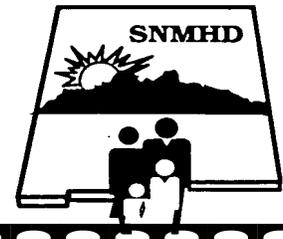


# PROSPECTIVO

A newsletter published by Southern New Mexico Human Development

July - August 2007 Volume 7



## Prevention Services:

R.O.P.E

B.I.G./Avanzar

RADAR

## Clinical Services:

Outpatient Services

Specialized Adult  
Outpatient Services

Specialized Children/  
Adolescent  
Outpatient Services

Prospectivo is published bimonthly by Southern New Mexico Human Development, Inc. The contents of this newsletter are the sole responsibility of SNMHD. Comments and suggestions may be sent to: SNMHD, Prospectivo P.O. Box 2285, Las Cruces, NM 88004.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Annual BIG Border Conference

The impact of alcohol and violence on the border was the theme at the 8th Annual Bi-national conference held in Cd. Juarez at the Lu-cerna Hotel. The conference was sponsored by the Border Initiative Group (B.I.G.). Issues of deep concern and specific to our region are those segments of the youth populations involved with gang violence, underage drinking, alcohol and domestic violence, and teen suicide.

Mexican and American speakers who share mutual concerns in this field presented their expertise and work experience for positive results to the local conference participants. Mexican speakers were Dr. Oscar Horcasitas, research investigator in Cd. Juarez, Lic. Martin Ponce Rubio, a gang interventionist in Mexico City, Israel Hernandez from Compañeros, Lucia Quintana from MUSIVI, and Olivia Caraveo from CIJ. American presenters include Stella Gallegos from Sexual Assault Programs, Inc., Shawna Chavez from Santa Fe Community College, Concha Montañó, Prevention Evaluator of Programs, Daniel Orduñez, El Paso County Attorney, and Vincent Ortega from SNMHD.

BIG is a bi-national collaborative of experts in the field of drug prevention in El Paso and Cd. Juarez as well as surrounding vicinities. BIG's members dedicate their efforts to the identification of needs and promotion of strategic services that are appropriate and culturally relevant to the populations they serve. Most important is the collaboration of professionals with common goals from two different countries: the U.S. and Mexico. For more information on how to become involved with BIG, call (505) 882-5101.

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Check us out at [www.snmhd.org](http://www.snmhd.org) or contact us at (505) 882-5101

## **Underage Drinking in Juarez**

The problem of underage and binge drinking in Mexico is a unique issue for the US/Mexico border. Differences in alcohol policies (drinking age limit at 18 years of age in Mexico; 21 years of age in the US) and enforcement of US and Mexican laws on alcohol consumption contribute significantly to public health and public safety problems on both sides of the international border.

As of May of 2007, the Juarez municipalities instituted enforcement of teen-agers drinking under the age of 18. American teens are escorted by Mexican police to the American side of the international bridge, while Mexican teen violators are escorted to a holding tank, gymnasium-like, until their parents come for them.

The 2004 New Mexico Traffic Safety Bureau statistics, "Estimated Annual Alcohol-Related Motor Vehicle Crash Events," illustrate:

- 219 Deaths
- 2,576 injuries
- 3,336 crashes
- 20,093 DWI arrests
- 968,339 Alcohol-Impaired Driving (AID)

## **STRENGTHENING FAMILIES**

The Strengthening Families Program (SFP), a family-oriented training designed for effective parenting and family skills training, as well as training on children's social skills development, will be renewed for FY '08. Last year the SNMHD served 140 families in southern Doña Ana County with children ages 0-6, 6-10, and 10-14. Past participants have stated, "I am calmer with my children," and, "I am not alone in this (parenting)," while also making the observation that the children behave better than they did before participating in the program.

The various groups of families meet once a week for two hours, a pre and post – test is ministered for evaluation purposes, and participating families receive a certificate of completion, a \$50 stipend, and pot luck celebration. While the 0-6, and 6-10 years old SFP is a 14 week program, the 10-14 years old SFP is a 7 week program with 2 booster sessions. To receive these services, or more information, please call (505) 822-5101.

## Underage Drinking Update 2007

The unique situation of cross-border underage drinking (US/Mexico) where the age limit to drink alcohol is different in each country creates an environment favorable for young teens. Often, teens as young as 12 (PIRE Research, 2002) pretend to be older with the use of fake IDs. In most instances, the fake IDs are not checked at the bars and nightclubs. Teens cross over to the Mexican side where they meet up with their friends to party. American teens 18 years of age may legally purchase and consume alcohol in Juarez, something they may not do in their own country until they are 21. It was found that the extent of binge drinking among teens on the border exceeds state and national trends.

According to research by the Border Project Model Program under Public Strategies, there are up to 1,400 crossings back to the US after a weekend of partying by teens too intoxicated to get behind the wheel (La Prensa, 2003). In addition,

- The Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) in 2002 conducted research to determine the extent of cross-border binge drinking. A breathalyzer test was administered anonymously to volunteer teen respondents at the bridge who were returning to El Paso, Las Cruces and surrounding communities from Juarez. Participating teens received incentives such as lottery tickets. It was found that the majority of teens were inebriated, some as young as 12.

A 2004 University of Texas at El Paso survey of 1,350 high school students, 13-19 years of age who cross the border to drink in Juarez are six times more likely to binge drink, five times more likely to drink and drive, and three times more likely to ride with a driver who's been drinking. Moreover, it was found that the rates of student binge drinking and drunk driving were higher when compared to the state and national rates.

Those New Mexico teens that cross back 45 minutes as they return to their homes to the DWI Resource Center, March years of age may or may not be arrested with drinking and DWI charges, some get their child, some will make an arrest vision, and so it is that some teen drunk get their license if they were driving

### Intervention Strategies

Local teens that binge drink across the fence and vehicle crashes caused by themselves and others in El Paso and Doña by coalitions, public health practitioners, lem. Present and past progress in this On March of 2006 the *Special Curfew* ment and openly supported by the Las requires anyone under the age of 18 to cross the international bridge with a parent or guardian. If teens get caught crossing the bridge without a parent or guardian, they are fined and not allowed to cross.

Legal age limit for drinking alcohol in Mexico is 21 years old; legal age limit for drinking in the U.S. is 18 years old. Research on border underage drinking found youth as young as 12 inebriated when crossing back to the U.S.

to El Paso from Juarez will drive anywhere from 20 – in Las Cruces or surrounding communities. According 2005, the Doña Ana County juveniles younger than 18 Some police agencies enforce the extent of the law rarely arrest juveniles for DWI, but call the parents to but not report the infraction to the Motor Vehicles Drivers will not lose their license, and others will not drunk without a license.

bridge are at high risk for health-related problems; excessive drinking, and pose a serious danger to them- Ana County. Local community leaders are supported and policy makers to assist with solutions to the prob- area is listed below:

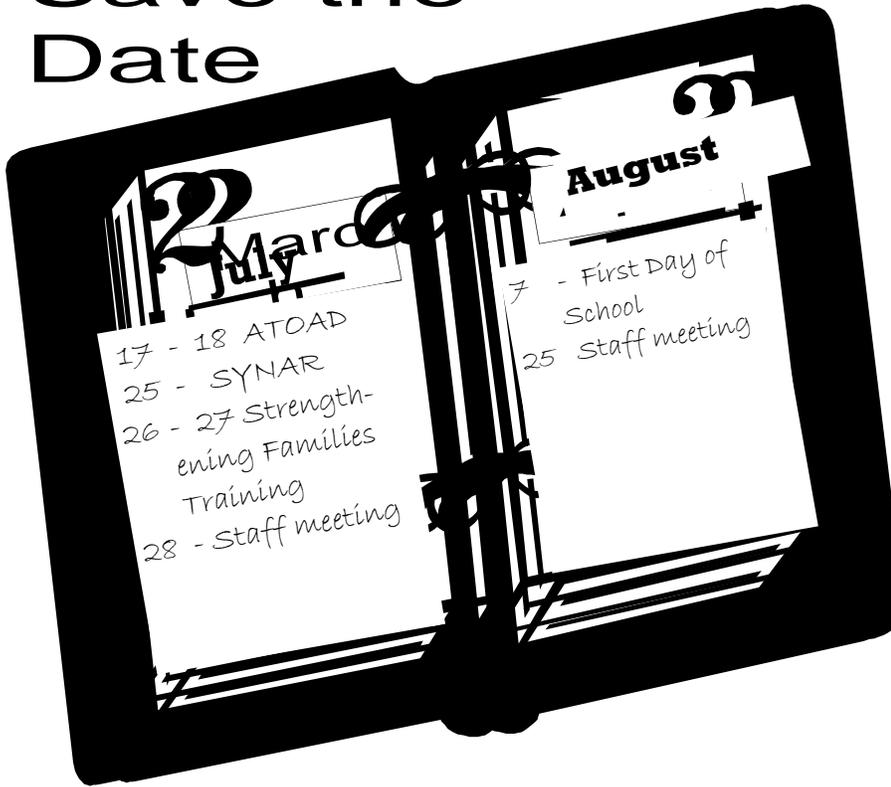
*Ordinance* was enacted by the El Paso City Govern- Cruces mayor, William Mattiace and many others, re- guardian. If teens get caught crossing the bridge with-

In turn, all public health officials maintain collaboration with community coalitions such as MADD, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and private contractors to help change community attitudes for healthier lifestyles.

Besides the recent enforcement of teen binge drinking by Mexican police, back in 1999, on the first day of the year, the all night bars in Juarez were mandated to close at 2am. The results then were a drop in cross-border drinkers thereby limiting alcohol access to the public.

The Doña Ana County DWI program includes community education, prevention, intervention, treatment, and enforcement activities and services. Southern New Mexico Human Development, Inc. (SNMHD) agency provides prevention services with community organization and education specific to parents and youth. SNMHD also has partnered up with social service agencies in Juarez to create the Border Initiative Group (BIG). The main goal is to reduce underage drinking and violence along the border by educating and implementation of environmental strategies.

# Save the Date



For more information about these calendar events, contact our Prevention Department at (505) 882-5101.

## Regional Alcohol and Drug Awareness Network Center

Southern New Mexico Human Development, Inc., is a New Mexico State Associate Center for dissemination of alcohol and drug information. For free materials relating to alcohol, tobacco, other drug use or violence-related issues contact the Prevention Department at (505) 882-5101.



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