

Lakewood's CHOICE Strategic Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/INTRODUCTION

Overview of Plan

CHOICE stands for **C**hoosing **H**ealthy **O**ptions and **I**gniting **C**ommunity **E**ngagement. This coalition started from the ground up and brought several agencies together to focus directly on youth substance use for the first time. There had been other attempts to energize around youth substance abuse prevention, but they were unsuccessful. Timing and the right people have made the start up of the coalition a great success. CHOICE is a Cohort 3 community for the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery's (DBHR) Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI). Some of the major partners in the coalition include: City of Lakewood, Lakewood Police Department, Franciscan's St. Clare Hospital, Greater Lakes Mental Healthcare, Clover Park School District, Lakewood Boys and Girls Club, Communities in Schools, and Safe Streets. The coalition has adopted a Leadership Team to provide strategic direction and guide its efforts and two sub-committees to focus on two specific areas of the community.

Mission Statement: *CHOICE is a community coalition focused on reducing youth substance use by increasing awareness, reducing access, and building pathways to healthy options for youth and families.*

Definition of Community

Lakewood is the second largest city in Pierce County and the seventeenth largest in the state of Washington. It is strategically located between Sea-Tac International Airport and Olympia, the state's capital. Lakewood is home to 60,000 residents, over 3,200 businesses, and three retail trade areas including Towne Center Mall; 2.5 miles of Interstate 5 freeway frontage along Pacific Highway; and a thriving International District. Lakewood also is the host community to Joint Base Lewis-McChord and Camp Murray, two major military installations. In 2011, Lakewood was named one of the nation's One Hundred Best Communities for Young People by America's Promise Alliance for the fifth year in a row. Lakewood has numerous lakes, parks and golf courses for citizens and visitors to enjoy.

Two military bases are Lakewood's eastern and southern borders, Camp Murray and Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM). JBLM is one of the top five bases in the United States. Proximity to military bases provides access to over 55,000 soldiers and their families. Current and potential military contracting opportunities attract businesses that work on JBLM or Camp Murray and/or have locations in the vicinity. They lodge in City hotels, live in our community, and buy goods and services from local companies. There remains a significant need for off base services and access to restaurants, shopping, and various services.

Priorities identified

Beginning with its inception, the priority of the CHOICE coalition has been to engage and connect the community, specifically in the Springbrook and Tillicum-Woodbrook neighborhoods within Lakewood. By connecting community members and providing education, CHOICE hopes to increase school performance, decrease youth delinquency, and improve mental health of youth. CHOICE plans to achieve this by addressing the following risk factors:

- Lack of community connectedness and engagement
- Alcohol Availability - Social access for youth
- Favorable attitudes towards substance use and anti-social behaviors
- Poor family management
- Early initiation of problem behaviors