



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**New Campaign to Tackle Adult Heavy Drinking
RethinkDrinks.com Launched to Drive Awareness, Link Resources**

GRAND RAPIDS -- Adult heavy drinking is a major public health concern. According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Assessment in 2008, 18% of those who were surveyed between the ages of 18-64 admitted to binge drinking in the past month. Binge drinking is higher among men (20.8%) and in residents between the ages of 25-34. The assessment also found 22.7% of adults in a higher income tax bracket (\$75,000/year) admitted to binge drinking in the past 30 days. Many people do not realize the long-term harm they are doing to their bodies when they engage in heavy drinking.

“Short term, we know the impacts of heavy drinking can include drinking and driving, aggression, and risky sexual behavior,” says Cathy Raevsky, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “But long-term, it can lead to obesity, higher risk of certain cancers, and organ damage. Knowing these risks early and taking a proactive approach can help you stay healthy.”

The Kent County Health Department is working in partnership with network180 to reduce adult heavy drinking. This month, the campaign to inform adults about the harmful effects and risky behaviors associated with excessive alcohol consumption kicked off throughout Kent County. “This broad-based, public health campaign incorporates social media, education, environmental strategies, and community mobilization,” said Denise Herbert of network180. “We need to raise the level of awareness of adult heavy drinking/binge drinking in Kent County, along with the associated health risks.”

The message is simple: rethink drinks. When you visit the website www.rethinkdrinks.com, you will find information including how to determine if your alcohol consumption is a risk to your health, how much alcohol and calories are in a drink, and an online calculator to assist you in determining your blood alcohol content. The multi-year campaign will include billboards, advertisements, QR coding and social media messages to drive people to the website.

This partnership between the Kent County Health Department and network180 is supported by a grant from the Behavioral Health and Departmental Disabilities Administration/Bureau of Substances Abuse & Addiction Services.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.