



# *Arizona's 2<sup>nd</sup> Statewide Substance Abuse Conference*

## **Partnerships to Prevent Underage Drinking Through Policy, Education, & Enforcement**

**May 1 and 2, 2007**

## **Conference Evaluation Report**

Evaluation Conducted by  
Pima Prevention Partnership



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## **Arizona's 2nd Statewide Substance Abuse Conference: Partnerships to Prevent Underage Drinking Through Policy, Education & Enforcement**

### **Conference Evaluation Results**

On May 1 and 2, 2007, 405 people converged on the Downtown Phoenix Wyndham Hotel for Arizona's 2<sup>nd</sup> Statewide Substance Abuse Conference. Numerous nationally recognized experts made keynote and plenary addresses, and twenty different breakout sessions covered the topic areas of policy, coalitions, youth, and enforcement. In an exemplary demonstration of collaboration and dedication among state agencies to reduce underage drinking, a wide array of sponsors contributed to this conference, including the Arizona Parents Commission on Drug Education and Prevention; the Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families Division for Substance Abuse Policy; the Arizona Attorney General's Office; the Arizona Department of Health Services; the Arizona Department of Public Safety; the Arizona Juvenile Justice Commission; Arizona SADD; the Governor's Office of Highway Safety; and the Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families Division for Children.

The conference was evaluated by Pima Prevention Partnership, an Arizona non-profit organization contracted by the Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families Division for Substance Abuse Policy to provide evaluation and technical assistance services for its statewide substance abuse projects. The evaluation results for the 2007 Statewide Substance Abuse Conference showed extremely high levels of satisfaction among attendees, both in terms of content and logistics. Participant satisfaction with the conference was measured with two satisfaction surveys, one for the conference overall, and one for the breakout sessions. An additional instrument, a planning worksheet, was used to collect data on community-level activities during the Community Action Planning Session, which took place during the final two hours of the conference. This report summarizes the findings of data collected using all three of these instruments, and is divided into three sections: 1) results for the conference as a whole, 2) results for the breakout sessions and, 3) results of data collected on Community Action Planning worksheets.

### **Overall Conference Evaluation**

The overall conference evaluation surveys contained multiple choice items measuring satisfaction with presentations, usefulness of information, organization of the conference, conference materials and exhibitors, facilities, and food. Open-ended questions gathered additional comments and suggestions. Out of 405 registered conference attendees, 149 completed overall conference evaluation forms, a return rate of 37%.

Conference attendees were asked to select from a number of categories to define their role in community substance abuse prevention. Respondents were allowed to select multiple categories,

so the percentages listed below do not add up to 100%. The most common responses, in rank order, were as follows:

1. Community coalition member (30%)
2. Substance abuse prevention provider (26%)
3. Educators (20%)
4. Advocates (15%)
5. Law enforcement officers (13%)
6. Youth (13%)
7. Tribal member (11%)
8. Courts (6%)
9. State government (3%)
10. Military (3%)

Almost all conference attendees reported being satisfied with the conference across a variety of measures. More than 90% of respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the following statements:

- The information presented at this conference was at the right “level” for what I wanted to know
- The conference was a good use of my time
- The conference was well organized
- The conference packet contained useful information
- The exhibitor tables provided useful materials
- The conference facility met my needs
- The food provided at the conference was satisfactory

Due to the high rate of satisfaction overall, there were not statistically significant differences in satisfaction with the conference among different types of attendees.

### **Keynote and Plenary Sessions**

Overwhelmingly, conference attendees obtained useful information from the keynote and plenary presentations. On average, 92% of respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the keynote and plenary presentations were informative. Many participants wrote comments and suggestions about the keynote and plenary presentations. Although these presentations received very positive evaluation scores, respondents suggested that the general sessions contained too much research and too many statistics, yet not enough information specific to Arizona’s population, including Native Americans and Hispanics. Some respondents indicated that the keynote and plenary presentations were very similar to one another and that they were not youth-friendly. Several respondents also suggested that handouts be provided of the keynote/plenary PowerPoint presentations.

## **Participant Comments**

Three open-ended questions were asked on the evaluation survey to elicit information on how participants planned to use the information learned at the conference, what further information they required, and any general comments or suggestions. The results of each question are summarized below.

### How participants will use conference information:

When asked how they intended to use the information that was presented at the conference, participants most frequently responded with general statements about taking the information back to their communities. The second most common responses were statements about using the information to stimulate and further develop coalitions, and to aid in strategic planning. Other frequently cited uses for conference information included improving existing programs, educating youth, developing new programs, and seeking policy changes.

### Further information requested by attendees:

Respondents were asked what information or resources they needed that were not provided at this conference. The most common response to this question was that participants needed more handouts and takeaway materials, particularly from the presenters. Along these lines, participants also requested copies of the video shown by Dr. Monti, and bibliographies of keynote speakers. The second most common request was for more culturally specific information for Native American and Hispanic populations. Other frequently cited needs included information on how to work with parents, more enforcement information, treatment, funding, and how to build or find a coalition.

### Overall Comments:

Overall comments written on the evaluation forms were combined into six categories: general praise for the conference, feedback on plenaries/keynotes, feedback on breakout sessions (covered above), youth participation, feedback on the venue, and feedback on the planning session at the end of the conference. The most frequent comments were those of general praise for the conference, including thank-you messages and feedback such as, “This is one, if not the best/most useful conference I have attended,” and “Excellent conference. Well organized, good information.”

Many comments were made praising the youth involvement at the conference, particularly with respect to the Hopi Red Ribbon Project. There were a few suggestions, however, to include more information and material geared toward youth, and more youth presenters. On a related matter, some respondents felt that law enforcement breakout sessions were not appropriate for youth. Other general comments regarding breakout sessions were positive, including that the breakout sessions were “better organized than at the National Conference on Underage Drinking.” The exceptions to this were comments regarding the two-hour Community Action Planning workshop at the end of the conference, which was said to be too loosely organized and ineffective.

Finally, a number of comments were made regarding the conference facilities. While some participants stated that they liked the conference hotel, more participants complained about the high cost of the hotel and parking, insufficient parking, and “freezing cold” temperatures in the hotel ballroom.

**Breakout Session Evaluations**

The breakout session evaluation surveys contained multiple-choice items measuring satisfaction with presentations and usefulness of information. An open-ended question gathered additional comments. Without total attendance numbers for each breakout session, survey response rates could not be calculated. A total of 912 evaluation forms for breakout sessions were collected.

Evaluation results for the breakout sessions were very positive. As can be seen in Table 2, more than 94% of participants “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with each satisfaction measure for all breakout sessions combined.

**Table 2: Evaluation Results for All Breakout Sessions Combined (n=912)**

Presentation	Percent Who Strongly Agree	Percent Who Agree	Percent Who Disagree	Percent Who Strongly Disagree
The session was informative.	66.7%	31.1%	1.7%	.6%
I will use information from this session in my community.	55.9%	38.4%	4.7%	1.0%
The information provided was at the right "level" for what I wanted to know.	55.4%	38.5%	4.8%	1.2%
This session was a good use of my time.	60.9%	35.6%	2.3%	1.2%

**Community Action Planning Session**

The final two-hour session of the conference was a planning workshop open to all conference attendees. Intended to serve as a capstone to the conference, the goal of the Community Action Planning session was for participants to work together and identify approaches that can be used to reduce underage drinking in their home counties. Participants were grouped by county, and asked to complete a worksheet listing the underage drinking problems identified in their communities, current approaches to address those issues, and new approaches identified at the conference. The sheets also included space for participants to note “next steps,” “networking successes” at the conference, and to identify any remaining training and technical assistance needs. Participants took one page of the carbonless-copy form home, and the other was collected by PPP for analysis. The results are presented below.

A total of 73 participant worksheets were turned in, representing all 15 counties of the state. Thirty-two percent of participants were from urban areas, 67% from rural areas and 1% were unknown.\* Although two participants identified themselves as working for tribal government, no respondents described themselves as tribal members. Other respondents included, but were not limited to:

- 34% Community Coalition Members
- 38% Substance Abuse Providers
- 21% Youth
- 27% Advocates

### **Local Underage Drinking Issues Identified**

Participants were asked to identify three different underage drinking issues in their communities the categories listed below encapsulate participant responses.

- 51% Easy access  
-examples of participant responses include: liquor was being shoplifted easily, alcohol available at home, and adults purchasing alcohol for minors
- 42% Societal acceptance  
-examples include: social hosting-parents, social norms/peers/family, social access, and parents being permissive
- 21% Violence  
-examples include: aggressive youth, gang activity, domestic violence and sexual assaults

### **Current Approaches to Underage Drinking Problems**

When asked to list the approaches they used to address each of these problems, education and enforcement were the two most frequently mentioned approaches, with values of 60% and 51% respectively. For societal acceptance, 59% of respondents mentioned education and 41% enforcement. Lastly, for issues of violence, 47% of respondents mentioned alcohol prevention presentations and 40% Red Ribbon Week as methods for addressing this problem in their community.

### **New Approaches Learned at the Conference**

The three most frequently listed new approaches learned by respondents were:

- 26% Education and training

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\* Arizona urban areas are defined in this analysis as Phoenix, the greater Phoenix area (*though not those respondents who described their town as Maricopa County*), Tucson and Flagstaff.

-examples of participant responses include: peer leadership/peer education, educate parents/adults with information & messages to prevent initiation of use, and responsible beverage server training-enhance what is done

- 23% Community awareness and media campaigns  
-examples include: community pride events, social norms media campaign, and emphasize the number of youth killed by DUI with death day
- 16% Environmental strategies/ordinances  
-examples include: environmental strategies: keg registration, social host law and new law enforcement strategies-keg registration, more consequences

### **Next Steps for Communities**

Participants were asked what next steps their communities would take as a result of conference attendance. The most common responses, in descending order, were as follows: educate/train community members, youth, parents and law enforcement; involve youth; develop an action/strategic plan; implement environmental strategies; identify problem areas; and increase use of media/awareness campaign.

### **Networking Successes**

Of those who completed the worksheet, twenty-six percent noted that making new contacts and coordinating presentations for their community was the most useful networking success. Learning new ideas from other communities and forming collaborations were the other two most frequently mentioned responses, with values of 16% and 10%, respectively.

### **Training and Technical Assistance Needs**

In response to their further training and technical assistance needs, participant answers ranged from education and training to all/as much as possible. Other responses mentioned included: more legal information, inviting presenters to their community, contact information for tribal government, and assistance with data collection and mapping.

## **Conclusions**

In summary, the evaluation results from Arizona's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Statewide Substance Abuse Conference indicated that the conference was a success. On evaluation surveys, respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the information presented in conference keynote addresses, plenary presentations, and breakout sessions was useful and well organized. The analysis of comments written on evaluation forms suggested a number of themes for consideration in planning future State Substance Abuse Conferences:

- Overall, the inclusion of youth participants was applauded, and the expansion of youth-focused presentations was encouraged.
- Although evaluations of the plenary and keynote presentations were extremely positive, survey respondents suggested that plenary sessions and keynote addresses should be tailored to the time allotted, more youth-friendly, less statistic and research-intensive, and that they should include information specific to the state of Arizona.
- Handouts should be provided for all presentations, including keynotes, plenaries, and breakout sessions.
- Many respondents requested more materials and resources specific to Hispanic and Native American populations.
- Some comments indicated a need for practical information on starting the work of prevention. Information on setting up action plans, starting coalitions, finding funding, and translating research into action may be helpful for those participants who are not already involved in organized prevention, intervention, or enforcement activities. Further efforts could be made to connect such individuals with existing coalitions or other organized efforts in their local areas, through planned networking activities or published directories.