

NC ABC Commission Launches New Anti-Underage Drinking Effort

December 3, 2014

RALEIGH, NC –The North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Commission today officially launched a new statewide campaign targeting underage drinking in North Carolina. The new campaign, called Talk It Out, is a multi-media campaign designed to raise awareness of the issue, and to give parents the right tools for talking to kids about the dangers of underage drinking.

During a news conference at Daniels Middle School in Raleigh today, NC ABC Commission Chairman Jim Gardner announced plans for broadcast, web, social media and a series of events and activities across the state associated with the campaign. Chairman Gardner also unveiled the Commission’s original body of research, [*The State of Underage Drinking in North Carolina*](#).

“When Governor McCrory appointed me to the North Carolina ABC Commission in 2013, he directed me to do something about the issue of underage drinking. Our team got right down to business and undertook a unique research effort to better understand the magnitude of the problem in our state. We went straight to the source – parents and children,” said Gardner.

“And what we found was alarming. North Carolina has an underage drinking problem. And what’s worse? Our state’s children think underage drinking is a much bigger problem than their parents do.”

The research uncovered that children think underage drinking is a much bigger problem than their parents. The average age children in North Carolina take their first drink is 13.9 – earlier than most adults tend to think.

In addition to the Commission’s research, several new campaign resources were unveiled during the event, including resources to help raise awareness of the issue and combat the problem, two new TV advertisements (set to air for the first time today) and a video featuring NC citizens who have experienced first-hand the traumatic consequences of underage drinking.

“You just can’t even comprehend what my family’s gone through, and it’s a pain that just doesn’t go away,” said Steve Sciascia, Town of Harrisburg Mayor. “I want to make sure that parents know that this happens, and it can happen to your children. And it doesn’t matter whether they’re 11 or 20. It’s underage drinking, and it has a consequence.”

According to the Commission’s research, most parents – more than 60% – don’t feel fully prepared to properly address underage drinking with their children, while children reported that they want and expect their parents to talk to them about the real issue of underage drinking.

“All of the numbers reported today mean one thing – that as parents, we can’t wait until high school to have real talks with our children. We have to start much earlier so they’ll be fully prepared for what they’re going to face,” said Lt. Governor Dan Forest. “Fortunately for us, Talk It Out provides parents with the right tools so we can talk openly, honestly and frequently with our children about the dangers of underage drinking.”

Lt. Governor Forest and his wife, Alice, are ambassadors of the Talk It Out campaign.

“The National Alcohol Beverage Control Association recognizes the importance of its member states in the area of alcohol abuse prevention and education. North Carolina’s initiative to educate parents, teens and others about the dangers of underage drinking is important. It demonstrates their commitment to not only safely manage the sales of alcohol, but to also be a driving force behind prevention efforts,” said Steve Schmidt, NABCA’S senior vice president of communication and public policy.

The Commission’s research was released to the public today. To access the research, campaign resources and more information, visit www.TalkItOutNC.org.