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“Underage drinking- it’s not just our issue, it’s your issue. As young people, as adults, and as a community, we are all affected.”

-The Great Brain Drain, March 2010

Prevention Efforts to Keep Youth Safe, Successful, and Alcohol-free

Beginning in 1998, the SUDS Coalition, a cooperative effort of the Stratford Police Department and the Stratford Youth and Family Advisory Board, has been a youth-adult partnership working to reduce underage drinking by raising community awareness of the problems associated with underage drinking and limiting youth access to alcohol. The SUDS Coalition brought together community leaders, school officials, police officers, parents and youth to send a clear, consistent message across the community that underage drinking is inappropriate, unacceptable and harmful through community programs and activities that limited youth access to alcohol, reduced underage drinking and promoted positive youth development.

During the assessment process, SUDS Coalition members prioritized enforcement levels, retail availability,

peer norms, and family norms as the risk factors, which impact Stratford most.

The choice of these risk factors was based on their high changeability and importance to the community. In 2005, underage drinkers consumed 16.2% of all alcohol sold in Connecticut, totaling \$325 million in sales. Nationally, these sales provided profits of \$157 million to the alcohol industry (PIRE 2006). Alcohol retail availability has been particularly lethal in Stratford since it has puts alcohol directly in the hands of many underage youth. It has been noted that some teenagers will wait outside outlets to ask adults to purchase alcohol for them. Situations such as these pose liability issues for all parties involved.

In addressing selected risk factors, it was agreed to place special **emphasis on enforcement**. Activities such as compliance checks have been used to address this need of the community.

As of January 2009, the SUDS Coalition was officially made a subdivision of the Youth and Family Advisory Board, which is advisory to the Mayor’s Office, Local Prevention Council, and Advisory Board to Stratford Community Services, the local Youth Service Bureau. Beginning in January 2010, the new coalition initiative, Partnerships For Success (PFS) Coalition, was assigned by the Board to continue the work of preventing underage drinking and to continue positive community change.

During these past 3 years of funding provided from Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), police enforcement efforts have resulted in increased compliance by liquor outlets, reducing youth access to alcohol.

Thank You

Stratford youth and families

Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)

Stratford Police Department

Stratford Public School

Stratford Library Association

SUDS Coalition

Connecticut Chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving

The Governor’s Prevention Partnership

HYPE (How Youth Positively Entertain)

RYASAP (Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership)

CT Distributors, Inc.

Stratford Youth And Family Advisory Board

Town of Stratford



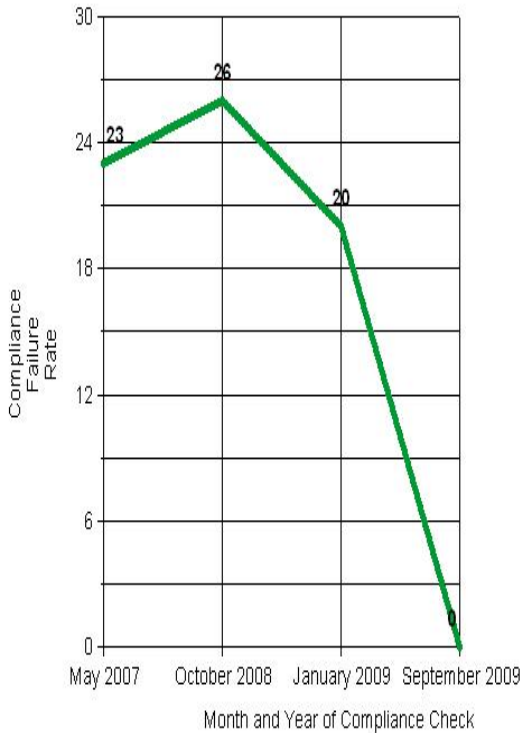
What makes an effective compliance check?

Effective compliance checks:

- Are frequent
- Target outlets most likely to see to minors (i.e. convenience and grocery stores)
- Utilize supervised and age-tested youth
- Publicize enforcement efforts to enhance extent to which compliance check programs and alcohol policies act as deterrents
- Penalize the establishment if an illegal sale is made

-Imm, P. et al (2007) Preventing Underage Drinking; Using Getting to Outcomes with the SAHSHA Strategic Prevention Framework to Achieve Results, http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR403

Stratford Alcohol Compliance Failure Rates 2007-2009



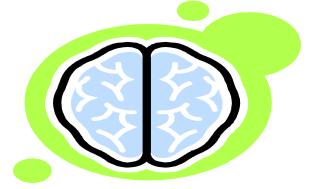
Underage Alcohol Sales Not Allowed in Stratford

Effective enforcement is essential to deter alcohol outlets from selling alcohol to underage customers and to discourage underage youth from attempting to purchase alcohol. To conduct compliance checks, local law enforcement with the assistance of the state Liquor Control Commission supervise undercover youth who attempt to purchase alcohol, penalizing the establishment if the attempt is successful.

During the past 3 years with routine compliance checks, Stratford has a 100% compliance rate with local alcohol retailers. During the September 2009 compliance check, minors were turned away at all 26 liquor establishments in an attempt to buy alcohol. Connecticut Distributors Inc, a local partner in the prevention of underage drinking, conducted a seminar in June 2009 for liquor outlets to help prevent sales to minors.

For more information on compliance checks and other local underage drinking prevention efforts, please contact Denique Weidema at Stratford Community Services at (203) 385-4095 or e-mail: dweidema@townofstratford.com.

**DID YOU MISS
THE GREAT
BRAIN
DRAIN?**



On March 25, 2010 Stratford was among hundred of communities nationwide to hold a Town Hall meeting to address underage drinking. The purpose of the Town Hall Meeting, *The Great Brain Drain*, was to alert the community to new research on the risks of underage drinking and its effects on the developing teen brain. This was also an opportunity to discuss ways to help youth avoid alcohol and learn how Stratford has been combating underage drinking.

The full presentation is available through the Community Services website at: www.townofstratford.com/communityservices.



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Every child in Stratford should have the opportunity to live safe and drug-free. It takes a community to raise a young person; we need your help.

TO LEARN HOW, PLEASE CONTACT STRATFORD COMMUNITY SERVICES.