



Promoting Positive Futures

## Social Hosting Ordinances

### THE DATA:

**Youth in Gunnison County report high alcohol, tobacco and other drug use and binge drinking among Gunnison County youth starts early** (binge drinking defined as consuming 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row on 1 occasion, 2 or more times in the past 30 days.)

- Gunnison County generated above average responses regarding lifetime ATOD use in the HKCS. According to HKCS, **66% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported having had alcohol in their lifetime, 39% reported having alcohol in the last 30 days and 21% reported binge drinking.** Once students get into high school alcohol seems to be readily available and binge drinking increases dramatically. **20% of 9-12 graders reported binge drinking in 2009.**<sup>1</sup>

**Gunnison County youth believe that it is “easy” to get alcohol.**

- **41% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 86% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders in Gunnison County reported that it was “very easy” or “sort of easy” to get alcohol.**<sup>2</sup> Research has indicated that one typical way underage youth procure alcohol is at parties where parents and other adults have left them unsupervised.<sup>3</sup>

**Young people in Gunnison County also report impaired driving and riding with drunk drivers.**

- In Gunnison County, **23% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders say they have driven after drinking alcohol,** and 32% have ridden in a car driven by someone else who had been drinking alcohol.<sup>4</sup>

### HOME PARTIES AND THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH UNDERAGE DRINKING:

- Although research on the topic is limited, the available research suggests that **home parties are high risk settings for binge drinking and associated alcohol problems.** Very young drinkers are often introduced to heavy drinking behaviors at these events.<sup>5</sup>
- Nationwide, statistics show that **53.4% of underage drinkers drank at someone else’s home** and another **30.3% drank in their own home.**<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See HKCS, Gunnison Community Report.

<sup>2</sup> See HKCS, Gunnison Community Report.

<sup>3</sup> See [www.centurycouncil.org/lib/downloads/iiaa/IIAA\\_Coach\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.centurycouncil.org/lib/downloads/iiaa/IIAA_Coach_Guide.pdf), citing Jones-Webb, et al., 1997, “Relationships among alcohol availability, drinking location, alcohol consumption and drinking problems in adolescents,” Substance Use and Misuse 32, 1261-1285.

<sup>4</sup> See HKCS, Gunnison Community Report

<sup>5</sup> See National Research Council Institute of Medicine. *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility.* Washington DC: National Academy Press, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.MADD.org>.

- In 2008 the City of Gunnison had 58 disturbing the peace cases.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, Gunnison County ranks 17<sup>th</sup> in the state for Juvenile Alcohol Violation Arrests with averages well above the state and national levels. In 2007, Gunnison County had 20 MIP cases which cost a total of \$34,000 to administer, in 2008 there were 13 at a cost of \$22,100 and in 2009 there were 12 cases.<sup>8</sup>

#### **THE GOAL AND ONE PROPOSED SOLUTION:**

- To reduce access and consumption of alcohol by underage youth and the problem behaviors associated with underage drinking, particularly binge drinking, and to provide another tool for law enforcement in dealing with these issues.
- By passing a City ordinance which would hold adults responsible for hosting or knowingly providing a place for underage drinking to occur we would hope to see access and consumption of alcohol by underage youth reduced. As drafted, the ordinance defines a “social host” as an adult who *knowingly* allows drinking on property that he/she owns, leases, or otherwise “controls”.
- 25 states and countless municipalities have passed Social Hosting Ordinances as a way to address underage drinking. Steamboat Springs and Craig have passed Social Host Ordinances in Colorado and law enforcement in these towns are finding the ordinance helpful, especially for habitual party houses.

#### **FAQ’S:**

- **Isn’t providing alcohol to a minor already illegal?** *It is illegal to provide alcohol to a minor unless they are your child. But, when law enforcement arrives on the scene of an underage drinking party, it is often difficult to determine who actually provided the alcohol. These ordinances allows law enforcement to cite the individual who hosts the party.*
- **Why does this ordinance target parties that occur on private residences?** *Parties and gathering on private property have repeatedly been identified as a primary place where youth drink alcohol.*
- **What if I go away and my child has a party, am I liable then?** *Under the proposed ordinance adults are not responsible for hosting the party if they are not home and youth hold a party without the parent’s knowledge. This new law would not change current civil liability law- adults can already be held liable for injuries whether they are present or not.*
- **Does local law enforcement support this?** *The City of Gunnison Police would support any additional tools in their efforts to reduce access and consumption of alcohol by underage youth and addressing the problem behaviors associated with drinking, particularly binge drinking (such as noise violations, sexual assaults, vandalism etc.)*

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7 These figures were supplied by the City of Gunnison Police Department.

8 These figures were supplied by Gunnison County Office of Juvenile Diversion.