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2017 – 2018 saw an exponential increase in the reach of Drug Free Collier to youth and adults. Over 45,000 kids and 10,000 adults received education and prevention messaging via assemblies, community presentations, events, CORE Clubs, and collaborative efforts with stakeholder partners. Adjustments to curriculum and delivery methods ensured greater penetration and absorption of key drug and alcohol instruction and guidance. Drug Free Collier played a significant role in exposing the necessary data to county decision makers in order for them to make informed decisions for the community.

The following are some key program achievements:

Operation Medicine Cabinet (OMC) – A Drug Free Collier (DFC) trademarked initiative for take back of prescription drugs. DFC held over 30 OMC events collecting and removing in excess of 90 tons of unused prescription drugs. Three additional permanent take back sites were established in pharmacies across Collier County making disposal readily available and convenient for citizens. Veora Little (DFC volunteer) who created the program continues to work diligently with government agencies and private sector business to develop a sustainable take back program through all pharmacies. Education classes to all Senior/Assisted living facilities occurred throughout the year mitigating the high risk of prescription drugs entering the supply chain via this method and provoking a repeated quote “I wondered why my nephew (or daughter) was visiting so often”.

Hidden in Plain Site (HIPS) – DFC in conjunction with Collier County Sheriff’s Department brought the HIPS trailer to events around the county throughout the year. This highly impactful visual presentation of the latest methodologies of hiding and using various drugs left a lasting impression on adults of how complex and far reaching the system is. All were astounded that many of these products are available in stores like Hallmark. Parents will think twice about highlighters and Dasani water bottles when looking into their kids rooms.

TIPS Alcohol Training Classes – DFC performed 8 TIPS classes for court mandated servers and bartenders throughout the year. Additionally, this year Restaurants and Bars took a proactive approach to educating staff by hosting DFC TIPS training on site. Texas Road House, Senior Tequila and others benefitted from the interactive training lessons. This coupled with other alcohol vendor training drastically reduced the numbers cited for serving underage customers. The latest check by the Naples Police Department saw 100% compliance.

Community Awareness Events – DFC held 10 events throughout the year to educate the community and stakeholders on critical issues such as the Opioid Crisis, Medical Marijuana, Legalization and Prescription Policies. Just over 1500 individuals attended these events in total. Dr. Kolodny provided historical

information on how the opioid crisis progressed and the data of the impact of the 5th vital sign on addiction. The public and professionals were exposed to the entirety of the supply and demand chain raising the desire and need for action to mitigate the crisis. Renowned drug educator Monte Stiles spoke on the impact of legalization of marijuana on states that have done so. Impact to enforcement, mental health services, hospital services. He provided visibility into how weak legislation has allowed dispensaries to operate in these states virtually unchecked.

CORE Club – DFC is proudest of our work in the schools of Collier County. Collaboration with the Collier County School District brought prevention assemblies to every Middle and High School. CORE Club expanded into all but a few of the schools which will come on line this fall (is fall a season in Florida?). Students in CORE receive “Life Skills” training, administer prevention campaigns in their schools and act as ambassadors making positive contributions to the student body. It is DFC’s strong belief that exposing kids to decision making skills, purpose, goal setting, emotional intelligence, anger mitigation and dispute resolution we have our best chance at prevention.

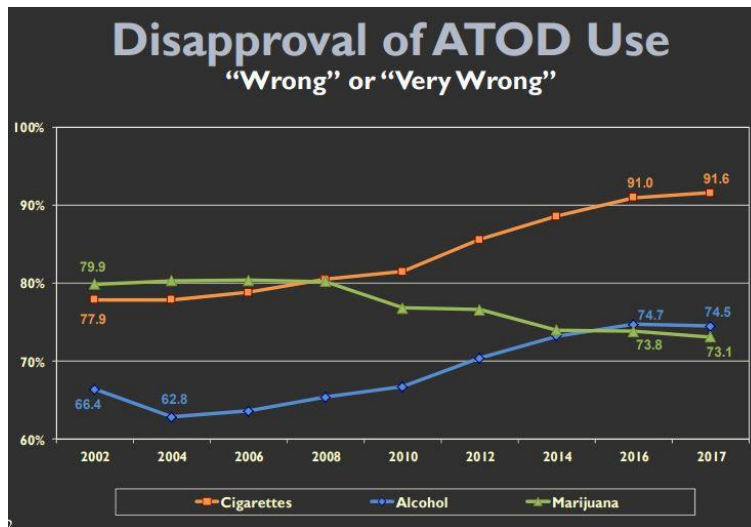
Concerns for Collier County

The most recent FYSAS data shows a continued decline in alcohol, tobacco, and drug use across the state amongst middle and high school students. Marijuana usage has fluctuated over the recent years but the trend reflects a small decline in usage by youth statewide. The top four concerns for teens and young adults are alcohol, binge drinking, marijuana, and e-cigarettes/vaping. Through our discussions with students, teachers, and parents Drug Free Collier has been made aware that Collier County trends along the same top concerns.

Alcohol use and Binge Drinking

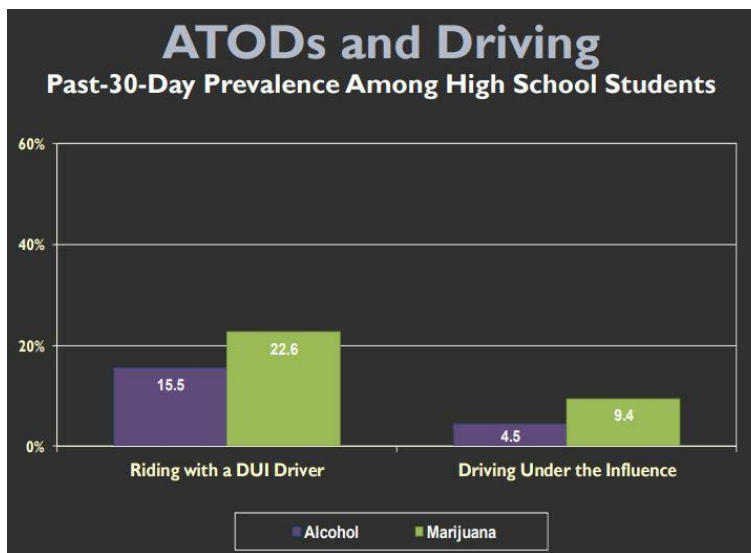
As a tourism destination, Collier County is very socially oriented, and alcohol is readily available at most social gatherings including fairs and festivals organized throughout the county. Because of the semi-tropical environment, numerous festivals and other public events take place throughout the year, with one or more occurring almost every weekend. Unfortunately, underage access to alcohol is also influenced in part by poor community norms, attitudes, and beliefs toward drinking. In the most recent county level FYSAS (2016), only 46.1% of students believe there to be a risk of harm associated with drinking alcohol. This data source also indicates that 18.0% of Collier County high school students report riding in a vehicle where the driver had been drinking, with another 6.5% of students reporting that they drive a car after consuming alcohol. Adults sometimes provide alcohol to youth with the misguided belief that it is safer for them to drink at home than it is for them to drink elsewhere. Other adults lack knowledge about the legal implications of allowing minors to drink in their home. Regardless of the motivation, it is clear that these prevailing norms and the lack of local strict social host laws are significant contributors to youth alcohol use throughout Collier County.

While there has been a trend of decline, binge drinking is still a major concern for middle and high school students. More and more youth are acknowledging the dangers and harm that regular use of alcohol can present, but still think the occasional night of heavy drinking does not cause lasting damage. Drug Free Collier constantly heard statements similar to “As long I wait a few weeks before drinking again my body will recover” or “The occasional party isn’t going really hurt me.” Peer pressure still plays a major impact on binge drinking, as most reported events took place at parties instead in the home.



Marijuana

After alcohol, marijuana use is another priority concern for Collier County. With the recent passing of medical marijuana amendments, attention and promotion of marijuana has greatly increased in the area. Along with this increase of awareness there has been a subsequent decrease in the perception of harm. Efforts to legalize marijuana for recreational or “medicinal” purposes inevitably send mixed messages to our youth, and they contribute to decreased perceptions of harm. This is resulting in an increase of risky behaviors, such as diving while impaired/riding with an impaired driver and attending school/work while impaired.



E-Cigarettes and Vaping

Use of e-cigarettes is another major concern with students in Collier County. From our discussions with the teens, the understanding of the harm that comes with the use of vaping devices is low. Most Collier youth do not associate vaping with smoking, there is a lack of understanding on what exactly is in the liquids, and the perception that vaping is “cool.” A lot of middle school students witness the high schoolers using and feel that it must be “safe since the older kids are doing it.” The JUUL in particular is on the rise in Collier. Due to its discrete nature students are able to use during the school day without the teachers and staff being made aware unless it is reported to them.