orientation sessions that are conducted by housefellows in residence halls. A letter from the Chancellor encourages parents to have discussions about drinking with their freshmen children. UW-Madison began in 2005 to notify students' parents when students under 21 years old were involved in dangerous or illicit drinking incidents, such as drinking that prompted admission to a detoxification center.

While the letter from the Chancellor is a welcome addition, the extent to which parents speak with their freshmen children about drinking is unknown, and research has not documented that such talks can modify alcohol expectancies. No research has demonstrated that general letters from university officials are effective at modifying student drinking behaviors. As stated previously, the majority of 200 students who attended a particular class reported that their alcohol orientation by housefellows was delivered in a cursory or frivolous manner, and some reported receiving no alcohol orientation at all.

Parental notification has apparently been helpful, since recidivism has been low. However, this strategy only addresses students who have already caused danger or harm. As reported in the New York Times on September 7, 2007, after parental notification began at UW-Madison, the numbers of first-time student admissions to a detoxification center have increased. More efforts are needed to prevent first-time dangerous and harmful events.

Possible Approaches

Approaches that could be taken, as part of a comprehensive prevention program:

- That all entering UW-Madison undergraduate students, including transfer students, receive the kind of alcohol expectancy education that research has shown to be effective in reducing risky and heavy drinking behavior
- That the State or UW System require all of its colleges to provide such educational programs, since risky and heavy drinking by such students generates economic and other costs for all state residents

Subject to further discussion, we suggest the following benchmark for January 2009:

- 90% of all UW students who matriculated in the fall of 2008 have received alcohol expectancy education like that which research has shown is effective at reducing alcohol overconsumption

Examples of Implementation of Best Alcohol Prevention Practices

Form a campus and community collaboration involving all major stakeholders

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln formed a campus-community collaboration that focused on reducing high-risk drinking among college students. It included forty community leaders, college administrators, students, parents, faculty, hospitality owners, police, medical professionals, and civic officials. NU Directions coalition members were able to develop a better understanding of the behavioral habits, traits and motivations for college students who engage in high-risk drinking. Their findings are available at their web site: www.nudirections.org, which also illustrates how alcohol prevention information can be compiled in an accessible format.

After an off-campus disturbance at Pennsylvania State University resulted in damage to public property, Penn State's President sought the assistance of the state's governor to broaden alcohol prevention efforts statewide. The focus of the Pennsylvania initiative is the formation of a campus and community partnership that will develop and implement environmental alcohol and other drug prevention strategies. The Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board provides a comprehensive training and technical assistance program and funds for mini-grants. For more information, see their web site: <http://www.lcb.state.pa.us/edu/site/default.asp>

Increase enforcement of minimum drinking age laws

A preponderance of alcohol sales to underage individuals led Minnesota citizens to work for better enforcement of laws to stop minors from having easy access to alcohol. The citizen-based Action on Alcohol and Teens set up an e-mail action alert system, started a newsletter, and spoke to civic groups about the problem. Efforts resulted in a St. Paul City Council mandate to conduct yearly compliance checks of liquor establishments, and a decision to prosecute parents and others over age 21 that illegally provide alcohol to minors. For more information see AAT's web site: <http://www.winternet.com/~martinez/>

Restrict alcohol retail outlet density

The California State Legislature adopted legislation authorizing local municipalities to control the number of bars and alcohol retail outlets in their communities. These rules apply to license requests in areas that are already oversaturated and/or areas that have high crime rates. Under the statute, high crime is defined as an area that exceeds the city's average crime rate by 20 percent. Under such conditions, a license application must be denied unless there is a finding of need, termed "Public Convenience or Necessity." Under this law, the burden of proof falls on the license applicant. For more information see: http://www.publicstrategies.org/east/pdf/PCN_IssBrief_withInsert.pdf

Increase prices and excise taxes on alcoholic beverages

In 2003, the National Academy of Sciences issued its report, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*. Among its many recommendations, that report promoted the public health and safety benefits of raising state and federal taxes on alcoholic beverages, especially beer. Alcohol tax revenue can be earmarked for alcohol treatment programs, thus enhancing health care and treatment options for state residents. States that already do so are: Arizona, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, Montana, New Jersey, Nevada, Oregon, Tennessee and Utah. For more information, see the “Factbook on State Beer Taxes,” at <http://www.jointogether.org/resources/a-factbook-on-state-beer-taxes.html>

Promote responsible beverage service policies in social and commercial settings

In North Carolina, retail and beer and wine executives, the Alcohol Beverage Control agency, and alcohol law enforcement officials formed a coalition called the Responsible Alcohol Sales and Service (RASS) Coalition. Their goal is to reduce sales of alcohol to underage persons. Their comprehensive state plan includes strengthening penalties for adult providers and underage purchasers; using color-coded drivers licenses to check age; conducting secret shopper programs to monitor sales; and holding a media campaign to let people know about the problem. Benefits include increased customer respect for and understanding of retailers’ responsibilities, increased community support, and greater public and retailer awareness of the dangers of underage drinking. For more information see <http://www.wecheckid.com/aboutrass.shtml>

Implement universal alcohol screening and brief intervention

The following colleges and universities are implementing systematic alcohol screening and intervention programs:

- Bristol Community College, Fall River, MA
- New Mex. Highlands Univ., Las Vegas, NM
- Northeastern University, Boston, MA
- University of California – Los Angeles
- State University of New York – Albany
- University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
- University of Delaware, Newark, DE
- University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT
- University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI
- University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
- University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN
- University of Texas at El Paso

For more information, see <http://sbirt.samhsa.gov/grantees/college.htm>

The Wisconsin Initiative to Promote Healthy Lifestyles is helping 20 primary care clinics around the state implement systematic alcohol and drug screening, brief intervention, referral, and treatment programs. For more information, see <http://www.wiphl.org>

Implement alcohol expectancy education

George Mason University and the University of South Florida include alcohol expectancy education in their alcohol prevention programming for students. For more information, see: <http://www.higheredcenter.org/grants/0006high-risk-grant-winners.html>