

Introduction

This framework for the prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems has been developed so that San Diego County can achieve the greatest efficiency with public dollars and develop a more responsive approach to alcohol, tobacco and drug problem reduction in communities.

The prevention framework incorporates the concept of community partnerships, the application of new, science-based knowledge of alcohol, tobacco and other drug problem reduction, and the development of a system-wide, outcome-driven prevention strategy to address the increasing trend of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among adolescents in San Diego County.

A Timely Response

The emerging view on how public agencies should respond to social problems is radically changing. Traditionally, government is viewed as the body responsible for developing specific services, describing how they should be operated, and defining the specific recipients of the service. Government and other public agencies have acted as caretakers for communities. Recently, approaches to planning services have developed that change the way public agencies interact with communities. The new approach is to interact with community groups as open and equal partners in seeking the public good.

The reorganization of the Department of Health Services into an integrated health services system is a clear example of government finding a better way to serve its citizens. Within the Department of Health Services, Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS) is applying a new understanding of alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems to the principles of community partnerships.

Research has demonstrated the direct relationship between the incidence of alcohol problems and the level of alcohol consumption across a specific population (1). The level of tobacco and other drug use and drug-related problems likely has the same relationship. Since alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems occur within the context of larger social and personal problems, public and private policies regarding availability and other environmental factors become key issues in preventing problems. This new understanding has sharpened the abilities of prevention specialists to develop new strategies to help make healthier communities.

Finally, the nationwide general trend of declining alcohol, tobacco and other drug use is not occurring among young people, especially adolescents. Intervention on this trend is the intent of this framework.

A Proactive Partnership

Public agencies are now demonstrating a greater responsiveness to actual community needs, acknowledging the ability of communities to understand their needs and to more appropriately address their own issues. Further, public agencies now seek to form partnerships with neighborhood residents, families, community organizations, educational institutions, and businesses to develop healthier neighborhoods and provide safer environments for children. This is a recognition that alcohol, tobacco and drug problems cut across individual, family and organizational boundaries, and only by bringing them together can we arrive at effective solutions. These multiple-level partnerships, which include family, community and governmental systems, can offer comprehensive and integrated responses to our common problems.

A Prudent Use of Public Funds

The use of public funds to help communities address alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems has had widespread support for many years in San Diego County. However, in spite of this, there are insufficient public dollars to meet the demand for alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention services. Further, prevention funding must be paired with other community initiatives to make a significant impact in reducing problems caused or aggravated by alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. An appropriate role of government is to allocate funds that would be both equitable among communities and provide services that demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness. Public agencies will work together with communities to identify the most responsible use of public and private fiscal resources.

An Integrated Approach

The most significant element of the new prevention framework approach is the opportunity for neighborhoods and communities to plan, develop and implement alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention services that are coordinated with their broader efforts to address the needs of youth and families.

This new prevention framework focuses on services that offer communities the best chance to protect young people. Specific long-term goals have been established to achieve a significant reduction in the use of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana among adolescents.

The prevention framework attempts to demonstrate accountability and greater local control in planning services most significant to families within communities. Leveraging County ADS funds with other private and local funding can create a synergistic effect to build a community fiscal infrastructure. This infrastructure will provide a flexible funding base to coordinate the delivery of prevention services according to community need. Consequently, community-planned prevention efforts using a combination of public and private funding will offer more efficient and effective responses to the alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems that not only impact the daily lives of youth and families but all members of the community.

PART ONE

Challenges As We Move Into The Twenty-First Century

The development of a new alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention framework is motivated by a variety of challenges facing San Diego County. A leading concern is that alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems are often barriers to effectively serving children, youth and families; also alcohol, tobacco and drug use are leading factors affecting the health and well-being of communities.

The demands of the twenty-first century will require prevention activities to be comprehensive and address specific community needs. To be effective in the reduction of alcohol, tobacco and other drug related problems, prevention strategies should be coordinated and integrated with other community-based prevention activities.

The Board of Supervisors encourages the development of strategies to prevent community and system problems rather than to react to problems after they have occurred. The Board of Supervisors' priorities continue to be children, youth and families, and criminal justice. Further, with welfare reform on the horizon, the issue of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs as barriers to the self-sufficiency of families must be addressed.

Currently, alcohol and other drug problem prevention services in San Diego County are primarily funded through a Federal block grant to the State of California. Tobacco prevention activities and services are solely funded through Proposition 99, the 1988 California Tobacco Tax Initiative. The challenge to ADS and those with whom ADS contracts is how to maximize the use of approximately \$2,500,000 to provide the most effective strategies to reduce alcohol and other drug problems.

***Demonstrating
Accountability***

Community members have a right to understand how their tax dollars are spent. Prevention specialists should explain to the communities how the techniques and strategies employed will produce positive and meaningful outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Specific outcomes should be integrated with broader community problems affected by alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. Examples may include fewer alcohol or drug-related juvenile arrests, less sales of alcohol and tobacco to minors, a decline in teen pregnancy rates, reduced incidents of youth violence, greater school attendance, and more ability of parents to address and intervene in their children's alcohol, tobacco and other drug issues.

***Responding to
Public Agency
Demands***

Decision-makers in public service are familiar with the annual strain of finding sufficient funds to operate a system of services developed by government agencies. Even in times of relative prosperity there are still limited public funds to serve the range of health, safety, education and social needs. Government leaders are forced to make difficult choices and know that not all worthwhile services can be funded.

Often, ADS is called upon by social services, justice and education systems to integrate and coordinate services and programs. Early intervention on alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems within these service systems would reduce the strain on these agencies. Interagency collaboration, a key element in the new framework, is an effective method to address this condition.

Effective examples of interagency collaboration are the Substance Abuse Summit, the Methamphetamine Strike Force, Project 8%, the Juvenile Assessment and Mentoring program, the General Relief Alcohol and Drug Services program and Family-Centered Services. ADS is also fully involved and committed to the broad community collaboration activities of the seven Youth Pilot programs authorized by AB1741 and the three Juvenile Delinquency Prevention programs funded through Title V.

Responding to

The **principles of this new prevention framework** for alcohol,

***Department of
Health Services
Reorganization***

tobacco and other drug problem prevention services are consistent with the reorganization principles of the Department of Health Services. Specifically, both efforts:

- Encourage the development and continued support of public-private partnerships and collaboration.
- Support full community involvement in service planning and development.
- Facilitate integration of alcohol, tobacco and other drug services across all health services.

The reorganization of the Department of Health Services offers two key advantages to effectively address alcohol, tobacco and other drug issues: a) an integration of alcohol, tobacco and other drug services across all health care services and b) maintenance of alcohol, tobacco and other drug problem prevention as a high priority within San Diego County.

Part Two

Applying a Public Health Approach

The delivery of alcohol and other drug (AOD) prevention services is guided by six federally defined AOD prevention strategies (Appendix 1). The strategies emphasize community-based processes, informational, educational, environmental and alternative activities. These strategies are encased in the public health model. The public health model demonstrates the relationship of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs to the physical and psychological state of the drinker, smoker or drug user and the surrounding physical, social, cultural and economic environmental conditions that may increase or decrease the opportunities for problems. To address and resolve alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems in any form requires attention to both the substance itself and the conditions which may increase or decrease the opportunity for problems.

Historically, alcohol and other drug problem prevention services have been provided primarily by contracts with non-profit community-based agencies (Appendix 2). In recent years, ADS and the prevention service providers have employed the public health approach to guide the development of effective and efficient strategies to reduce alcohol and other drug problems.

Tobacco use prevention has been provided by a combination of contracted services with non-profit community-based agencies and individuals, and some direct services by County staff.

Guiding Principles

In addition to the public health approach, the following principles, complementary to the Board of Supervisors' priorities, will continue to be central within the new prevention framework and guiding principles:

Prevention Framework

- **priority for children, youth and families**
- **environmental rather than individual-focused services**
- **consolidation of services where duplication exists**
- **emphasis on community-based collaborative prevention services**

Guiding Principles

- **integrated services**
- **community collaboration-based service planning**
- **targeted outcomes to reduce alcohol, tobacco and drug problems among youth**

Problems affecting communities have multiple causes,

Community-Based Planning

including alcohol, tobacco and other drug factors, that impact different communities in a variety of ways. Responses that produce measurable, significant outcomes to these problems require community members, local organizations and public agencies to implement coordinated multiple strategies⁽²⁾. ADS will continue to work in partnership with a range of community-based entities in implementing these prevention approaches and services at neighborhood, community and countywide levels.

The new prevention framework requires a partnership of community members and organizations (Appendix 3) to plan and implement alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention services within the context of other community activities. This assures that these services are coordinated and integrated with other health, public safety, social services and youth activities. Coordinated prevention services reduce wasteful duplication and ensure that a consistent message is delivered to youth and families. Further, coordinated strategies offer a complete package of services to help reduce crime, promote family strength, support community youth efforts, involve schools in community activities and communities in school activities, and improve neighborhood appearance and the quality of life.

This approach enables practical prevention messages and activities to reach people where they live, work, learn, and play. The general promotion of health, including efforts to prevent alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems, becomes a common aspect of community life.

Consequently, reduced alcohol, tobacco and other drug use improves conditions to those areas where the community places its highest values. The intended outcomes are an improvement to the larger system or environment affected by alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems. The outcomes of each strategy help achieve improvement to the common problem.

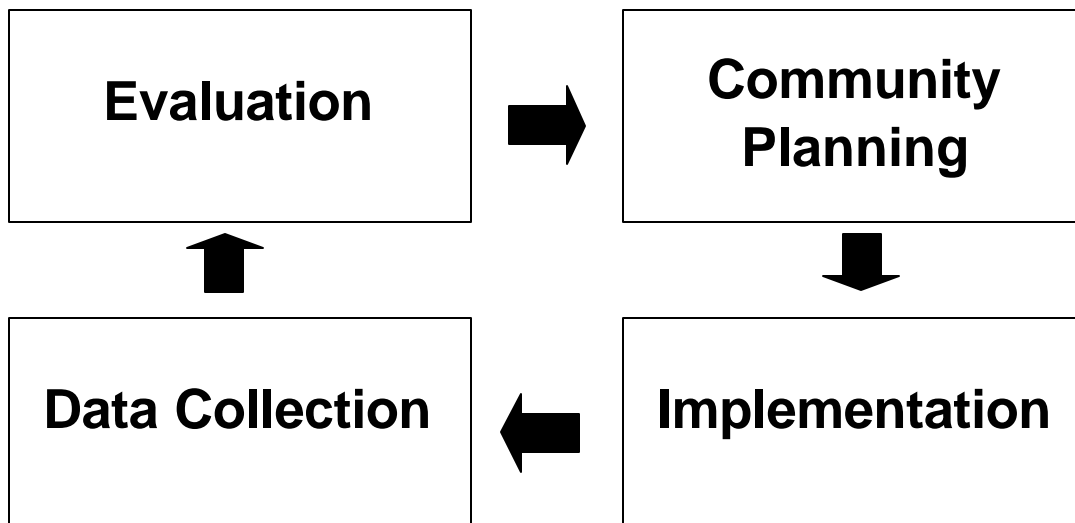
PART THREE

Prevention Works!

New Designs and New Constituencies

Over the past several years, significant advances have occurred in the field of prevention. New designs in community and school-based prevention approaches have been shown to be far superior to past efforts. New community partnerships have also formed with the capability to implement sophisticated prevention activities in communities.

Further, techniques in measuring outcomes of various approaches have been encouraging. It can be said with confidence that prevention experts now know what works and what doesn't work.



***A Common
Community
Vision***

Prevention experts now know that policy approaches, coordinated with effective community education strategies and a strong media advocacy effort have demonstrated successful outcomes. These successes include alcohol-free, family-friendly parks and beaches; improved quality of life in neighborhoods; and significant reduction in underage drinking. However, for policy approaches to work, consensus must be reached among those who will implement these policies in their homes, schools, businesses and communities.

Cooperation and collaboration provide the most effective method to achieve the greatest public support. Further, these collaborative approaches offer great advantages in their ability to leverage funds and resources and to produce additional funds. Several collaborative partnerships have been formed among systems and communities throughout San Diego County. These broad-based partnerships represent the range of interests of neighborhood residents. Among the most promising successes are:

- Youth Access to Alcohol Policy Panel
- City-County Partnerships, such as the Escondido Community Health Care Project and the Oceanside Traffic Safety Project
- School-linked Collaborative Groups - Healthy Start and New Beginnings
- AB1741 Youth Pilot Project Collaborative Groups
- Title V Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Collaboration
- 1995 and 1996 County "Substance Abuse Summit" Conferences
- Methamphetamine Strike Force
- Tobacco Community Collaborative - Tobacco Control Coalition since 1990
- Tri-County Collaborative - Southern Coast Regional Board
- American Lung Association - Tobacco Free Youth

The Problem-Centered Approach

Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use are leading factors in problems affecting communities. However, the actual extent and nature of the effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are often hidden. By analyzing larger problems, such as those affecting public safety or public health, alcohol, tobacco and other drug contributing factors begin to emerge.

Multiple strategies, such as media advocacy, community education, and policy changes are then applied to solve the larger problem. Local coalitions use multiple strategies, including alcohol, tobacco and drug prevention strategies, then measure "outcome" success by a decrease in the identified problem.

Improved Methods in Measuring Success

Significant advances have been made in measuring prevention outcomes. **ADS will employ the most efficient of these new approaches to determine program effectiveness. These include the use of the latest technology for data collection and evaluation.**

In this new framework, prevention strategies will address specific alcohol, tobacco and other drug-related issues in communities. These issues may include teen substance use and other delinquency problems, teen pregnancy, school attendance and parents ability to effectively address alcohol, tobacco and other drug issues with their children and to intervene when necessary. ***Consequently, each community coalition engaged in prevention work and funded through this effort will be expected to achieve outcomes to improve conditions in one or more of the above issues.*** Further, efforts among coalitions to address regional issues and the development of local infrastructures to support long-term efforts will also be expected outcomes.

Evaluation designs will be included in all community prevention programs to measure ongoing progress, immediate effects or outcomes and long-range improvement of conditions.

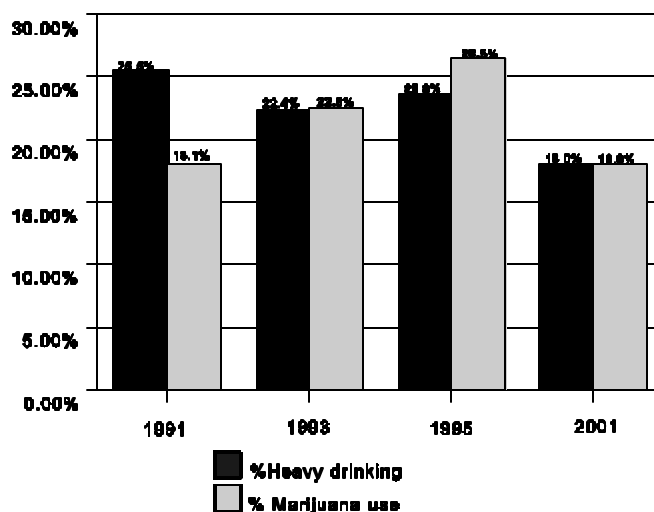
***Evaluating
Long-term
Impact***

The new prevention framework also seeks to evaluate the overall prevention services system. This evaluation will determine if the prevention efforts have reversed the trend of increasing alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among adolescents. As mentioned earlier, after several years of declining alcohol and drug use, a trend of increasing usage is appearing among adolescents. Although the percentage of regular use is not yet at the peak levels of 1980 and 1981, there is no acceptable level of use for adolescents.

Part Four

Conclusion

Meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century will require a renewed effort on the part of all citizens. Reversing the trend of increased drug use among youth can only be accomplished through the combined efforts of concerned families, neighborhood businesses and organizations, community workers and public agencies who recognize the value of protecting and nurturing young people. The following chart represents the current trend and the expected long-term outcome as a result of implementing the new prevention framework.



Youth Risk Behavior Survey, SD City Schools

The prevention framework includes specific goals to measure the success of long-term countywide efforts. The above chart shows the recent increase in use and the expected reduction in alcohol and other drug use among San Diego County youth. These long-term impact goals target alcohol and marijuana use (well-known "gateway" drugs), the primary drugs in which adolescents experience problems.

The reduction represents about an 8 percent decline in alcohol and drug users per year. With a roughly estimated 35,000 middle and high school students in San Diego County currently using alcohol or other drugs, this would be almost a 29 percent drop in alcohol and drug use among students by the end of a four year period.

It is important to emphasize that any amount of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among adolescents should never be tolerated. Continued prevention approaches beyond the four-year period will hopefully continue a trend of reduced use to the only acceptable level - zero percent.

The prevention framework is designed to advance a “best practices” approach to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problem prevention; this means planning and implementing of science-based, multiple strategies that target specific problems affecting youth and their families. The strategies should also be coordinated with other public health entities and integrated into larger system approaches, such as the activities of the Children’s Initiative, the Youth Pilot Program (AB1741), the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Project (Title V) the Comprehensive Strategies efforts and others.

Positive outcomes are clearly expected. The collaborative groups involved in this prevention activity are also expected to use those successful strategies allowed under the Federal guidelines (see Appendix A). **ADS will also contract with a qualified agency to develop and conduct a comprehensive evaluation to determine how well the countywide prevention system has succeeded in meeting its goals. This evaluation system will also serve to provide monitoring for each local effort so those community collaborations may make corrective changes to their approaches on an ongoing basis over the five-year period.**

This framework for prevention can achieve the goals and outcomes it has set out to accomplish. It will require the support of all those with an interest in the success of our young people and the quality of life in our communities. Our approach is based on current knowledge of the best practices for preventing alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems among youth. As new information and new strategies are developed, they will be incorporated into the prevention framework.

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The Six Federal Prevention Strategies

Under the requirements of the Federal Block Grant funding for alcohol and other drug problem prevention, only the following six strategies may be used:

Information And Dissemination

- Provides awareness and knowledge of the nature and extent of alcohol and other drug use, abuse and addiction and its effects on individuals, families and communities.
- Examples include development and distribution of informational brochures, public announcements and advertisements and lectures to various audiences. Although this strategy uses the media to publicize program events and activities, it should not be confused with "media advocacy," a Community-Based Process strategy.

Education and Training

- Involves interactive communication between educator and participants and usually includes life and social skills development.
- Examples include peer education, mentoring, and refusal skill development programs. The effectiveness of this strategy is usually related to how well it is linked to other community efforts, especially those described below under "Alternative Activities".

Environmental Change

- Establishes or changes written and unwritten community standards, codes and attitudes, thereby influencing the prevalence of alcohol and other drug abuse.
- Environmental Change has two subcategories:
 - *Legal and regulatory initiatives*: examples include the establishment of conditional use permits to allow some local control on alcohol outlets or making formal appeals to enact state law to ban alcoholic beverages marketed to underage youth.
 - *Service and action-oriented initiatives*: examples include designated driver programs and social host policies and practices, such as responsible beverage service training.

Community-based Process

- Enhances the ability of the community to effectively plan and implement prevention services for alcohol and other drug problems. This strategy also provides the platform where environmental change strategies are planned and developed.
- Examples include coalition building and collaboration to strengthen services and increase the impact of prevention services. In San Diego, these include the Youth Access to Alcohol Policy Panel, the Methamphetamine Strike Force and the collaborative efforts in communities operating under AB1741, which provides blended funding for services to children and families.

Alternative Activities

- Provides for alcohol and other drug-free activities to critical population groups, especially youth.
- Examples include constructive activities such as neighborhood clean-up campaigns, development of community youth centers, or social and recreational activities such as alcohol and drug-free dances or organized after-school sports events.

Problem Identification and Referral

- Provides informational and referral services to individuals experiencing first use of illegal drugs or age-inappropriate use of alcohol. However, this does not include early intervention or assessment for treatment services, which is "secondary prevention" and not a Federal prevention strategy.
- Examples can range from volunteer "help-line" referrals to a professional staff who conducts screening and brief interventions, which is an informational and educational dialogue with potential problem users on alcohol and other drugs. The screening and brief intervention strategy is currently being used successfully at the Escondido Healthy Cities and Communities Project.