
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 11, 2013

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Health Department Reminds Adults to “Rethink Drinks” Effort Focuses on Community Awareness

GRAND RAPIDS – The Kent County Health Department is continuing to work in partnership with network180 to reduce adult heavy drinking. The partnership is entering its second year of the campaign to inform adults about the harmful effects and risky behaviors associated with excessive alcohol consumption. The campaign is hitting the road... in more ways than one.

Year two of the campaign has included bus boards on The Rapid, billboards, Johnny Ads and drink coasters distributed to bars and restaurants throughout Kent County, advertising at Fifth Third Ballpark, an end-of-season agreement with the West Michigan Whitecaps, and outreach at local schools and colleges.

“Alcohol abuse and heavy drinking can be a problem for all populations in West Michigan, especially this time of year,” says Adam London, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “There are many short and long-term problems associated with heavy drinking, from risky behaviors to obesity and organ damage. Encouraging healthy behavior in places where alcohol is consumed helps us reach those most at-risk.”

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.

The website www.rethinkdrinks.com includes:

- How to determine if your alcohol consumption is a risk to your health;
- How much alcohol is in a drink;
- How many calories are in a drink;
- Online calculator to assist in determining your blood alcohol content.

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.