

## UNDERAGE DRINKING PREVENTION NATIONAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

### FAQs

#### **What Are SAMHSA and CSAP?**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an operating division within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is charged with reducing the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) is one of four Centers within SAMHSA, and it provides national leadership in the Federal effort to prevent alcohol, tobacco, and drug problems, including underage drinking.

To help Americans lead healthier and longer lives, CSAP promotes a structured, community-based approach to substance abuse prevention through the Strategic Prevention Framework. The framework aims to promote youth development, reduce risk-taking behaviors, build assets and resilience, and prevent problem behaviors across the individual's life span. This approach provides information and tools that can be used by states and communities to build an effective and sustainable prevention infrastructure.

#### **Why Is Underage Drinking Such an Important Issue?**

Underage drinking is a national public health issue with serious implications. According to a study by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 10 million people under the age of 21 drank alcohol in the past month in the United States. However, many young people start drinking before the age of 15. The age range between 11 and 18 is an impressionable period when youth are especially susceptible to outside influences such as peers, family members, and the media.

#### **What Is the "Talk. They Hear You." Campaign?**

In 2006, Congress passed legislation entitled, the "Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act," or the "STOP Act."<sup>1</sup> The legislation called for a "multi-faceted effort" to include prevention, intervention, treatment, enforcement, and research into underage drinking. In addition, the STOP Act recognized the need for a national media campaign to prevent and reduce underage drinking. It charged SAMHSA with carrying out this charge.

## **How Is the “Talk. They Hear You.” Campaign Different From SAMHSA’s Other Underage Drinking Prevention Media Campaigns?**

SAMHSA first launched an Underage Drinking Prevention Media Campaign in 2005 with the tagline, “Start Talking Before They Start Drinking.” SAMHSA launched a second phase of that Campaign in 2010 called “Talk Early. Talk Often.” Now, the “Talk. They Hear You.” Campaign focuses on more tailored communication approaches to reach parents with children aged 9 to 15, an age group in which children cite parents as the most influential people in their lives. This current effort unifies SAMHSA’s underage drinking prevention efforts under a single initiative and draws on the latest research about the important role parents and caregivers play in the choices their children make about alcohol.

## **References**

1 GovTrack.us (database of federal legislation). *S. 882: STOP Act. 112th Congress.* (2011). From <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/s882> (accessed May 3, 2012).