

Excellence in Prevention – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

Name of Program/Strategy: Social Host Ordinance

Report Contents

1. Overview and description
 2. Implementation considerations (if available)
 3. Descriptive information
 4. Outcomes
 5. Cost effectiveness report (Washington State Institute of Public Policy – if available)
 6. Washington State results (from Performance Based Prevention System (PBPS) – if available)
 7. Who is using this program/strategy
 8. Study populations
 9. Quality of studies
 10. Readiness for Dissemination
 11. Costs (if available)
 12. Contacts for more information
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1. Overview and description

A local ordinance that establishes either a civil or criminal offense for a person who provides alcohol to persons under 21 years of age and enables law enforcement to cite the individual who hosted the party or who owns or controls the property where parties occur. These responsible individuals may include older peers, parents, landowners and tenants. These ordinances are specifically directed at adults who might dismiss the state laws concerning underage drinking, health- related warnings, insist on serving minors, host parties and/or look the other way when others host on their property. The intent is not to seek out and punish adults who are regularly monitoring their children and who take reasonable precautions to prevent their children from hosting underage parties.

2. Implementation considerations (if available)

Excellence in Prevention – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

3. Descriptive information

Areas of Interest	Substance abuse prevention
Outcomes	
Outcome Categories	Alcohol
Ages	
Gender	Male Female
Races/Ethnicities	American Indian or Alaska Native Asian Black or African American Hispanic or Latino White Race/ethnicity unspecified
Settings	
Geographic Locations	Urban Suburban Rural and/or frontier Tribal
Implementation History	
NIH Funding/CER Studies	
Adaptations	
Adverse Effects	
IOM Prevention Categories	Universal

4. Outcomes

Scientific Evidence

While social host ordinances have been established in a number of localities across the country, no specific research concerning the effects of such an ordinance on reducing underage social access to alcohol has been undertaken. However, increased visible enforcement of underage drinking in general has been shown

Excellence in Prevention – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

to reduce drinking, binge drinking and harm in general. Therefore, there is precedent for the potential of this enforcement strategy to reduce social availability of alcohol.

In a second study, social host liability laws were associated with decreases in reported heavy drinking and in decreases in drinking and driving by lighter drinkers (Stout, Sloan, Liang, & Davies, 2000). They had no effect on drinking and driving by heavier drinkers. The conflicting findings may reflect the lack of a comprehensive program that insures that social hosts are aware of their potential liability. Although social host liability may send a powerful message, that message must be effectively disseminated before it can have a deterrent effect.

- 5. Cost effectiveness report (Washington State Institute of Public Policy – if available)**
- 6. Washington State results (from Performance Based Prevention System (PBPS) – if available)**
- 7. Who is using this program/strategy**

Washington Counties	Oregon Counties
*See Section 10: "Readiness for Dissemination"	

- 8. Study populations**
- 9. Quality of studies**

The documents below were reviewed for Quality of Research. The research point of contact can provide information regarding the studies reviewed and the availability of additional materials, including those from more recent studies that may have been conducted.

References

Stout, E. M., Sloan, F. A., Liang, L., & Davies, H. H. (2000). Reducing harmful alcohol-related behaviors: Effective regulatory methods. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 61(3), 402-412.

10. Readiness for Dissemination

The communities of Mercer Island and Rainier have adopted Social Host Ordinances at the time of this publication (June 28, 2012).

Excellence in Prevention is a project of Oregon Addiction and Mental Health Services and Washington Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery. Information is drawn from many sources, including the National Registry for Effective Prevention Programs (NREPP), sponsored by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

Excellence in Prevention – descriptions of the prevention programs and strategies with the greatest evidence of success

11. Costs (if available)

12. Contacts

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Learn More by Visiting: <http://www.drugfreeactionalliance.org/parents-who-host/>