



# CommunityNEWS

*Promoting Health & Wellness through prevention in our Community.*

## What Parents Should Know About Rhode Island Social Host Laws

**With holiday celebrations taking place — some involving the presence of alcohol — parents and all adults should remember that underage drinking remains unsafe, unhealthy and illegal.**



Hosting a party with underage drinking can be dangerous. As a community, we need to respect our teens by providing safe and enjoyable experiences. Let's join together to reduce underage drinking for the safety of our youth and our entire community.

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**A recent Rhode Island survey showed that of the underage youth who drink alcohol, 59% reported getting alcohol from a friend or relative; 35% reported a parent or guardian secured liquor for them.**

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### What is the Rhode Island Social Host Law?

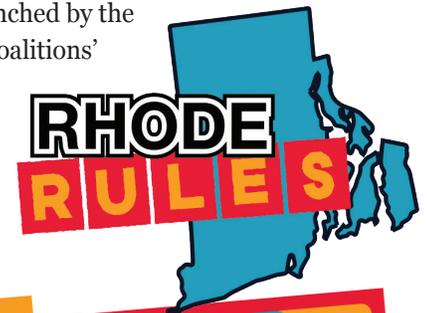
It is against the law in Rhode Island, for a host to “permit” an underage person to consume alcohol. “Permit” is defined as to give permission for, or approval of, the possession or consumption of an alcoholic beverage by any form of conduct, that would cause a reasonable person to believe that permission or approval has been given. The law states that any host serving alcohol to minors at a party or social function will be held responsible for those minors — even if they leave your property or consume alcohol without your knowledge or consent.

### What’s the Real Risks for Youth & Communities?

- While underage drinking may seem harmless, early exposure to alcohol can have short- and long-term effects, including impacting brain development. Brains do not fully form and mature until around the age of 24.
- Underage youth who use alcohol are at a higher risk for future substance misuse and disorders and may also experience increased anxiety and depression.
- Drinking alcohol can lower inhibitions and increase the chances kids will engage in risky behaviors.

## Rhode Island regional Coalitions Launch Social Host Campaign to Raise Awareness

A new campaign was launched by the Rhode Island Regional Coalitions’ Partnerships for Success grant to reduce underage drinking and raise awareness among adults regarding Rhode Island’s social host laws.



## Introducing RWU's Public Health Club



*Board Vice President, Emily Lane and President, Isabelle Boullier.*

The Public Health Club is a student club at Roger Williams University that aims to advocate for, promote, and improve public health on campus and in the surrounding community. We fulfill this through a fun and collaborative project-based structure where we talk about relevant issues on and off campus, then try to determine creative solutions to them. The club was approved to become an official club on campus in the 2021 Spring Semester. In the time the club has been active, club members have volunteered at Flu Vaccination Clinics and COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics. We have also participated in the Annual Turkey Basket Drive where we have donated dry goods and health/medical supplies to families during the Holidays. This past year, the club has worked closely with the Public Health Department on numerous projects, including:

- *A Career Panel that highlighted different career paths and experiences from professionals on and off campus.*
- *A Career Fair & Department Kick Off Event provided resources for students pursuing Public Health (major, minor, or core concentration), as well as networking opportunities, and different projects students have pursued with their Capstone projects.*
- *Attended local community events, including Rally4 Recovery, sponsored by the East Bay Community Action Program/HEZ, and the Opioid Overdose Awareness Vigil in Warren.*

The Public Health Club looks forward to collaborating on projects and opportunities with community stakeholders and university partners on advocating for safety and health equity here on campus and in the surrounding community. We'd like to thank the Public Health department for continuously supporting the student efforts being done here on campus!

***If you have additional inquiries, please contact Isabelle Boullier at [ib.publichealth@outlook.com](mailto:ib.publichealth@outlook.com).***

## Protecting Your Child's Brain

### **Your Teen's Brain Won't Fully Mature Until Age 25**

Well, this is often why your teen may be forgetful, make poor decisions, or take crazy risks. The part of the brain that controls these types of functions (the prefrontal cortex) hasn't fully matured yet. To add fuel to the fire, the part of your teen's brain that seeks pleasure and reward is fairly well developed. As you can imagine, the combination of the two can explain why some of your teen's actions and behaviors seem totally irrational. It's not their fault.

### **Teenage Brain Development**

The teen years are a critical period of brain development and a time when their brain is very sensitive to toxins. If drugs or alcohol are introduced into their system, the brain's development is changed. Drug use can cause physical changes in the brain, specifically in the prefrontal cortex. This is the easiest excuse parents can give their children for avoiding alcohol and drugs. It goes beyond values, religious beliefs, legal issues, and plain good judgment; abstaining is vital to their health and future. Teach them to say no in order to keep their brain growing and developing the way it should.

The hippocampus is the part of the brain that deals with memory and mood regulation. Drug use causes cell damage and death in the hippocampus, leading to problems with memory tasks, mood behaviors, and cognitive impairment. It also causes developmental issues in the part of the brain that controls attention and ability to understand complex ideas.

The science of brain development reveals why teens are responsive to new experiences and influences, both positive and negative. This makes the teen years a period of great promise, but also of potential risks, like addiction. That's why preventing and delaying substance use during this time is so important to their long-term health.



# Important Facts & Signs for Parents to Know About Vaping



Vaping has become one of the most popular forms of substance use among young people, despite growing evidence of its health risks and harms. Typically, the ingredients include nicotine, flavorings and other chemicals, many of which are toxic. Some vaping products contain marijuana or other drugs.

**According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 19.6% of high school students and 4.7% of middle school students in the early months of 2020 reported using a vaping product (also known as an electronic or e-cigarette) in the past 30 days.**

**Knowing the facts about vaping and e-cigarettes can help parents protect kids from the real dangers to their health. Some signs to look for regarding vaping:**

**Equipment** – You may find devices that look like USB drives, e-liquid bottles, pods/cartridges (that contain e-juice) or product packaging. Aside from leaf marijuana, gel jars that contain highly concentrated marijuana extract (dabs), small tools to scoop dabs and cartridges that contain THC oil or wax (a yellowish-brown substance) are signs of vaping marijuana. Learn about the consequences of youth vaping, be familiar with the popular brands and devices (e.g., JUUL, Suorin, Kandypens, Puff Bars, Stig, Posh), know what is being vaped (e.g., nicotine and/or marijuana, flavor types) and be prepared to an honest conversation with your child.

**Online/Mail/Store Purchases** – Lookout for purchases made online and charged to your credit card or unusual packages that arrive in the mail. Kids also buy them at big box stores, gas stations or from friends.

**Scent** – While the smell from vaping is faint, you may catch a whiff of a flavoring where there appears to be no other source. For example, if you smell bubble gum or chocolate cake, take note. It might be a flavored nicotine vaping product. Marijuana vapes can produce a skunk-like smell.

**Vaping Slang** – You may see vaping slang in text messages such as “atty” for an atomizer, “VG” for vegetable glycerin found in e-juice or “sauce” referring to e-juice. Getting “nicked” refers to the euphoria experienced with high doses of nicotine and feeling “nic sick” refers to heart palpitations, nausea/vomiting or light-headedness associated with the overuse of nicotine vapes.

**Social Media and Online References** – Kids often brag about their vaping exploits on social media. Look for pictures or references on their Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Twitter and other social media accounts. Take note of popular vaping terms in their online searches.

**Appearance and Behavior Changes** – Vaping nicotine may lead to anxiety, irritability, difficulty concentrating and loss of appetite. Vaping marijuana can result in bloodshot eyes, dry mouth and thirst, increased appetite and shifts in behavior and mood. Sometimes, there is a noticeable change in friends and a decrease in activities that were once enjoyed.

**Physical Symptoms** – Physical side effects of vaping may include trouble breathing, headaches, cough, dizziness, sore throat, chest pain and allergic reactions such as itchiness or swelling of the lips. More severe effects include worsening of asthma symptoms, lung disease or failure and heart disease.

**Increased Thirst/Nosebleeds/Interest in Stronger Flavors** – Some of the chemicals used in e-juices dry out the mouth and nose. As a result, some kids drink more liquids, have nosebleeds and may show a desire for stronger flavors (when the mouth is dry, flavor perception is reduced).

**Decreased Caffeine Use** – Some teens who vape nicotine develop a sensitivity to caffeine because both nicotine and caffeine are stimulants. If your child drank caffeinated energy drinks and has cut back or quit, it may be because of vaping.

# The Holiday Season is a Teaching Opportunity for Parents

**Parents are still the #1 influence on their kids! During this season of parties and celebrations, it's important for adults to keep in mind that they are role models for young people when drinking and serving alcohol!**

Although Americans seem to find a reason to drink for every holiday (even candy-centered Halloween), certain celebratory events are 'boozier' than the rest. Christmas, New Year's Eve, the Superbowl and St. Patrick's Day are considered the booziest of the year.

For most people, holidays are a time for celebration and quality time with family and friends. While alcohol is often present during these occasions and consumed more than on an average day, the tradition to drink can make holidays an important time of year to talk with your kids about alcohol.



Open communication with our kids is the most important deterrent to underage drinking. Even if we think they are not listening, they are! Keep in mind that kids not only listen, they watch too! They are really good watchers! Pay attention to your own alcohol use habits. As an adult, alcohol use is legal, however you're your child's primary teacher and role model. What you do and say has a great impact on their decisions.

Remember, every conversation doesn't have to be about big issues. The goal is to build the relationship and keep the channels of communication open.

# Warren PD Borges & Reynolds Receive Awards from MADD-RI



Two members of the Warren Police Department were recognized for their contributions to the community at this year's MADD-RI Awards Breakfast. The event is an annual gathering of state law enforcement officials that recognizes those who work to end impaired driving on Rhode Island roadways.

Warren Police Chief Roy Borges, who was nominated by the Warren Prevention Coalition, received a "Community Outreach" award for being an active community partner supporting our local Recovery Center and being a leader in Warren's first Candlelight Vigil. Officer Darrin Reynolds received a "DUI Pin" for his ongoing efforts to identify and arrest individuals operating under the influence.

## Community RESOURCES

**East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP)**  
100 Bullocks Point Ave., Riverside, RI (401) 437-1000

**East Bay Center** 2 Old County Rd., Barrington, RI  
(401) 246-1195

**East Bay Recovery Center** 31 Railroad Ave., Warren, RI  
(401) 302-6231 or 401-289-2055

**BH Link Hotline** — (401) 414-LINK (414-5465)  
24/7 – help with a behavioral healthcare crisis.

**St. Mary of the Bay Food Pantry**  
645 Main St., Warren RI (401) 245-700



**Warren**  
Prevention Coalition

514 Main Street, Warren, RI 02885 • 401.245.7387

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For information, contact Ann Marie Roy at [ARoy@townofwarren-ri.gov](mailto:ARoy@townofwarren-ri.gov) or Maria Ursini at [Mursini@townofwarren-ri.gov](mailto:Mursini@townofwarren-ri.gov).

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[warrenprevention.com](http://warrenprevention.com)