



Chelsea
Community
Hospital

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CHELSEA GETTING “SERIOUS” ABOUT HIGH RISK YOUTH BEHAVIOR

CHELSEA, MI – Chelsea Community Hospital (CCH) announced this week the launch of an aggressive community-wide initiative designed to prevent high risk behaviors among 10-15 year-old kids in Chelsea. The Chelsea Community Youth Collaborative (CCYC) was originally conceived as a joint initiative by CCH and the Chelsea School District. This ambitious, community wide campaign will commence just before the start of the school year.

CCH has recently hired Reiley Lewis, MPH, as full time Prevention Program Director, to facilitate the program. Ms. Lewis will facilitate the program and coordinate awareness events and activities. She will also act as liaison between the advisory board, the youth advisory committee, local community leaders, Chelsea Community Hospital (BHS), and the representative organizations involved.

The initiative began in November of 2007 when personnel from CCH Behavioral Health Services met with school representatives, counselors, social workers, and school psychologists to discuss the growing concerns of adolescent behavior, specifically drug and alcohol abuse. Two months later, a planning group was assembled with representation from the Chelsea schools, local law enforcement, area churches, community service and civic organizations, and concerned parents. The group met on several occasions discussing current initiatives being offered. They also discussed the research trends of middle and high school students, in particular those between ages 10-15, as it relates to risky behavior. Several students representing target age groups were asked to respond to a series of questions and to speak to the group in an open forum.

Based on the information gathered from these meetings and additional information provided from the school district and the State of Michigan, an action plan was set in motion. The Coghlan Family Foundation, cofounded by Michael and Suzanne Coghlan of Saline, made a multi year financial commitment to help fund the program. The Coghlan's have been active members of the planning group since the beginning of the initiative. “As parents and members of a small community, my wife and I have made it our mission to do everything we can to prevent teen substance abuse,” says Michael Coghlan. “We searched for that partner to help us in this cause and Chelsea Community Hospital was the right choice. We’re anxious to get this program up and running with the potential to take it to other communities to help as many families as possible.”

Also just announced, Chelsea based advertising agency, Edgar Norman Creative (ENC) was hired to create a multi faceted marketing and public relations campaign, designed to reach both middle and high school kids, their parents, and the community at large. Students and parents will get a full dose of the program soon after school begins in late September.



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“We will be rolling out a campaign with a clear message that says young people are an important part of this community, and their decisions directly impact their health and safety,” says Program Prevention Director, Reiley Lewis. “We will inform people of the causes of underage drinking and drug use, and present the means to prevent them through education, skill development, role modeling, family support and positive social networks.”

In addition to the many community factions involved, support is being offered by a Chelsea couple, Dr. Jim O’Neill, Ph.D, and his wife Angela O’Neill, parents and owners of O’Neill Consulting. They have provided consultation in prevention program development and evaluation to over 50 schools, community coalitions and human service agencies in southeastern Michigan. Dr. O’Neill has served as advisor to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, and evaluation consultant to the Michigan Office of Drug Control Policy. Is also Professor of Psychology at Madonna University in Livonia, Michigan.

“Research shows that coalitions are very effective in reducing underage drinking and related youth risk behaviors when multiple sectors of the community offer a variety of prevention strategies,” says Dr. O’Neill. Mrs. O’Neill noted, “It’s exciting to be part of this important initiative right here in our town. Chelsea has the right mix of resources and dedicated individuals to make this collaborative extremely successful.”

The campaign focuses on key transition points from elementary school to middle school, to high school, and students in the 10-15 year old age group. Earlier this year, the collaboration committee offered a parent education series through McKune Memorial Library. CCH’s Behavioral Health Services is developing an extended assessment intervention program for kids and their parents who have been identified as having some substance abuse involvement. Chelsea schools will continue a number of initiatives including support groups, mentoring for 5th through 9th graders and “Concerned Persons” groups in the middle and high schools.

“Our goal is to not only inform the community of the behavioral issues and serious repercussions of their consequences, we also want everyone to know that there is professional help and support right here in Chelsea,” says Nancy Siegrist, Director of Behavioral Health Services at CCH. “This is a social problem, not a geographic problem. It happens here in Chelsea, and it needs to be dealt with seriously by the entire community.”

Chelsea’s history of alcohol related tragedies over the years, and recent unhealthy behaviors in both the middle and high school has been a driving force for this initiative. “The reality of the situation is, adolescents are participating in a variety of high risk behaviors today more than ever,” says Andrew Ingall, Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Chelsea School District. “It’s not just a problem in their homes, it’s not just a problem with the schools: we need to work on this together, as a community. This is a great beginning.”

More information can found on the CCH web site at www.srslychelsea.org. or, email Reiley



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CCYC VISION

CCYC has a vision that Chelsea will embrace the health and wellness of its families and that underage drinking and other drug abuse will not be tolerated in this community – under any circumstances.

We believe that young people engaging in high risk behavior can be combated through education, skill development, positive role modeling and peer influence.

We believe that parents need to learn skills and strategies for talking with their children about high risk behaviors and their consequences.

We believe that parents and the whole adult community need to model healthy, responsible behavior for our children and for one another.

We believe that healthy behavior (especially by our youth) should be recognized, encouraged and supported.

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Chelsea Community Hospital is an independent, non-profit medical facility established in 1970. Located in Chelsea, Michigan, CCH is nationally recognized for both quality of care and patient satisfaction by national ranking organization Press Ganey, and is accredited by the Joint Commission. CCH attracts more than 300 physicians in almost all disciplines. Services include a Surgery Center, comprehensive orthopedic services, a Women's Health Center led by one of America's Best Doctors, a full continuum of mental health and substance abuse services, a nationally recognized Head Pain Treatment Program, and a 24-hour ER. Please visit www.cch.org for more information on the many programs and services offered at CCH.