U-M’s Comprehensive Approach to Alcohol Risk and Harm Reduction: Implementing a Parent-Family Communication Program

August 2, 2016 | The National Meeting

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Heather Domonoske, MA Candidate
• Review best practices and theory for University of Michigan’s Parent-Family Communication program
• Examine AOD harm reduction through a health and wellbeing framework involving multiple university units
• Explore student development theory as it relates to student decision-making and the value of parent-notification programs
The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs release of and access to student education records.

In October 1998, the Higher Education Amendments were signed into law, providing assistance to colleges and universities in their efforts to address student alcohol and other drug use. Section 952 clarified that institutions of higher education are allowed (but not required) to notify parents if a student under the age of 21 at the time of notification commits a disciplinary violation involving alcohol or a controlled substance.
Program Development Timeline

**May 2015**
- Decision to exercise provision in FERPA
- Benchmarking
- Delineate pilot components
- First Year Students
- Repeated or dangerous behavior
- Wellness focus
  - Parental notification
  - Parent Family Communication

**June-August 2015**
- Planning
  - Wolverine Wellness
  - Dean of Students
  - Office of Student Conflict Resolution
  - Housing Conflict Resolution
- Communication with stakeholders
- Communication with parents and students
- Hiring of Program Manager

**September 2015-April 2016**
- Implementation
  - Develop database report
  - Exemption protocol
  - Communication tools
  - Website
  - Letters
  - Meetings with students
- Follow up emails and phone calls with parents
- Troubleshooting

**May 2016**
- Data Analysis
- Evaluation
- Preparation of End of Year Report
- Recommendations for revisions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big Ten +4 School</th>
<th>Parental Notification (Y/N)</th>
<th>Circumstances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indiana University – Bloomington</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Second offense or other aggravating factor present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>All instances of AOD violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio State University</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penn State University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>All instances of AOD violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>All instances of AOD violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutgers University</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign</td>
<td>May notify</td>
<td>If Dean of Students determines it is in the best interest of the student and University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Iowa</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>All instances of AOD violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland</td>
<td>Specific circumstance</td>
<td>Only if student facing disciplinary charge that could result in suspension/expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Minnesota</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nebraska – Lincoln</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>If student is under 21 and living in University Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Second offense or other aggravating factor present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Benchmarking-Other Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Notify Policy</th>
<th>Specific Violation/Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brown University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Second offense or other aggravating factor present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia University</td>
<td>May notify (not in all cases)</td>
<td>Second offense, student living in University Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>All instances of AOD violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dartmouth University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Instances of probation, suspension. (4th violation of beer/wine policy; 1st violation of hard alcohol policy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvard University</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>After any AOD violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeton University</td>
<td>May notify</td>
<td>After any AOD violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California – Berkeley</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>(Only if violations may result in suspension/expulsion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California – Los Angeles</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>(Only if violations may result in suspension/expulsion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>May notify</td>
<td>Case specific – decision made by Office of Vice Provost for University Life after consultation with student’s school office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Virginia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>All instances of AOD violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yale University</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>(Only if severe threat to student’s health)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social-Ecological Approach to Prevention

Intrapersonal
Knowledge
Attitudes
Behavior
Self-concept
Skill
Developmental history

Interpersonal Processes and Primary Groups
Formal and informal social network and social support systems, including family, work group, and friendship networks

Institutional Factors
Social institutions and organization characteristics, and formal (and informal) rules and regulations for operations

Community Factors
Relationships among organization, institutions and informal networks with defined boundaries

Public Policy
Local, state and national laws and policies

(ACHA, 2015)
Holistic Approach to Student Wellness

Physical: The role that you take in maintaining your body for strength, vitality and energy.

Spiritual: Your understanding of your place and purpose, how you make meaning of what happens to you, and what your mind goes to for comfort or relief.

Emotional & Mental: Being aware and managing your feelings, being at peace with who you are, and having the tools you need to weather life’s ups and downs.

Intellectual: Feeling stimulated and engaged with learning and staying open to new ideas and perspectives.

Environmental: Reflects the impact your environmental (home, school, city, planet) has on you and the impact you have on the environment.

Social: How you choose to define and connect with your community and people around you.

Financial: Your relationship with money and skills for managing resources, as well as your ability to make good consumer choices and seek out appropriate financial opportunities.

Occupational: The work you choose to do and how it contributes to your community and fulfills you.
First year college students have been identified as a high risk group for heavy drinking (NIAAA, 2002)

Students report that parents are the most influential people in their social support network (Doumas, Turrisi, Ray, Esp, & Curtis-Shaeffer, 2013)

Strong, positive parent relationships are a protective factor in reducing harmful drinking in college students (Labrie and Sessoms, 2012)

Parent-based Interventions, combined with other harm-reduction strategies, lead to lower BAC levels, fewer drinks, and less alcohol-related consequences (Turrisi and Ray, 2010)
Restorative and Educational Philosophy

- Utilized by the Office of Student Conflict Resolution (OSCR) and University Housing
- Informs conversations with students about behavior, community expectations and impact

(Schrage & Giacomini 2009)
Restorative and Educational Philosophy

A shared approach which focuses on high support and accountability for students

Commitment to Collaborate: Commitment between OSCR and HSCR offices (CLAM and Statement)

- Social Justice/Restorative Justice
- Adaptable Conflict Resolution
- Collective voice
- Consistent in process, not outcome
- Consultation Resource
- Reduce duplication with appropriate case related boundaries
- Best scenario for students

(Wachtel, 1999)
### Reframing Terminology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Terminology</th>
<th>Reframed Terminology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime or Offense</td>
<td>Incident or Violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender</td>
<td>Respondent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>Impacted or Harmed Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt or Innocence</td>
<td>Responsible or Not Responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punishment or Sanction</td>
<td>Agreement, Responsibility, or Restorative Measure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Housing Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution

- Cases referred from Res Staff members and Housing Security that take place in Residential communities or with residents. Result in a meeting with the Hall Director.
- Focus on accountability for students in violation of the CLAM and repairing harm in communities and for those involved.
- Address the student's identity and experience at Michigan to build a relationship and engage in authentic dialogue.
• Allows students to address alcohol & other drug-related incidents in a safe, confidential setting
• Not a healthcare intervention
• Program Components
  - A review of the *Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities*
  - A discussion of options for resolving the AOD-related incident
  - A discussion of the incident
  - Exploration of the student’s general AOD-related use
  - Understanding the student’s Michigan experience
  - A review of free, campus-based AOD resources
• No disciplinary record incurred
OSCR Process

-Tier I
  First-time AOD incident not resulting in a transport to the hospital/jail
  Educational conversation with OSCR facilitator
  Parent-Family Communication not applicable

-Tier II
  Second-time AOD incident not resulting in a transport to the hospital/jail
  First-time AOD incident resulting in a transport to the hospital/jail
  Educational conversation with OSCR facilitator
  Educational measure (ASAP, BASICS, IMEP)
  Parent-Family Communication applicable
OSCR Process

-Tier II+

Second-time AOD incident not resulting in a transport to the hospital/jail from a residence hall
First-time AOD incident resulting in a transport to the hospital/jail from a residence hall
Educational conversation with OSCR facilitator
Educational measure (ASAP, BASICS, IMEP)
Community Impact Meeting with hall director
Parent / Family Communication applicable

-Formal Conflict Resolution

Similar philosophy / approach to previous tiers
Disciplinary Record
Parent / Family Communication applicable
Knefelkamp & Widick’s

Developmental Instructional Model

• Based on Perry’s Theory of intellectual and ethical development
• Students learn and grow when these 4 areas are considered when instructing, teaching, or facilitating:
  • Structure
  • Diversity
  • Experiential learning
  • Personalism
• By engages multiple campus partners, the University of Michigan is able to create a trifecta of support for challenges and experiences students face after an AOD event.
Collaboration and Communication

**Stakeholders**
Executive Officers
Student Life Leadership Assembly
Student Affairs Network (SAN)
Dean, Directors, Department Heads
Faculty Governance - SACUA
Office of New Student Programs
Student Leaders: CSG/RHA/Greek Life Leadership
The University of Michigan notifies parents/family members when a first year student under age 21 has a serious alcohol or other drug (AOD) event. Examples may include alcohol-related hospital transport, an arrest for marijuana, or more than one alcohol or drug-related violation of either the "Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities" or "Community Living At Michigan (CLAM)."
Parent-Family Communication Program Goals

• Contribute to the University's comprehensive approach to reduce AOD risk and harm

• Reduce first-year students’ repeated alcohol-related incidents

• Increase social support by connecting students and parents to AOD resources as they transition into the U-M community
The Letter

- Policy Overview
- Date of Incident
- Educational Programming
- Health and Wellbeing
- Link to Resources
- Invitation to Partner
- Student is CC’d on the letter

“I like the letter. It’s not about getting into trouble; it’s about getting help.”

Student who came in to review the letter before it was emailed.
Wolverine Wellness
207 Fletcher Street, Suite 2110
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

June 30, 2016

ENTER PARENT/FAMILY NAME
000 Permanent
Permanent, Michigan 00000

Dear ENTER PARENT/FAMILY NAME:

The University of Michigan initiated a pilot program to notify the parents/families of first-year students, under the legal age of 21, who have engaged in concerning behavior and choices involving alcohol or other drugs.

We are writing today to let you know that Joseph Zichi was in violation of the University of Michigan Alcohol and Other Drug policy on June 05, 2016. Our purpose in sending this communication is to ensure we are able to partner with you in providing the best support possible for Joseph. We are concerned that continued misuse may be detrimental to Joseph’s overall health and well-being as well as negatively impact academic and personal success at the University of Michigan.

Further, we would like to share with you the steps we have taken to support Joseph’s well-being and success here at the University of Michigan. Joseph has met with a staff member from the university to discuss the situation. During this discussion, Joseph was provided information and resources to help make thoughtful decisions moving forward and to help restore any potential personal or community harm.

We know parents/families play a very important role in the lives of their students. We look to you as essential partners in our work and want to involve you early in the network of support.

If Joseph has not yet discussed this with you, we encourage you to focus your conversation on health and well-being. Here is a link to additional information that may help guide that conversation.

If you have any questions about the university’s programs or resources, please contact me at (734) 647-7542 or jansenjc@med.umich.edu.

Warmest Regards,

Janet Jansen, MPH
Alcohol and Other Drug Parent-Family Communication Program Manager
Wolverine Wellness

cc: Joseph Zichi
Data Methods and Collection

- September 2015 - April 2016
- In-House Program Collection
  - Letter data
  - Student Meetings
  - Parent Follow-up
- Email-based Survey
  - Student Survey
  - Parent Survey
324 students met the criteria of the Parent-Family Communication program
310 letters sent
Males > females
10% requested exemptions (41% granted)
8% recidivism rate
310 Parent Family Communication Letters Sent

AOD transports: 190
Two AOD violations: 87
Marijuana arrests: 33

Female Students: 116
Male Students: 187
Missing gender information from 7 students
23% of parents responded (n=71)

Concerns raised by parents:
- Mental health concerns
- Family history of substance abuse
- Negative impacts of Greek Life involvement
- Not knowing full story or unaware of events
- Peer pressure or fear of not fitting in
- Parent denies student’s responsibility

Topics addressed:
- Harm reduction strategies
- Available educational and support resources

“I believe your pilot program influenced [my student]’s decision to bring this to our attention first, allowing us to engage the issues at a more opportune time than might otherwise have occurred.”

U-M parent via email
Student Meetings

42 individual student meetings (14%)

- 34 exemption request meetings
- 8 general information meetings

Meeting highlights:
  - Accommodate student schedules
  - Guide student autonomy
  - Generate talking points
  - Review and revise the letter
  - Provide time for student and parent communication
Exemption Requests

- 34 formal requests (10%)
- 14 exemption requests granted (41%)
  - 8 International Students exempted
  - 6 Approved
    - Alcohol is forbidden
    - Fragile parent relationship
    - History of violence and anger by parent
Recidivism

- 24 Post-Letter Violations (8%)
  - 3 parent follow-up contacts after the first letter
  - 2 students requested meetings before the 2nd letter was sent
Student-Parent Communication

- 92% of the students are telling their parents about the incidents before the letter arrives.
  - Over 70% communicate immediately after the event
  - Over 20% communicate because of the letter
  - 8% report not telling their parents before the letter is sent
Knowledge of Parent-Family Communication Program

Percent of Parent Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percent Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Email/letter</td>
<td>59.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/News</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>11.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your student</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UM Website</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The graph shows the percentage of parent responses to various methods of communication.
Knowledge of Parent-Family Communication Program

Percent of Student Response

- Media/News: 2.1%
- Social Media: 0.733%
- Parents/Family: 3.65%
- School-wide email: 6.75%
- Alcohol.edu: 10.22%
- ResHall Staff: 0.83%
- Friends/Roommate: 5.11%
- OSCR/Hall Director: 61.31%
- Other: 2.19%
Parent

“I wanted to say we really appreciate and support your program and your concern for the students’ well-being, and we think contacting us parents is a great idea.”

“The phone call from my [student] and the conversation I had with the wellness center were both instrumental in getting [my student] back on the right track.”

Student

“It's good for keeping parents and students on the same page.”

 “[The letter] opened the door for communication.”
Limitations

- Non-traditional approach to parent / family notification
- Shared responsibility among multiple units in Student Life
- Data collection
- Inconsistency of law enforcement sharing citation information
Thank You!

For more information, visit:
https://www.uhs.umich.edu/parent-communication

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