



The solution is in the community

Help reduce underage alcohol consumption

How many people in our community realize the potential consequences of providing alcohol to someone under 21? Recently the Bear Pause Theater has been playing an ad that is sponsored by the Minnesota Institute of Public Health that is geared towards adults ages 21 to 29.

This is a result of studies that have shown that these adults are a common source of alcohol to underage drinkers. You will also find this information displayed on posters throughout the area of businesses that believe that we should not be providing alcohol to our young people. This is a good opportunity to remind everyone of an important message: we need to make responsible and safe decisions around alcohol.

This subject is particularly important for young adults who have recently turned 21. They may have friends, siblings or coworkers who are still underage. This can cause people to feel pressured to buy alcohol. They may not think it's a big deal. What they might be forgetting, however, is that they are putting both the underage drinker and themselves in jeopardy of getting hurt or in trouble with the law.

If you provide alcohol to a minor you could be charged with a gross misdemeanor, which has a maximum penalty of \$3,000 fine and/or one year in jail.

A conviction for providing alcohol can also show up in a background check, which could affect future housing, school or job applications. Not only can you be charged criminally, you can also be sued for damages as a result of things that occur when our youth are drinking underage, which means that you may be held responsible for what happens to that person after they have been drinking. What happens if that underage drinker drives home and gets into a car accident? What if the underage drinking gets into a fight with someone? If the underage drinker dies or suffers grave bodily injury, the provider can be charged with a felony offense.

The solution is in the community. We have everything right here; we just need to get the entire community to join in these efforts! If you would like more information or would like to get involved with the Coalition please visit our website at www.workingtogethercoalition.org or contact Kelly Felton with Working Together: A Coalition for Safe and Healthy Communities at (218) 330-8129 (218) 330-8129 or e-mail kelly@workingtogethercoalition.org.