



Connie Beck, Director
Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

news release

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Grant supports youth substance use prevention

A \$625,000 grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program will continue to provide funding for the Humboldt Allies for Substance Abuse Prevention (ASAP).

A community coalition founded in 2002, ASAP works to reduce and prevent substance use among local youth.

The grant was awarded to the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), which provides staff for ASAP. It will be distributed in \$125,000 increments over the next five years.

ASAP is made up of members of all ages from across the community working together to build safe and healthy communities, free of drug-related harm. Strategies include youth leadership development, media campaigns, community education and events, and advocacy for policies that impact communitywide change.

"Collaboration and caring are what this coalition is all about," said ASAP Chair Art Wilson. "It's a diverse bunch of people with skills, passion and creativity who are dedicated to making our community healthier. That's what keeps me coming back."

An earlier DFC grant supported the coalition's efforts from 2010 through 2015, and included a focus on safe storage and proper disposal of prescription medications. It also supported the passage of a social host ordinance in Eureka which penalizes hosts of underage drinking parties. Additionally, ASAP has sponsored youth-focused Photo Voice projects as well as participating in other community awareness campaigns.

In March 2016, ASAP collaborated with DHHS, Humboldt Waste Management Authority, the Humboldt Independent Practice Association and Cloney's pharmacies to install medication disposal bins at Cloney's McKinleyville location and one of its Eureka locations. There are currently 12 disposal bins across the county, many of which ASAP has helped establish.

The new grant will continue to support existing projects such as these as well as make it possible for the Coalition to create a community-informed plan to support future goals and activities.

According to the 2017-18 California Healthy Kids Survey, Humboldt County teenagers have reported easy access to alcohol and other drugs. Studies show that early onset of substance use can affect brain development and is linked to higher rates of addiction later in life. Communities across the country with DFC coalitions consistently report decreases in alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and prescription drug misuse among middle and high school students.

Community members are invited to attend ASAP's meetings and join the Coalition. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 12, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. at the Community Wellness Center, 908 Seventh St. in Eureka. Members in outlying areas can join meetings using a web platform.

For more information, check out the coalition's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/humboldtasap or call 707-445-6023.

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