

NEWS RELEASE

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ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH OFFERS OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FACTS, UNDERSTAND RISKS

JACKSON, Mich. [April 10, 2014] – With one in every 12 adults afflicted by alcohol abuse or dependence, it's vital to separate facts from misconceptions, according to the Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition.

“Nearly 18 million Americans struggle with alcohol abuse,” said Melissa Tinervia of JCSAPC. “Millions more engage in risky drinking patterns, like binge drinking and underage drinking, that can lead to abuse or dependence. But the answer is not to accuse or tell people to ‘just get over it.’ We need to help them deal with the condition constructively.”

April is Alcohol Awareness Month, which offers the opportunity to educate the community on the facts, risks and support systems available, Melissa Tinervia said.

Alcohol has a tranquilizing effect on most people. It depresses parts of the brain, particularly the areas governing judgment and self-control. Long-term heavy use of alcohol can lead to serious behavioral issues—violence, poor judgment, interpersonal conflict and dangerous activities such as drunken driving. Long-term abuse can also cause damage to the liver, heart, stomach and brain.

“In and of itself, alcohol is not ‘evil.’ But it does affect the body and brain in a variety of ways,” Melissa Tinervia explained. “For those who are alcohol-dependent or have certain physiological and psychological risk factors, the effects can be intense and complex.”

Negative labels and criticism won't help people who are alcohol-dependent address the affliction. “We should think of alcohol abuse and dependence in the same way we think of cancer. It's a disease. As with any disease, we need to help these patients get the treatment and support they need,” said Melissa Tinervia.

JCSAPC offers direction for those who are seeking that help:

- Central Michigan 2-1-1 can connect people to the nearest program or support organization trained to deal with alcohol abuse or dependence. Resources are available for those who are alcohol-dependent or have family members abusing alcohol. Dial 2-1-1 on any phone or go online to www.centralmichigan211.org.
- Home of New Vision is a local organization providing case management and peer support programs and services to help those affected by addiction. For services with this agency or referral for other forms of treatment, assistance is available by calling (517) 788-5596 or going online to www.homeofnewvision.org.

About JCSAPC

The Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition works to reduce youth and adult substance use/abuse by building community capacity and supporting substance abuse prevention, early intervention and treatment through recovery oriented systems. The vision of JCSAPC is to have a safe and healthy community free of substance abuse. www.drugfreejackson.com

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