

Hoquiam to benefit from prevention services

Local News

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HOQUIAM, Wash. - The Hoquiam community has been selected to receive funding to reduce youth alcohol and other drug use, and create a healthier and safer community environment. The support includes funding for training, technical assistance, and community and school-based prevention services.

Hoquiam is one of 52 communities statewide participating in a Prevention Redesign Initiative (PRI), funded by the state Department of Social and Health Services' Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR). PRI supports new or existing coalitions in partnering with parents, youth, educators, health professionals, law enforcement, faith leaders, and local government. Coalitions will identify their highest prevention needs, plan and implement evidence-based strategies, leverage local resources and evaluate the impact of selected programs. "Our goal in redesigning and targeting our state prevention services is to leverage enough resources in high-need communities to achieve greater reductions in substance abuse and the harm it causes," said Chris Imhoff, DBHR's Director. "Community leaders are prepared to use these resources to help young people make healthy choices and succeed," added Imhoff.

PRI's primary goals are to reduce underage drinking among 8th and 10th graders, improve academic performance, and reduce juvenile crime. Alcohol abuse injures and kills more young people than all other drugs combined. The 2012 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey found that prevention efforts are working to reduce teen drinking, however, more than 115,000 youth said they drank in past 30 days.

Because the teen brain is still developing, alcohol and drug use during this time can permanently damage learning and memory, and impairs judgment and impulse control. This puts teens at greater risk for serious injuries and death.

"A number of factors were considered in selecting Hoquiam for services," said Wilma Weber, community coalition coordinator from Grays Harbor County Public Health Department. "These included a variety of data around substance use as well as successes in local policies that influence health. The school district is also highly supportive of the project and these factors show that Hoquiam is ready to benefit from prevention services."

The prevention coalition will begin the planning process soon and encourages community members to join the coalition to help develop a meaningful plan of action for the community.

State and county data from the Washington State Healthy Youth Survey is available at www.AskHYS.net. Information and tips for parents for preventing underage drinking can be found at www.StartTalkingNow.org.