

Live Internet Broadcast Features Lessons Learned from National Effort to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students

A Matter of Degree Campus-Community Partnerships to Share Successes in 60-minute, Live Web cast on June 11 from the University of Delaware, With Moderator Ralph Begleiter, Former CNN Correspondent

A Matter of Degree (AMOD): The National Effort to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students is a multi-year, national pilot project designed to test an innovative approach to reducing college high-risk drinking and its harmful consequences for campus-communities. Representatives from the 10 AMOD campus-community partnerships will share their successes, challenges faced, and lessons learned through a live, interactive Web cast from the University of Delaware June 11 from 2 pm to 3 pm EDT. The broadcast will be available at www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net and archived at that address for four months.

The 10 campus-community partnerships of AMOD go beyond traditional prevention efforts that focus on the individual drinker, recognizing that the social environment influences individual decision making. AMOD partnerships have succeeded in restricting drink specials and controlling house parties and noise problems, and campus administrators are weighing in on alcohol licensing and zoning issues in the community. By creating viable, effective, campus-community coalitions, the responsibility for high-risk drinking among students and its related problems has shifted from the university to the community as a whole.

“Perhaps the greatest lesson learned through A Matter of Degree is that powerful changes can happen when the university joins forces with concerned community leaders, elected officials, law enforcement and others to address high-risk drinking,” said Richard Yoast, PhD, director of the American Medical Association’s Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, which administers the project. “Tremendous progress has been made as a result of A Matter of Degree, and our goal is to share what we’ve learned with other campus administrators and concerned community leaders who want to make a change in their communities and to reduce high-risk drinking and its consequences.”

The Web cast moderator will be Ralph Begleiter, the University of Delaware's Distinguished Journalist in Residence and former CNN World Affairs Correspondent and a broadcast journalist for more than 30 years.

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Examples of Key Successes to Date:

- The University Delaware's Building Responsibility Coalition in Newark, Del. succeeded in generating support for a Mayor's Alcohol Commission which resulted in the creation of a police alcohol unit, which is funded through increased business license fees of alcohol-selling establishments.
- The Stepping Up Coalition of the University of Iowa in Iowa City helped pass a city ordinance which reduced drink specials and a second ordinance to impose the city's first ever age restriction on entry to bars – to age 19. In addition, local bar owners have committed to implementing bar monitors, using a colored wristband system, and increasing employee training to curb underage and binge drinking.
- High-risk drinking rates have dropped at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, where NU Directions organized key stakeholders statewide to create a digital drivers license program to reduce the use of false IDs.
- Campus crime has dropped at Lehigh University in Bethlehem Pa., in part through the campus-community coalition's innovative efforts to tame Greek parties.

Among other topics, A Matter of Degree representatives will discuss:

- How key interventions and strategies were utilized, including community organizing, media advocacy, research and data, enhanced enforcement and political strategies;
- Obstacles and challenges and how they were overcome;
- The importance of support and leadership from top levels of government and campus administration; and
- What AMOD project directors would do differently the next time.

Web cast panelists will be:

- Tracy Bachman, Building Responsibility Campus/Community Coalition, University of Delaware/Newark, Del.
- Phillip E. Jones, Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, University of Iowa/Iowa City
- Linda Major, NU Directions, University of Nebraska/Lincoln
- Lisa Erk, former national communications director, A Matter of Degree
- Richard Yoast, A Matter of Degree and AMA Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse

A Matter of Degree is supported by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and managed by the American Medical Association's Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, based in Princeton, N.J., is the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care. It concentrates its grantmaking in four goal areas: to assure that all Americans have access to quality health care at reasonable cost; to improve the quality of care and support for people with chronic health conditions; to promote healthy communities and lifestyles; and to reduce the personal, social and economic harm caused by substance abuse - tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs.

The American Medical Association is the nation's largest physicians organization and is a leader in promoting professionalism in medicine and setting standards for medical education, practice and ethics. Through its Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, the AMA has taken a leadership role to reduce the harms caused by alcohol and other drug abuse, particularly underage drinking.

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