

Why get involved with reducing substance abuse?

The work performed by local community anti-drug coalitions is a natural fit with the goals of the APHA's Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Section. The Section's goals are to (1) develop, foster, and advocate for sound research, policy, and practice in the fields of ATOD epidemiology, prevention, and treatment, and (2) enhance communications concerning ATOD issues among the Section membership and among the membership, APHA leadership, and the wider community.

- Parents sometimes host parties that permit underage drinking in hopes that they can supervise and/or control alcohol consumption. You may be asked to assist a coalition's effort to educate parents by lending your expertise to educate parents about the potential long-term consequences of regular use of alcohol or binge drinking on adolescent brain development.
- You may be asked to be involved in a healthcare policy panel that will make recommendations that will involve community healthcare consumers and professionals in shaping local healthcare infrastructure, policy and programs.
- Occasionally coalitions use their media connections to feature "local expert" discussion on medical aspects of particular drugs (legal or illegal) of abuse or other public health-related aspects in print or on local radio and TV.

What's in it for us?

- Increased visibility on a local and national scale
- Opportunity to have a voice at the community level
- Influence the integration of best practice research into local level strategies
- Potential to shape local, state and national public health policy

Building a quality relationship with a local substance abuse prevention coalition gives you an opportunity to integrate the medical point of view into the planning and execution of local strategies to reduce substance abuse and related problems in the community.