

Missouri – Partners in Prevention (PIP) Case Study

Partners in Prevention (PIP), located at the University of Missouri, is a statewide consortium of colleges and universities in Missouri dedicated to creating healthy and safe campus environments. PIP provides training and technical assistance to its campus members and serves as a clearinghouse of education materials, policies and the latest prevention research. The PIP coalition of 13 institutions of higher education originated in 1999 through a U.S. Department of Education (ED) Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant to reduce and prevent high-risk drinking among Missouri's college students. Since then, the consortium has grown to include 21 colleges and universities, serving public, private, technical, and religiously affiliated campuses in Missouri. Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant funds from the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Behavioral Health provides funds to support small grants for member campuses and PIP's staffing infrastructure. Additional funding sources have been secured in recent years to address driving under the influence (DUI), tobacco cessation and prevention programs, prescription drug abuse and misuse, mental health promotion, problem gambling, and suicide prevention.

The Partners in Prevention's [mission](#) is *“To create a campus, city and state environment that supports good decision making in regards to alcohol by the college students who attend the higher education institutions in the State of Missouri.”* The consortium also works to decrease substance abuse and other problematic health and safety behaviors of Missouri's college student population. According to Joan Masters, PIP Director, member campuses receive training and technical assistance to help them interpret data, build coalitions, develop strategic plans, evaluate interventions, implement environmental prevention strategies, and learn more about current prevention “hot topics.” PIP coalition members meet monthly for training and networking, and also host an annual statewide prevention conference called “Meeting of the Minds.”

Each PIP school collects data on students using the Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS, an online, anonymous survey collecting information to understand the impact of alcohol, drugs (illegal and prescription), mental health issues, and gambling on student health and wellness. The MCHBS also provides information about attitudes, perceptions of other students' behaviors, campus and community laws, and policies. PIP staff assists member schools to implement the survey and analyze the data for individual campuses and in aggregate at the state level. PIP members have access to their own student data, which is used to inform each campus on baseline data of AOD usage patterns, track trends, where best to focus their prevention efforts, and measure the effectiveness of program implementation and policy changes over time.

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Each year, PIP members are required to draft and implement a strategic plan for their campus community using their student survey data. Each campus' approach depends upon the individual needs of the campus. Schools work closely with PIP staff to develop their strategic plans, decide what problems to address, and select evidence-based prevention strategies. Only after plans are submitted and approved do campuses receive a funding for prevention efforts. Campuses have used the money for educational materials (posters, brochures); give-away/incentive items for students to participate in alcohol screenings and other similar events; late-night alcohol-free events for students; additional police enforcement during large, problematic student celebrations; staff training; peer educator certification; and travel to the statewide "Meeting of the Minds" conference. PIP members are not permitted to use that money for staff to coordinate the campus initiatives. Having a part-time or full-time dedicated prevention professional on campus illustrates the member campus' commitment to providing adequate resources and an infrastructure necessary to reduce health and safety problems among students.

In order to participate in PIP, the college President or other senior administrator must support campus involvement in the coalition and be committed to tackling student alcohol and drug abuse issues. Campus leaders must also ensure that adequate staff is in place to carry out the necessary prevention work. PIP members form campus committees and build relationships with key stakeholders to be successful in reducing problematic student health and safety behaviors. The key partners in any campus and local community coalition vary, depending on the problems being addressed and the prevention strategies being implemented. PIP campus members are also encouraged to work with any local substance abuse prevention coalitions and other likely collaborators to help with their prevention efforts. In addition to the prevention work being done on any individual campus, there is ample opportunity to share resources and lessons learned with one another.

PIP and individual campuses have experienced many successes because of the training support and collaborative nature of the coalition. According to PIP's web site, the following outcomes have been achieved:

1. An increase in the number of campus/community coalitions throughout the state.
2. An increase in the skill level of those students and professionals who participate in training opportunities.
3. To collect baseline data on students at all participating Missouri colleges and universities.
4. A decrease in availability of alcohol to college students.
5. An increase in the number of alternative, alcohol free programming on the participating campus communities.
6. A decrease in student drinking rates including; binge drinking, average number of drinks per week and number of times students drink per week.
7. A decrease in the negative consequences of binge drinking including violence.
8. An increase in the accuracy of students' perception of their peer's AOD use.

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Most notably, the overall ‘binge’ drinking rate¹ of college students in the state has decreased from 34% in 2007 to 26% in 2013. Since 2007, there has been a significant reduction in the number of underage students engaging in binge drinking at campuses served by the coalition.

One of the challenges for PIP has been the loss of national prevention resources for institutions of high education. According to Joan Masters, “Just a few years ago, we could rely on training, technical assistance, and prevention resources from the Higher Education Center. Since it’s funding was eliminated, PIP is now *the* support for not only member campuses, but others in Missouri, if asked.” Another challenge is sustainability. If state funding were eliminated, the PIP coalition would dissolve, since it essentially supports the infrastructure to staff and coordinate trainings and facilitate communication among the campuses.

During the course of any initiative, many lessons are learned that help inform best practices and changing course, if needed. The Partners in Prevention staff and coalition members offered several lessons learned, that include:

- Each campus has their own story, know their students best and what specific problems they face.
- Campuses are at different stages of readiness to address a particular problem, depending on the issue.
- It is necessary to work with campuses where they’re at and provide leadership by that method. Some are farther along than others.
- Campuses don’t have to do it all on their own. PIP staff will always help.
- Being a PIP member is like being in a classroom—member campuses are continuously learning from each other.
- The expectations from PIP and the funding provided to the campus help to focus and motivate campus leaders, campus coordinators, and coalition members.
- It is important to get buy in from a senior campus administrator, since that’s where the most decisions and work can get done. Administrative support provides the opportunity to do the work and the time to do it.

The Partners for Prevention coalition is an innovative mechanism for providing training, technical assistance, and resources to a several campuses working to reduce student alcohol and drug misuse. Providing funds to support an infrastructure and skilled staff, who are responsible for filtering that expertise to similar member organizations illustrates the effectiveness of the hub and spoke model. The PIP staff and member campuses have experienced many successes that might not have occurred had there not been the support to foster the transfer of prevention skills and knowledge and develop the relationships of sharing data, policies, strategies, and lessons learned.

Partners in Prevention: <http://pip.missouri.edu/>

¹ *% of students having 5 or more drinks in a 2 hour period