



Success Stories

Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

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Missouri's New Minor in Possession "Possession by Consumption" Law Passes!

It is certainly time to celebrate in Missouri! Missouri's new Minor in Possession (MIP) "possession by consumption" law became effective on August 28, 2005. The new MIP "possession by consumption" law expands the old MIP law's definition of "possession" to include "consumption" of alcohol and being "visibly intoxicated." Under the new law, minors (16 to 20 years old) who plead guilty to or are convicted of MIP will have their driver's license suspended for 30 days for the first offense and 90 days for the second offense. For a third offense or subsequent offense, their driver's license will be revoked for a year.

Several aspects contributed to passage of this law:

- First was the grassroots effort of local community prevention coalitions that worked on the passage of local and county ordinances. Communities worked under the umbrella of the Northland Coalition (Clay, Platte, and Ray Counties – Kansas City north area), Youth With Vision and the Missouri Youth/Adult Alliance to Reduce Underage Drinking to change social norms of acceptance through a social marketing campaign. After passage, the results were made public and elected officials were advised of those local accomplishments.

- Second was a joint resolution in 2004 to create a bipartisan Joint Senate/House Interim Committee, which was chaired by Senator Gibbons. That study committee convened a series of public hearings across the State during the second half of 2004. Many of the local efforts were recommended during those public hearings.
- Third was the bill's passage as a result of those recommendations. The lead underage drinking bill ultimately became the new MIP law. It was Senator Gibbons, President Pro Tem (Senate Leader) of the Missouri State Senate, who championed the issue and moved the bill through both the Senate and the House to be signed into law.

Perseverance and the work of prevention coalitions can and do have a major influence on social policies. Community activists have significant influence over the decisions of their elected officials. Addressing policy at the lowest levels, partnered with social marketing, is often the easiest path for change.

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The views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the views of the Office of Juvenile Justice for Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) or the Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center (UDET) and are solely of the author/source.

