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**Parents' Perceptions of Teenage Drinking
Survey 2005**

Report to

Peak Wellness Center

by

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Parents' Perceptions of Teenage Drinking Survey of Albany, Laramie, Goshen and Platte Counties, Wyoming, 2005

In Spring 2005 Peak Wellness Center in Cheyenne (Client) enlisted the Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center (WYSAC) to conduct a phone survey in Southeast Wyoming focusing on the perceptions and behaviors of parents who have kids in grades 6 through 12 regarding teenage drinking. Among other things, the data collected is intended to serve as a point of comparison between the perceptions parents have about teenage drinking and actual teenage behaviors regarding alcohol consumption provided by data collected in other surveys.

Methods

The questionnaire used was largely based on a survey conducted for the Maine Office of Substance Abuse in 2003 by Strategic Marketing Services, a division of Pan Atlantic Consultants. The questionnaire was adapted to best fit the specificities of South Eastern Wyoming. After final approval by the Client, the Survey Research Center (SRC) of WYSAC set up the survey for Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI).

Households in Albany, Laramie, Goshen and Platte counties were to be included in the sample. The Client's desire to have data representative on the county level called for a disproportionately stratified sample by county. The total sample size was set at 400, with a goal of 100 completions in each of the four counties. The sample was purchased from a commercial vendor specializing in sample generation. Unfortunately the vendor was only able to generate enough telephone numbers that were believed to belong to household that have children of the targeted age group for Laramie county. For the other 3 counties the targeted samples had to be supplemented with RDD (Random Digit Dialing) phone numbers. RDD has the benefit of improving the population coverage by also including unlisted numbers. This circumstance required an extensive screening of the household for eligibility, i.e. establishing whether or not it had children in grades 6 through 12. A total of 445 interviews were completed. A random sample of that size yields a margin of error of about plus or minus 4.7 percentage points with 95% confidence. The respective margins of errors for each county are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

		Margin of error
Laramie	127	9 percentage points
Albany	114	9 percentage points
Goshen	102	10 percentage points
Platte	102	10 percentage points

Experienced SRC telephone interviewers conducted the surveys between July 7 and July 17 2005. Most interviews were attempted Monday through Thursday between 6 pm and 9 pm. Some additional day time calling as well as two Sunday afternoons were included in the calling schedule. Up to 13 calls were made to phone numbers which had not been determined to be ineligible in previous calls. Soft refusals were contacted a second time in an attempt to complete an interview.

Key Findings

- A great majority (83.5%) of parents surveyed state that they have serious talks about alcohol with their children either *several times a year* or *once a month or more*.
- For children who participate in social events or gatherings at night or on weekends: 85.3% of surveyed parents claimed to ask them *often* or *always* whether there would be adult supervision; 40.2% of parents stated they *always* ask if alcohol will be present, while 27.5% stated that they never ask if alcohol will be present.
- A large majority (91.3%) of parents stated that they talked about the events or activities their child was involved in upon the child's return home, and 38.1% stated that one goal of this conversation was to determine whether the child was drinking.
- The vast majority (96.4%) of parents state that their child is *very honest* or *mostly honest* with them about his or her involvement with alcohol.
- Regarding alcohol use by their children, 76.9% of the adults in the survey stated that, to the best of their knowledge, their child had not had more than a few sips of alcohol in his or her lifetime; 81.8% said that their child had not had an alcoholic beverage in the past 30 days; 88.9% stated that their child had not had five or more drinks in a single sitting within the past two weeks.
- Most (78.2%) parents think it is *not at all likely* or *not too likely* that their child will use alcohol within the next year.
- A majority (67.1%) of parents believe that when parents drink alcohol in front of their children, this *definitely* or *to some extent* makes alcohol more appealing to the children.
- 76.4% of parents either *agree* or *strongly agree* that they would catch their child if he or she drank alcohol without permission.
- Large majorities (93.5%) of parents either *agree* or *strongly agree* that they have a strong influence over their child's behavior when it comes to alcohol use.
- Nearly all (97.3%) parents surveyed stated that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that family rules regarding alcohol use are clear.
- While 43.3% of surveyed parents stated that access to alcohol was at least somewhat difficult for their child, the majority (56.6%) of parents stated that such access was *somewhat easy* or *very easy*.
- Most (84.8%) parents stated they have a "zero tolerance" alcohol policy when it comes to their teen child.

- For adults who saw TV ads regarding teen drinking on Wyoming television, 72.3% stated that they found these ads to be *effective*.
- Other than TV ads, the two most popular sources of media coverage related to teenage drinking in Wyoming media are newspaper articles (60.1%) and radio coverage (41.0%).
- For every respondent age category, majorities stated that they have serious talks about alcohol with their children several times a year or once a month or more.
- In general, younger parents agree more with the statement that their children share their feelings with them. The highest percentage of those that agree with this statement is 93.6% for parents under the age of 35.
- A similar pattern emerges for parents who agree that they would detect it if their child drank without permission: younger parents feel more certain of this, with declining certainty as parent age increases.
- Higher percentages of older parents, and generally higher percentages of parents with higher levels of education, stated that jokes or funny stories about their past drinking experiences encourage their children to use alcohol.
- Among parents who stated that their children attend weekend or nighttime social events or gatherings, there is a general decline as education increases in the percentage of parents who ask if alcohol will be present.
- Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to believe that their children have easy access to alcohol than do parents with lower levels of education.
- As the grade of children increases, so does, in the opinion of their parents, the apparent ease in their access to alcohol.
- There is a decline in the percentage of parents who think their child is honest about their alcohol involvement as the child's grade increases, though the percentage of all parents who believe their child is *mostly* or *very honest* is well over 90% for all grade categories.
- Higher percentages of parents with children in higher grades think it is likely that their children will use alcohol within the next year.