



Beach Cities Health District Joins Mothers Against Drunk Driving for April 21 Virtual Event on How to Talk to Kids About Substance Use

Event will feature keynote from Hermosa Beach Police W. Chief Paul LeBaron and presentation by Beach Cities Health District's Youth Advisory Council for National Alcohol Awareness Month

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REDONDO BEACH, Calif. (April 20, 2021) – Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Southern California is hosting a free, virtual workshop to equip parents and caregivers with the resources they need to talk with their teens about the risks of underage drinking and drug use – an especially important conversation after a year of COVID-19 and physically distancing from others. The “PowerTalk21®” event will include local students’ perspectives on substance use through a presentation and a fishbowl discussion featuring members of Beach Cities Health District’s (BCHD) Youth Advisory Council, a student-led group of 8th-12th grade students who are passionate about making a difference in the health outcomes of their peers.

Other presenters include Behavioral Health Services, a testimonial from a Torrance parent who lost her child to underage drinking and a street racing incident and a keynote address by Hermosa Beach Police Chief W. Paul LeBaron about underage drinking prevention in the Beach Cities from his perspective as a parent and police chief.

The event is in conjunction with April being Alcohol Awareness Month and Teen Driver Safety Month in May — MADD has deemed this time of year “PowerTalk21® Season.” As part of MADD’s Power of Parents® program, PowerTalk 21® encourages parents and other caring adults to have intentional, ongoing conversations with their kids about alcohol and other drugs. In fact, the event is being held on April 21 as a national day for parents to connect with their children on the dangers of substance use.

“Together with our coalition, the Beach Cities Partnership for Youth, we’re taking a community approach to prevent youth substance use in our community,” said Beach Cities Health District CEO Tom Bakaly. “Our goal is to help local students grow into healthy adults. I encourage all students, parents, teachers and anyone else who has a child they care about to join us for this event.”

In 2016, BCHD identified substance use prevention and mental health as top health priorities for the Beach Cities youth population. According to the 2018-19 California Healthy Kids Survey, the percentage of students reporting using alcohol or drugs in the past 30 days more than doubles between 9th and 11th grade. In addition, 37 percent of 11th graders have used drugs or alcohol in the past 30 days, on average.

To tackle these youth health challenges, BCHD convened more than 200 students, parents, teachers, mental health providers and community members to serve on its Beach Cities

Partnership for Youth Coalition. The PowerTalk21® keynote speaker, Hermosa Beach Police Chief W. Paul LeBaron, is a member and so are BCHD's Youth Advisory Council students. In 2019, BCHD joined more than 700 communitywide coalitions across the country when it was awarded a Drug-Free Communities Grant, now administered by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. The five-year grant helps support Coalition activities to prevent youth substance use.

Efforts include a "Talk About It" parent education series, which encourages parents to talk to their teens about drugs, alcohol and other social-emotional topics; Photovoice presentations about vaping and alcohol use presented by the Youth Advisory Council; collaboration with Beach Cities school districts on their substance use prevention curriculum; an opioid awareness video and social media campaign featuring prevention partners; a weekly Parent Chat with South Bay Families Connected (SBFC) and Torrance Memorial's Thelma McMillen Center; and the Families Connected Speaker Series co-presented with SBFC.

Beach Cities families seeking resources and referrals for substance use, mental health and other COVID-19 health concerns can call BCHD's School Well-Being Line, 310-374-3426, Option 2, on school days between 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

"We have seen during the pandemic that parents can be a bigger influence on their teens than they might think," said Patricia Rillera, MADD California State Executive Director. "We want to help parents continue conversations with their teens and help them make the right decisions to keep themselves safe as they resume their regular activities outside of their homes."

The free PowerTalk21® virtual workshop will be held on Wednesday, April 21 from 6-7:30 p.m. Register online at www.tinyurl.com/BeachCitiesPT21. For more information and resources to talk to your kids about substance use, visit bchd.org.

About Beach Cities Health District

Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) is a healthcare district focused on preventative health and serves the communities of Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach. Established in 1955 as a public agency, it offers an extensive range of dynamic health and wellness programs, with innovative services and facilities to promote health and prevent diseases across the lifespan. BCHD also operates AdventurePlex, a health and fitness facility where kids play their way to good health, and the Center for Health & Fitness, a comprehensive fitness center that is the only Medical Fitness Association-certified facility in California. Visit www.bchd.org or call (310) 374-3426 for more information

About Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Founded in 1980 by a mother whose daughter was killed by a drunk driver, Mothers Against Drunk Driving® (MADD) is the nation's largest nonprofit working to end drunk driving, help fight drugged driving, support the victims of these violent crimes and prevent underage drinking. MADD has helped to save more than 400,000 lives, reduce drunk driving deaths by more than 50 percent and promote designating a non-drinking driver. MADD's Campaign to Eliminate

Drunk Driving® calls for law enforcement support, ignition interlocks for all offenders and advanced vehicle technology. MADD has provided supportive services to nearly one million drunk and drugged driving victims and survivors at no charge through local victim advocates and the 24-Hour Victim Help Line 1-877-MADD-HELP. Visit madd.org or call 1-877-ASK-MADD.

About Behavioral Health Services

Behavioral Health Services (BHS) is the lead agency for the Beach Cities Prevention Community Council. BHS is contracted by the LA County Dept. of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control to do teen drug and alcohol prevention work in the beach cities (alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs are our three main substances of prevention focus). During the event, BHS will briefly share about their prevention work, the PCC, and talk about how the Social Host Ordinance is an effective prevention tool to reduce youth alcohol use.

About the City of Hermosa Beach

Founded in 1907, Hermosa Beach is a thriving community of some 20,000 residents. Located on the southern end of the Santa Monica Bay in Los Angeles County, with beaches ranked among the best in the world, Hermosa Beach has been recognized for its work to highlight Southern California beach culture, foster a vibrant local economy and protect coastal and environmental resources.