

Town Hall Meetings: Mobilizing Communities to Prevent Underage Drinking



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Workshop Presenters

In order of presentation

- **Gwyndolyn Ensley, M.Ed.**
*Substance Abuse and Mental Health
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- **Rená Agee, M.A.**
Macro International, Inc.



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Framing the Seriousness of the Issue

- In 2007, about 10.7 million persons aged 12 to 20 (27.9 percent of this age group) reported drinking alcohol in the past month. Approximately 7.2 million (18.6 percent) were binge drinkers, and 2.3 million (6.0 percent) were heavy drinkers.
- Those who begin drinking alcohol before the age of 15 are five times more likely than those who start at age 21 and older to develop alcohol problems.



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Framing the Seriousness of the Issue *(continued)*

- Nationwide, 5.2 percent of the 44.7 percent students who currently drank alcohol usually obtained the alcohol they drank by buying it in a store (e.g., liquor store, convenience store, supermarket, discount store, or gas station).
- Nationwide, 4.1 percent of students had drunk at least one drink of alcohol on school property.



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Costs of Underage Drinking

- The economic cost of underage drinking is estimated to be nearly \$62 billion.
- Underage drinking is a risk factor for heavy drinking later in life.
- Underage drinking is a leading contributor to death from injuries, which are the main cause of death for people under age 21.

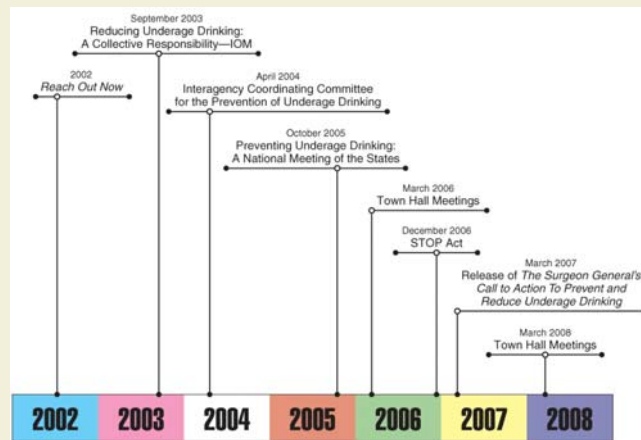


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Federal Response



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Effective Health Communications Initiatives



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Start Talking Before They Start Drinking (STBTSD) Campaign

Campaign objectives:

- Seek to reduce and delay the onset of underage drinking (UAD).
- Help parents protect their children from the risks of underage drinking.
- Provide facts and practical advice to parents.

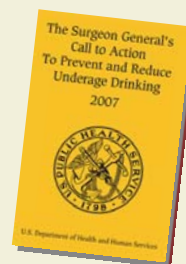


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Start Talking Before They Start Drinking Campaign *(continued)*

- Urge parents to speak with their children about underage alcohol use.
- Support the goals of *The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking (SGCTA)*.



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Campaign Elements

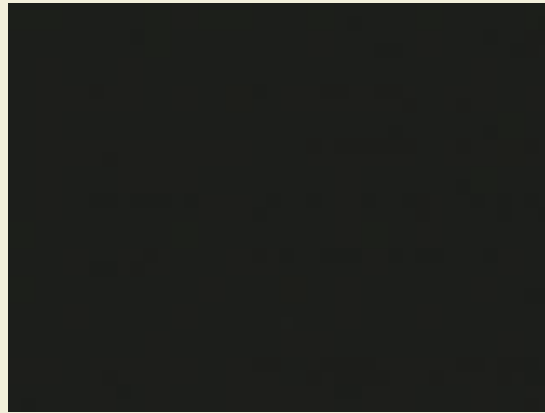
- **Start Talking Before They Start Drinking: A Family Guide**
- **Federal Web portal:** www.stopalcoholabuse.gov
- **Multiple media channels of dissemination were selected using donated media:**
 - Television
 - Interactive media
 - Radio
 - Newspapers
 - Outdoor advertising
 - Magazines



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Television



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Town Hall Meetings (THMs)



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THM Objectives

- Further goals identified in *The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking*.
- Enable communities to sustain and further local UAD prevention initiatives.
- Engage and empower communities in a coordinated national effort to prevent and reduce UAD.
- Promote behavior change among youth and adults to support UAD prevention.
- Generate media coverage to increase awareness of UAD.



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THM Participation

- Nationwide participation resulted in a 30 percent increase from the 2006 THM initiative.
- Reached out to many ethnic groups:
 - African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Chinese, Ethiopian, Hispanic, and Somalian.
- Meetings held in all 50 States, Washington, DC, and 5 U.S. Territories.



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THM Response: *Call to Action*

- **The THMs met the following *Call to Action* goals:**
 - Foster societal change to facilitate healthy adolescent development.
 - Engage parents, schools, communities, all levels of government, and all social systems.
 - Promote an understanding of underage alcohol use in the context of human development and maturation.
 - Improve public health surveillance.



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THM Response *(continued)*

- **Over 1,600 community-based organizations (CBOs) coordinated THMs in their communities.**
- **Over 1,800 THMs were held across the Nation.**
- **CBOs provided details about the THMs held in their communities using a four-page OMB-approved evaluation form:**
 - Eighty-six percent of CBOs (1,379) provided results on the THMs.
 - Evaluation forms were received on 1,559 THMs (about 86 percent).



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THM Evaluation



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Strong Community Support

- **THM attendees included:**
 - As many as 1,350 adults (average = 44.5)
 - As many as 1,000 youth (average = 30.8)
 - Average number of other/unspecified attendees was 31,352*

**Includes market reach for TV, radio, and/or newspaper*



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Broad Community Participation

Wide-spread participation in the THMs from various sectors of the community:

- Parents
- Youth
- Law enforcement
- Prevention specialists
- Teachers/education professionals
- State and local elected officials



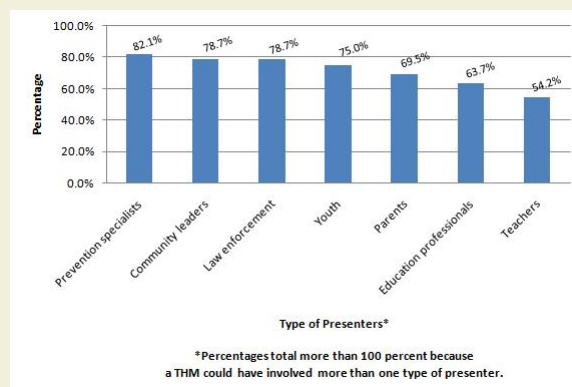
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Broad Community Participation

(continued)

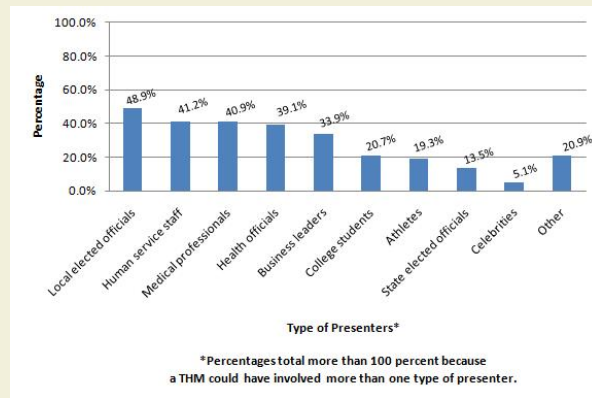


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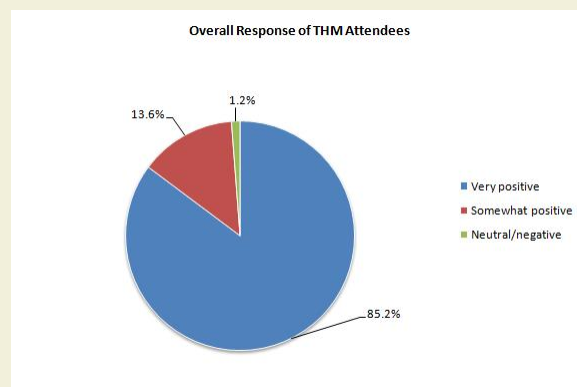
Broad Community Participation (continued)



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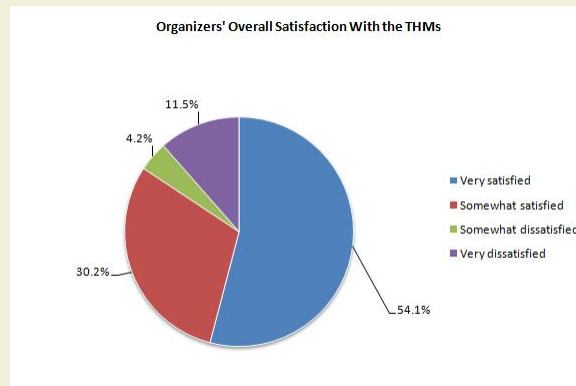
Overall Response



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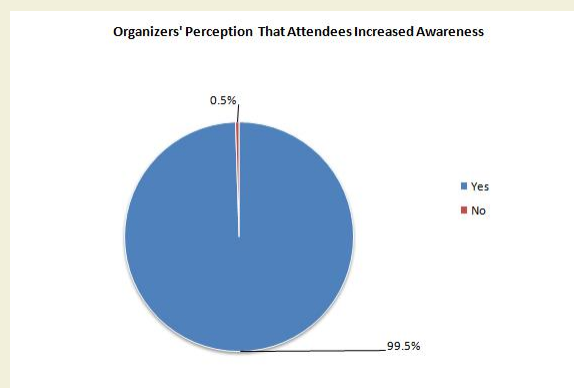
Overall Satisfaction



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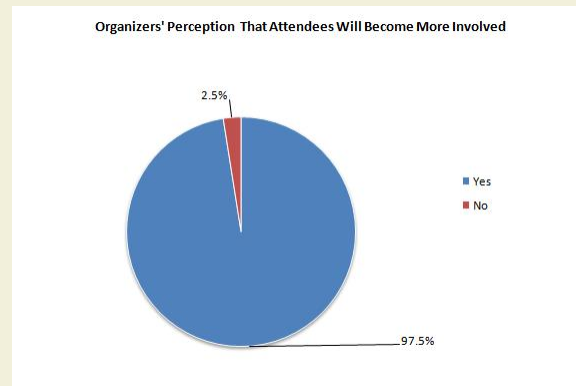
Perceived Increase in Awareness



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Perceived Future Involvement



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Parental Involvement

Parents plan to become more involved by:

- Developing more alcohol-free activities for themselves and their children.
- Talking to their teenagers about UAD.
- Spending more one-on-one time with their teen(s).
- Becoming more knowledgeable about their children's social activities and friends.
- Reducing access to alcohol to youth and their friends.
- Starting a parent network or support group.



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Community Involvement

Communities plan to become more involved by:

- Joining a coalition (existing or new).
- Creating more alcohol-free alternative activities for teens.
- Volunteering with youth activities.



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Youth Involvement

“Our THM was completely student-led. They did all the planning and organizing, including inviting panelists, putting together a PowerPoint presentation with local statistics, and helping lead small discussion groups.”

“Our THM was completely facilitated by our youth. They are very passionate about this issue and certainly stimulated community conversation.”



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THMs Collaboration

“Hosting this THM on UAD was a great opportunity to discover strategies to combat the UAD problem in our community. With the input of local elected officials, school officials, law enforcement, and other prevention partners, we were able to address the issue from many different angles. We decided to conduct follow-up meetings to continue combating UAD.”



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THMs Collaboration *(continued)*

“We conducted two separate THMs—one in English and one in Spanish. The Spanish-language forum was where more parents brought their children and were very participatory in the discussion. We were advised that they never had the opportunity to attend a forum that offered them the ability to voice their issues and concerns.”



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Multiple Approaches Used

CBOs used different formats to conduct THMs in their communities:

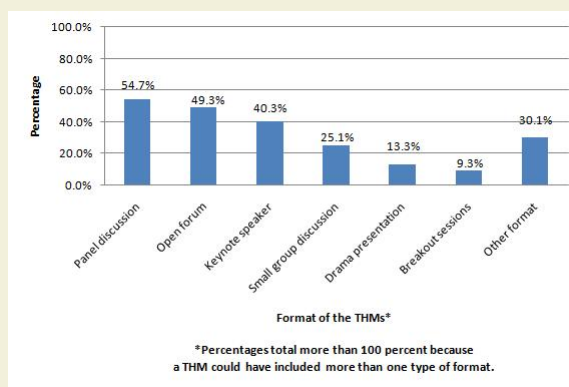
- Panel discussions
- Small group discussions
- Open forums
- Keynote speakers
- Other formats



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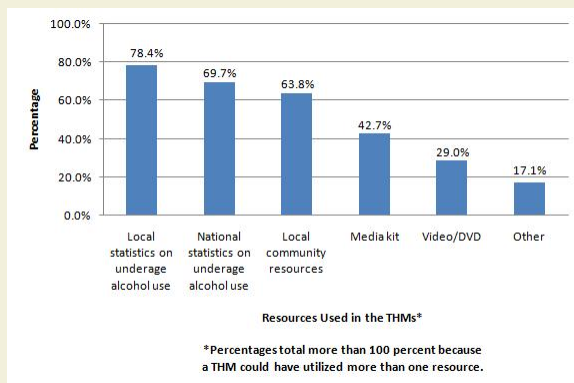
Multiple Approaches Used *(continued)*



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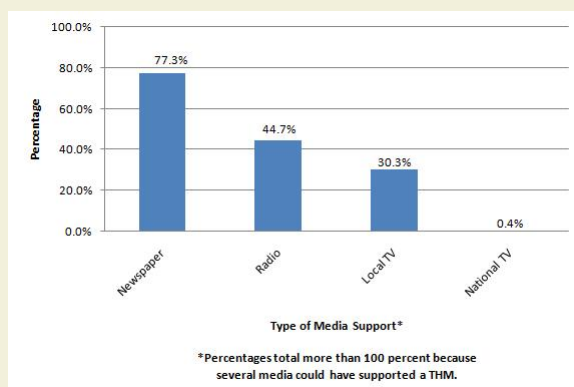
Resources Used



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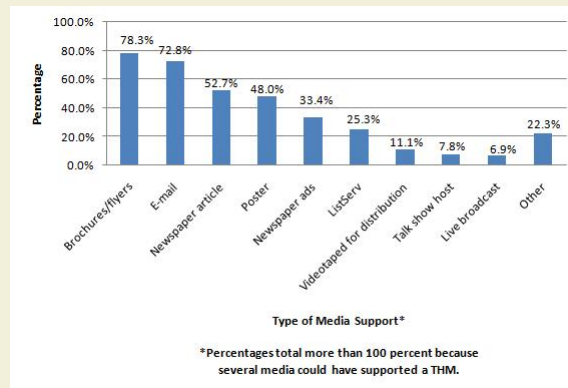
Vast Media Support



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Vast Media Support *(continued)*

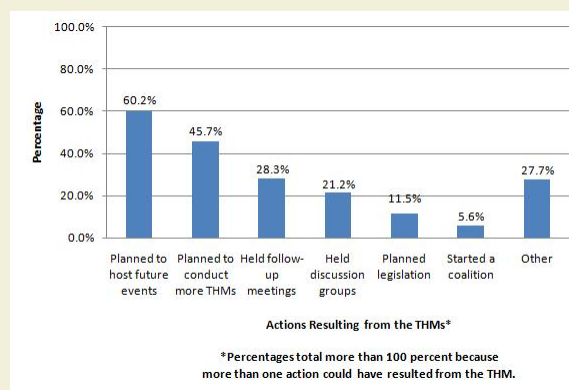


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THM Successful Outcomes



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THM Achievements

- Resulted in a 30 percent increase in participation from the 2006 THM initiative.
- Engaged communities across the Nation to prevent and reduce UAD.
- Addressed several SGCTA goals.
- Received wide-spread community participation, including considerable support from the media.
- Increased community awareness of the negative effects of UAD.
- Mobilized communities to take action in addressing UAD.



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Lessons Learned

- Supply talking points for panelists participating in THMs.
- Present additional ways to maximize community and media support.
- Identify public/private resources for additional funding for THMs and other UAD activities.
- Maintain ongoing communications with THM sponsors, supporters, and participants.



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Next Steps

- **SAMHSA-sponsored activities**
 - *Reach Out Now* collaboration with Scholastic, Inc
 - *Reach Out Now* Teach-Ins
 - Underage Drinking Prevention State Videos (11)
 - National Meeting of the States (proposed)
 - Too Smart To Start (TSTS) Web site update



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Next Steps *(continued)*

- TSTS Electronic Board Game (in English and Spanish)
- E-Cards (in English and Spanish)
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Museum
- Red Ribbon Week Activities
- Hard Choices featuring Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four Comic Book



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