



21 Teens Share Reasons to Stay Above the Influence in Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities PSA

TROY, Mich., Nov. 20, 2020 – Twenty-one high school students from across Oakland County recently pledged to Stay Above the Influence as part of a public service announcement (PSA) created by The Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities, which launched today on its social media channels.

The Alliance filmed this PSA during the pandemic and asked youth advocates from its 21 prevention coalition network why they choose to stay above the influence. Social distancing protocols were followed during the filming. The high school students had a variety of answers – from being a leader, importance of their education and health to sports, family and pursuing their passions and dreams. The Alliance plans a social media campaign that will include a snapshot of each youth with their message to drive home the need to stay above the influence. One teen said, “I stay about the influence because I can focus better in school and make a positive impact on the world.”

“We used our teen advocates in the PSA since there’s nothing more powerful than a message delivered by our peers,” said Julie Brenner, president & CEO, Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities. “The goal of Stay Above the Influence campaign is to help teens stand up to negative pressures, and influences. The more aware one becomes about the influences around them, the more prepared they will be to face them, including the pressure to use drugs and alcohol.”

Drug deaths on the rise in 2020

Drug deaths have risen an average of **13 percent** so far this year over last year, according to mortality data from local and state governments collected by [The New York Times](#), covering 40 percent of the U.S. population.

Due to the critical nature of its work, the Alliance pivoted quickly as COVID-19 hit and moved its programs online due to the pandemic and currently delivers its programming online. The Alliance provides a variety of programs for students –

- A county-wide youth leadership initiative called **PEEPS (Peers Educating and Empowering Peers)**
- **Keep Them Safe, Keep Them Healthy program** allows students to hear compelling testimonies of young adults who have experienced addiction and the challenges they have faced. Students learn the harmful effects of poor decision making and how quickly all forms of substance misuse can spiral out of control. **Substance-specific presentations** educate students and parents alike, addressing the risks of specific substance use, including alcohol, recreational marijuana, prescription drug misuse, electronic nicotine devices (vaping) and tobacco use.
- **ReNEWed** is a mindfulness-based program to reduce stress and anxiety among students that provides multiple opportunities for students to explore emotional health and wellness through peer-to-peer connection.



- **Resolve** is a comprehensive life skills training program designed to address issues specific to individuals at risk of substance misuse and/or in recovery and is targeted to alternative schools, treatment centers and recovery homes.
- **Save A Life** is a free presentation that trains participants on the proper administration of the Intra-Nasal Naloxone overdose reversal drug.

About Above the Influence

[Above the Influence](#) was originally created as a part of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, a program of the Office of National Drug Control Policy but is now a program of the non-profit Partnership for Drug-Free Kids.

The Alliance's The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Partnership for Success Grant paid for the PSA. This grant program works to prevent the onset and reduce the progression of substance abuse and its related problems while strengthening prevention capacity and infrastructure at the community and state level.

Learn how the Alliance helps families struggling with addiction

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MS1YuRa-xmA&feature=youtu.be>.

The Alliance is also holding an **Anti-Vaping Messaging Contest** for Oakland County students in grades sixth through 12th, which runs through December 7, 2020. Students are asked to create an anti-vaping message to be used on t-shirts, posters and social media. All entries should be submitted to Kendra Ruddy at kruddy@achcmi.org by December 7th at 5:00 p.m. Only one entry per student. Find out more at <https://www.facebook.com/allianceofcoalitions/photos/a.1288650551147391/3818867148125706> The first 150 entrants will receive a FREE t-shirt.

About the Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities

The Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities is a substance misuse prevention and wellness organization that supports a 21-coalition prevention partnership in Oakland County serving more than 55 local communities and provides Shatter the Stigma: Family & Recovery Support and education groups for anyone affected by addiction. Predominantly funded by Oakland Community Health Network, the Alliance also provides free Narcan training. The Alliance connects, strengthens, and mobilizes strategic partners to promote healthier communities. Visit www.achcmi.org for more information. For more information, please call 248.221.7101. Follow us on social media on @allianceofcoalitions on Facebook and Instagram and @ACHCMichigan on Twitter. The Alliance recently moved to its new headquarters – 5505 Corporate Drive Suite 301, Troy, MI 48098.

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