

From: [Brandon Colee](#)
To: [Florida Prevention](#)
Subject: (CAN YOU ADD ME TO THIS EMAIL LIST?) News Articles, Friday, November 12, 2010
Date: Friday, November 12, 2010 11:23:02 AM

Hello Florida Prevention,

Wonderful news email! Will you please add me to your email list☺

Thank you so much.

Brandon Colee

Manager

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Mission ~ To make St Johns County a healthy substance-free community through the reduction and prevention of alcohol and drug abuse by our youth with Prevention, Advocacy, Choices and Teamwork

From: Heidi Matheny [mailto:heidi@pactprevention.org]
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2010 10:56 AM
To: brandon@pactprevention.org
Subject: FW: News Articles, Friday, November 12, 2010

FYI...

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Mission To make St. Johns County a healthy substance-free community through the reduction and prevention of alcohol and drug abuse by our youth with Prevention, Advocacy, Choices and Teamwork.

From: Florida Prevention [mailto:FloridaPrevention@eog.myflorida.com]
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2010 10:44 AM
To: dams@nova.edu; amity_chandler@ccps.k12.fl.us; Angie Ellison; anti-drug@cox.net; aventura@unitedwaybroward.org; b_town_00@hotmail.com; bcallahan@copecenter.org; Brooke Baker; bysapc@bellsouth.net; campbell.gail@gmail.com; Carol Burkett; carrie@ovfv.org; cepps@roundtableslc.org; chrisfranzetti@aol.com; chrissy_bynum@ccps.k12.fl.us; cindyconey@aol.com; Clarice Powell; Clay; cparris@pascoasap.com; debbie@seminolepreventioncoalition.org; debi@safecimatecoalition.org; deborah@ovfv.org; dlees@highlandsheriff.org; Douglas.leonardo@baycare.org; Ellen_Piekalkiewicz@dcf.state.fl.us; elwoodford@yahoo.com; Gail Dixon; geometrics@aol.com; gerry.brent@mcchildrensalliance.org; Goldstein, Ron; gwen_love@cdfsfl.org; heidi@pactprevention.org; Jacob, Leonard Robert; jcairnes@hanleycenter.org; Janet Reilly; jcarter_fheasap@yahoo.com; jdoherthy@operpar.org; UpFrontin@aol.com; jjswell@aol.com; jmbardes@yahoo.com; jah@nettally.com; JKaufman@StartingPlace.org; jonq.teenalliance@gmail.com; KPerry@nopetaskforce.org; kmr05g@fsu.edu; KDoughty@OperPar.org; Kelly Johnson; kingdavidinc@bellsouth.net; kthomas@roundtableslc.org; lhilko@operpar.org; Lisa Jones; lisa.mcelhaney@gmail.com; mwaters@mailer.fsu.edu; Maureen.Simmons@C4BF.org; mcdonaldg1@windstream.net; meena.harris@myfloridalegal.com; cwjordan44@aol.com; nwflpc@bellsouth.net; pcastillo@unitedwaybroward.org; penny.detscher@fldoe.org; prevention@embarqmail.com; prevspec@aol.com; PSapp@informedfamilies.org; Putnam; putnamcountyanti@bellsouth.net; rtodd@cfbhn.org; RBirrenk@mendezfoundation.org; rlh1995@mailer.fsu.edu; riley.kim@MAIL.DC.STATE.FL.US; rjablons@tampabay.rr.com; Shipley, Claude; skramer.mcac@gmail.com; Sonya Bufo; stephanie.geoghagan@ccbhc.org; Substance Free Citrus; susan@safeandhealthyduval.org; suwanneecoalition@mac.com; Tiffane_Raulerson@doh.state.fl.us; togetheragain@earthlink.net; vkress@smabehavioral.org; youthadvocacy@gmail.com
Subject: FW: News Articles, Friday, November 12, 2010

FLORIDA

http://blogs.browardpalmbeach.com/juice/2010/11/brce_d_grant_drug_control_pill_mills.phpB

Bruce D. Grant, Florida Office of Drug Control explains delays in establishing prescription drug database

11 November 2010

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/11/1920618/prescription-drug-bill-divides.html>

Prescription drug bill divides GOP donors

11 November 2010

NATIONAL

<http://sify.com/news/prosecutor-heroin-mill-found-near-times-square-news-others-klmiEkgahfg.html>

Heroin mill found near Times Square

12 November 2010

<http://www.kansas.com/2010/11/12/1585121/ngerous-punch.html>

Kansas scrutinizes alcoholic energy drink

12 November 2010

<http://www.keloland.com/News/NewsDetail6371.cfm?id=107006>

Underage drinking is legal with parent present

12 November 2010

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ip7r1SIPog5ds_RyeomhhRTvdZxA?docId=CNG.56d1f55752a2aab0626aee89d327544b.9a1

Suicide rate soar among US Veterans

12 November 2010

<http://swampland.blogs.time.com/2010/11/12/as-we-were-saying/>

As we were saying; Veterans mental health

12 November 2010

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101111/ap_on_bi_ge/us_four_loko_ban;_ylt=AlrZ3akt0cLq6CikkfXahYxzfNdF

Washington State bans energy drinks

11 November 2010

INTERNATIONAL

<http://www.asylum.co.uk/2010/11/12/cat-caught-smuggling-drugs-into-russian-prison/>

Cat caught smuggling drugs into Russian prison

12 November 2010

<http://www.irishcentral.com/story/roots/emeraldextracts/seven-out-of-every-1000-in-ireland-use-heroin-107430868.html>

Seven out of every 1,000 in Ireland use Heroin

12 November 2010

<http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory?id=12126283>

Mexico Violence costs \$350K daily in Natgas losses

12 November 2010

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/mexico-drug-cartel-offers-to-disband-20101111-17pd9.html>

Mexico drug cartel offers to disband

11 November 2010

<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/11/12/mexico.senate.president/>

Mexican lawmakers: jobs, education key to fighting Drug War

12 November 2010

FLORIDA

http://blogs.browardpalmbeach.com/juice/2010/11/bruce_d_grant_drug_control_pill_mills.phpBr

Bruce D. Grant, Florida Office of Drug Control explains delays in establishing prescription drug database

11 November 2010

You've got to admire the spunk and sanity of Bruce D. Grant, director of the Florida Office of Drug Control, appointed by Charlie Crist. He didn't much like the insinuation, in our story [published here yesterday](#), that the Florida government has been lazy about funding legislation that will help curb the practices of the narco-peddling pill-mills that have sprung up like ugly mushrooms across Fort Lauderdale in the last decade, and which are responsible for feeding the drug habits of addicts in West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, and elsewhere. What did he do? Did he stalk off, offended, and refuse to ever again speak to the lamestream media? No! He called us about it, and we had a nice chat.

First of all, he wants us to know that there is more to Florida's prescription problem than the pill mills. Most abused prescription drugs come friends and family. The day-trippers who come to Florida from parts north to return home with hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of pain killers, mostly Oxycontin, represent only the most dramatic manifestation of a problem that kills seven Floridians daily. (And countless more nationally.) "That's only the most egregious, blatant, and ugly example of all the drug diversion going on in Florida," says Grant. He asks: "Are you familiar with *The Tipping Point*, by Malcolm Gladwell?" We are. "Well then -- you know what the tipping point was for the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program? It was Oakland Park. It was the national exposure that embarrassed Florida. You got this national news, people coming from all up the Eastern Seaboard and Appalachia, coming down here for the prescriptions. And we had to get off our seats and pass a law."

And of that embarrassment was born a solution. A partial one, to be sure, and not a solution free of the lugubriousness that plagues any bureaucratic action. But a solution all the same. It's called Florida Statute 893.055 (or "SB 462"), a piece of legislation drafted by Floridian Senator Mike Fasano, Republican of District 11. The legislation mandates the creation of a database, overseen by the Department of Health, that will allow pharmacies and doctors to check on the prescription-filling activities of individual patients -- to see if a patient is doctor-shopping, for example, by visiting three doctors, obtaining three prescriptions, and filling them at three different pharmacies. Moreover, it will provide an easy way for pharmacists to note if a single doctor is prescribing "medically improbable" quantities of narcotic painkillers. The database, when completed, will make life much more difficult for the white-coated pushers of Oakland Park's pill alleys, and put a "significant dent in prescription drug diversion and abuse," according to Grant.

Problem is, as reported in our story, the legislation cannot be implemented with state funds.

"But it is funded," says Grant. "When the law was passed in 2009, it said in there that it couldn't be funded by the state. It left us with the challenge of raising funds in two different ways." One of these was through a specially-created nonprofit that could raise funds for the creation of the database; this has yielded \$500,000. The other fundraising mechanism was federal grants, which have yielded \$800,000. As it stands, the program is sufficiently well-funded to bring the database online and keep it running through the end of June, 2011. "And another \$250,000 will keep it up through June, 2012," says Grant.

According to the letter of the law, the database should be up and humming by the first of December. It won't be, because Florida's government is a bureaucracy, and bureaucracies are slow, and that's just how it is.

The particular problem in this instance is the drafted contractors. Shortly after Statute 893.055 was passed in early 2009, the Department of Health opened bidding on the contract to create the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. When bidding closed this summer, the losing bidder contested the winner, and the DoH opened bidding again. The same loser, Optimum Technology, lodged another complaint -- this one about the terms of the bidding themselves. Which means construction of the database has yet to get underway. Though Grant cannot know for certain when it will be completed, he guesses it will be sometime in March.

Nevertheless, he's proud of the state's progress, and, we suspect, more pissed off about the delay than he's willing to tell a reporter. As he reminds us, the prescription drug crisis in Florida is "comparable to the crack epidemic." Until the database is complete and operational, that's another seven deaths per day, 49 per week, 200 per month...

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/11/1920618/prescription-drug-bill-divides.html>

Prescription drug bill divides GOP donors

11 November 2010

TALLAHASSEE - A veto override planned by Florida's Republican legislative leaders is driving a wedge between major GOP donors, with business groups and health care giants Wednesday renewing their fight over a prescription drug bill.

Barney Bishop, president of Associated Industries of Florida, said he was pleased - but also stunned -- when the legislation (HB 5603) was added to a list of measures vetoed by outgoing Gov. Charlie Crist that lawmakers want to revive in next week's special session.

Bishop, who had hailed the bill's passage last spring as a "huge victory for the business community," said he followed a simple rule in figuring the vetoed drug bill would remain dead:

Money talks.

"We're very appreciative that it looks like it's coming back," said Bishop, whose organization includes most of the state's largest corporations and major political donors. "It's the right thing to do. But we figured that with the kind of money these doctors had given, it was over and done with."

Among those supporting Crist's veto in June was Automated Healthcare Solutions, a Miramar company headed by a pair of doctors, Paul Zimmerman and Gerald Glass, who later gave more than \$1 million to political spending committees headed by the incoming Senate President Mike Haridopolos and House Speaker-designate Dean Cannon.

The company provides software that helps doctors dispense and manage patient prescriptions, a profitable sidelight for many doctors. The legislation vetoed by Crist would have imposed new restrictions on doctors' "repackaging" prescriptions, lowering costs to the state and private companies, but also threatening Automated Healthcare's services.

Haridopolos and Cannon used the money funneled from the doctors primarily to help Attorney General Bill McCollum in his losing Republican primary fight with Gov.-elect Rick Scott. But the doctors quickly pivoted following the campaign - pouring \$735,000 into the Florida Republican Party and another \$145,000 to Scott's spending committee - in an attempt to make nice with the GOP nominee.

Until last week, Automated Healthcare Solutions looked well-positioned with the Capitol's new power trio - Haridopolos, Cannon and Scott. Also supporting the veto were the Republican-allied Florida Medical Association and Florida Orthopedic Society - and the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME), a Democratic power base.

Losing Democratic gubernatorial candidate Alex Sink had sided with AIF and other business groups in backing the legislation, which supporters say will save private companies \$34 million in workers' compensation costs by reducing prescription costs.

Zimmerman, the company's CEO, says in a statement on the company's website that its services are designed to "enhance revenue production by allowing physicians to retain profits."

"I think the doctors thought they had done everything to keep this bill down," said Ron Book, who represents them in other matters before the Legislature. "I still think that if the Legislature doesn't want to take up

controversial bills in the special session, this bill won't come up."

Incoming Rules Chairman Gary Aubuchon, R-Cape Coral, hinted Wednesday that the lineup of nine bills and a \$9.7 million budget provision for Shands Hospital in Gainesville represented the most that lawmakers may attempt to override next week. But he acknowledged that the entire list may not be taken up - giving some hope to those who want to keep Crist's veto in place.

"It won't exceed that original list," Aubuchon told lawmakers. "But it may not include all the things on that original list."

The legislation was approved last spring 38-0 in the Senate, and by the House, 120-0. But even Bishop, of AIF, said the toughest provisions of the bill - which limits doctors' ability to distribute repackaged prescription drugs to injured workers - were added late through his organization's lobbying.

FMA and other critics said few lawmakers had a good understanding of the bill's effects.

For his part, Cannon, R-Winter Park, said the legislation was proof that lawmakers were willing to take action - without regard for contributors.

"That bill passed overwhelmingly in both chambers," Cannon said. "We think it was good policy then, so we think it's good policy now. It doesn't really matter to me who supported it, or opposed it."

NATIONAL

<http://sify.com/news/prosecutor-heroin-mill-found-near-times-square-news-others-klmiEkgahfg.html>

Heroin mill found near Times Square

12 November 2010

Authorities say a newly renovated apartment two blocks from Times Square was being used as a major heroin-packaging mill to process millions of dollars' worth of the drug for sale.

Three men and a woman were awaiting arraignment Thursday on drug-possession charges after a raid Wednesday at the building.

The New York City Special Narcotics Prosecutor's office says investigators found 28 pounds of heroin, worth about \$6.5 million, in 250,000 small envelopes, and workers busily packing the drug for sale. Some envelopes had been stamped with underground brand names such as King Kong.

The prosecutor's office says the drug ring rented the \$3,800-a-month, duplex apartment two weeks ago from an apparently unsuspecting landlord.

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<http://www.kansas.com/2010/11/12/1585121/ngerous-punch.html>

Kansas scrutinizes alcoholic energy drink

12 November 2010

Kansas liquor officials are taking a hard look at a strong drink that's been banned in three states.

The drink, called Four Loko, mixes the caffeine of an energy drink and the alcohol content of wine in a 23.5-ounce can that sells for about \$2 at local liquor stores.

One can contains the alcohol equivalent of a nearly full bottle of wine, combined with the caffeine of three cups of coffee.

Michigan and Washington have banned the malt beverage and similar products after reports that the mixture caused blackouts and, in one case, a heart attack, among college-age drinkers. Oklahoma is phasing the drink out from its store shelves, allowing liquor stores to sell their remaining stock but prohibiting further supplies from being brought into the state.

Freda Warfield, a spokeswoman for the Kansas Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, said Kansas officials have had no reports of incidents related to the beverage. But they are closely monitoring the situation in other states and an ongoing investigation by the Food and Drug Administration, she said.

Matt Hess, manager of R and J Discount Liquor in Wichita, said the product has been on the shelf since February.

He said he's considered pulling it, but he's waiting for word from the state to see "if they say it's OK."

Initially, the product sold poorly, but controversy has boosted sales, he said.

"The sad thing is, with all the exposure, we have people who don't even know what it is coming in and buying it," he said.

One Four Loko buyer, a young man with a shaved head and tattooed scalp who identified himself only as "Johnny," said "It's the best. Don't cancel it."

The drink will probably remain on Kansas shelves for a while.

Banning it from state-licensed liquor stores would likely require legislative action, Warfield said. The Legislature won't start meeting until January.

Critics say that Four Loko, which comes in a variety of fruity flavors and in brightly colored cans, is explicitly targeted at teens and young adults who might not be aware of the danger of mixing caffeine, a stimulant, with alcohol, a depressant.

"What you get is someone who's drunk, but wide awake," said Brian Smith, spokesman for the Washington State Liquor Control Board, which banned Four Loko and similar drinks on Wednesday. That, he said, makes them more likely to drive drunk or continue drinking to a dangerous blood-alcohol level.

He said that was what happened to a group of nine students at Central Washington University who had to be hospitalized last month after a party featuring the energy-alcohol beverages.

The students had blood alcohol levels ranging from 0.12 to 0.35. Anything more than .30 is considered potentially lethal.

"It's not college students drinking a bunch of beer and getting stupid," Smith said. "The CWU students were all underage... one of them nearly died."

The liquor board's emergency ban will last 120 days and Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire vowed to enact a permanent ban.

"Quite simply, these drinks are trouble," Gregoire said in a statement.

A representative of Phusion Projects, the company that created and makes Four Loko, said no spokesperson was available Thursday and referred inquiries to statements on the company website.

The company portrays itself as "a small business success story," started by three friends at Ohio State University. Starting with a federal loan from the Small Business Administration, they built a company selling products in at least 45 states.

The theme of their comments to regulators in Washington and elsewhere is that their product is being unfairly targeted because the bans don't apply to other caffeine-containing drinks, such as coffee liqueurs.

"If mixing caffeine and alcohol is the most pressing concern, addressing it would be best accomplished by creating laws that apply to the entire caffeinated alcoholic beverage category — not specific, individual products and not just beers or malt-based products," the company said in an open letter to state and federal regulators. "If product-specific bans remain the preferred course of action, we will protect our rights as a business to the fullest extent of the law."

Smith, of the Washington state board, said there's no validity to the company's comparisons to coffee drinks and liqueurs.

Those drinks are far more expensive, marketed to a more mature segment of the drinking public and seldom consumed to intoxication level, he said.

Under pressure from state attorneys general, beer titans Anheuser-Busch and Miller Brewing removed caffeine from similar products they had brought to market.

<http://www.keloland.com/News/NewsDetail6371.cfm?id=107006>

Underage drinking is legal with parent present

12 November 2010

CANTON, SD - The pressures for KELOLAND kids to drink are enormous, and some parents say it's better to be realistic than sorry. A growing number have chosen to slowly introduce alcohol to their underage children, and it turns out, the law is on their side.

In South Dakota, it's perfectly legal for anyone under 21 to consume alcohol as long as a parent is around. The statute says minors may consume alcohol in the immediate presence of a parent, guardian or spouse, as long as that person is of age.

"Whether it be a glass of wine at a Christmas dinner or Thanksgiving dinner, the state feels that's an appropriate level of supervision," Lincoln County State's Attorney Tom Wollman said.

The law differentiates between kids under 18 and adults 18 to 21.

"Eighteen and below can drink at home in the immediate presence of a parent," Wollman said.

Those 18 and above can drink at a bar or restaurant with a parent, as long as the establishment's owner approves.

Wollman has seen several cases where parents try to use the law as a defense in court, saying their child was with them when they were drinking.

"Unfortunately, we've seen parents coming in after the fact where that really wasn't the case, but they're just trying to get their son or daughter out of trouble," Wollman said.

But Wollman says it's a move that's difficult to defend because once a minor leaves the presence of their parents when they've been drinking, all bets are off.

"A parent may have been in the immediate presence of the child when the child drank alcohol, but then the child goes to the school dance; that's not a legal defense," Wollman said.

Wollman says the law basically says parents have the final word on whether to let their kids consume alcohol in a controlled environment.

"I think parents would like to think their kids are responsible enough and sometimes they are, but I stress that the statute says, 'In the immediate presence of parents,'" Wollman said.

It may be legal to allow minors to drink under supervision, but is it right? It's a discussion you won't want to miss, in Thursday's Eye on KELOLAND at 10.

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ip7r1SIPog5ds_RyeomhhRTvdZxA?docId=CNG.56d1f55752a2aab0626aee89d327544b.9a1

Suicide rates soar among US Veterans

12 November 2010

WASHINGTON — The economic downturn and the trauma of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have pushed more US veterans to suicide, Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki said Thursday.

As Americans across the United States and around the world celebrated the contributions of men and women in uniform on Veterans Day, Shinseki outlined a sobering picture for the approximately 23 million veterans in the United States.

Only eight million of those veterans are currently registered with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Shinseki said. Many slip through the cracks due to crippling mental health problems, homelessness, alcohol and illegal drug abuse or crime.

Several studies have shown that suicides are on the rise among youths who have left the military.

"It's compounded by the stress, the trauma that goes with the current operations, where we have a much smaller military being asked to do so much and then repeat it tour after tour," Shinseki told National Public Radio (NPR).

"I know the suicide numbers are up."

In January, he indicated that 20 percent of some 30,000 suicides in the United States each year are committed by veterans. That means that an average of 18 veterans commit suicide each year.

Suicides claimed the lives of a record 309 servicemembers last year, up from 267 in 2008, according to Pentagon numbers. The number of suicides between 2005 and 2009 -- 1,100 -- exceeded that of the number of US military members killed in Afghanistan since 2001.

The Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs do not keep statistics on veteran deaths.

Shinseki pointed to a backlog of Veterans Affairs cases or disability claims that has soared to over 700,000 this year, up from 400,000 to 500,000 the year before.

He noted that the number of new cases has increased faster than his agency's capacity. Even though the Department of Veterans Affairs closed out 977,000 cases last year, it got another million new cases.

A large number of the new cases involve younger veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The Department of Veterans Affairs has changed its requirements regarding PTSD claims, so that veterans no longer have to prove they got the disorder because they served in a warzone. There has also long been a stigma in the military associated with psychological problems.

"If it's verified, that connection is now automatic, it's provided," Shinseki explained, noting this had increased the number of cases he has to address.

"We have PTSD treatment going on with veterans that go back to World War II, Korea, Vietnam. So it's a large generational issue."

Asked whether the dour economy had increased veterans' reliance on his agency, Shinseki noted that "the economic downturn has had that impact on families" over the past year and half, while he has struggled to meet a goal to end homelessness among veterans in five years.

"We're doing fine, just not going fast enough," he added.

A July report by the army on suicide prevention found that senior leaders have failed to track reckless behavior and monitor alcohol and drug abuse among soldiers back home as the military focused on fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan over nearly a decade.

Repeated deployments with shortened dwell time have also strained the military, and the army hopes to soon give soldiers two years at home for every year deployed.

<http://swampland.blogs.time.com/2010/11/12/as-we-were-saying/>

As we were saying: Veterans mental health

12 November 2010

Tough story in the Clarksville, Tenn., *Leaf-Chronicle* this morning about a soldier with PTSD who says he went AWOL, instead of returning to Afghanistan, because of the lack of mental-health services at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. "All I wanted was to be treated," Specialist Jeff Hanks, who also served in Iraq in 2008, said outside the fort's gate Thursday as he turned himself in. "Hopefully they'll listen to me and treat me." Hanks said he went absent without leave nearly a month ago after his post-traumatic stress disorder and the collapse of his family convinced him he couldn't get the help he needed in a war zone:

Hanks said he reached out to his commanders while home on leave, but he was met with resistance and delay. He said he was told he would immediately have to go back to Afghanistan.

We [wrote](#) about this sad state of affairs at Fort Campbell in the August 16 issue of *Time*:

The Army has spent \$7 million building at Fort Campbell what it calls its first behavioral-health campus (soldiers call it "the mental-health mall") with a half-dozen new clinics filled with the latest technology for diagnosing and treating posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury. The fort's mental-health staff has grown from 31 in January 2008 to 95 today...But the trend at the base remains clear; the workload per mental-health worker has nearly doubled from 2008 to 2010, jumping from 19 to 32 visits per week.

Additional [reporting](#) for that story revealed:

The focus on Fort Campbell's mental health has been driven, in part, by a 2008 probe that tried to figure out why its 2007 suicide rate was 50 percent higher than the overall Army's. Outside Army experts found that even as Fort Campbell's mental-health visits increased fivefold from 2005 to 2007, the staff shrunk from 28 to 18. That led to longer waits between visits and individual troops being seen in clinics beset by "frequent staff turnover," forcing the soldier to "start over" with a new therapist each visit. The mental-health workload led to poor care and morale, as well as "compassion fatigue," among counselors. The first recommendation to curb suicides: "address critical behavioral-health shortages."

The Army's didn't care for the attention garnered by the young soldier. "It seems a shame to focus attention on this particular young man on Veterans Day," a post spokeswoman said in a statement, "when we have 15,000 men and women from the 101st Airborne Division bravely supporting the fight and placing themselves in harm's way in Afghanistan and Iraq."

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101111/ap_on_bi_ge/us_four_loko_ban;_ylt=AlrZ3akt0cLq6ClkkfXahYxzfNdF

Washington state bans energy drinks

11 November 2010

OLYMPIA, Wash. – Retailers have a week to clear millions of dollars worth of alcoholic energy drinks from their shelves after state regulators banned them Wednesday, citing the hospitalization of nine dangerously drunk college students last month.

The emergency ban, similar to those in Michigan, Utah and Oklahoma, takes effect Nov. 18. Washington's rule targets beer-based drinks that also feature caffeine, such as the malt-liquor energy drink Four Loko.

Some universities also have banned boozy energy drinks from campus while the federal Food and Drug Administration reviews their safety, and U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., called Wednesday for a ban in his state.

Democratic Gov. Chris Gregoire, who requested Washington's ban, said a strong caffeine-and-alcohol combination could encourage drinking too much by masking alcohol's regular depressant effects. She also said alcohol-based energy drinks — sometimes fruit-flavored, often sold in brightly colored cans — are too appealing to young drinkers.

"It's no different than the kind of appeal that Joe Camel had to our kids when it came to cigarettes," she said Wednesday.

Alcoholic energy drinks drew national attention after an October party in Roslyn, a picturesque mountain town known as the place where part of the 1990s television series "Northern Exposure" was filmed.

Nine Central Washington University students who drank Four Loko were hospitalized with blood-alcohol levels ranging from 0.12 percent to 0.35 percent, and a female student nearly died, university President James L. Gaudino said. A blood-alcohol concentration of 0.30 percent is considered potentially lethal.

Police reported a chaotic scene, with students passed out and so drunk officers originally thought they had overdosed on drugs.

All the hospitalized students were inexperienced drinkers — freshmen ranging in age from 17 to 19. Toxicology results showed no drugs in anyone's bloodstream, other than a small amount of marijuana, university police Chief Steve Rittereiser said.

Some students admitted drinking vodka, rum and beer with Four Loko, which is made by Phusion Projects Inc., of Chicago. A Phusion spokesman did not immediately respond with comment on Washington's ban, but the company has said it takes pains not to market to underage drinkers.

Washington's emergency ban specifically covers products that combine beer, strong beer or malt liquor with caffeine, guarana, taurine or other similar substances found in regular energy drinks.

Washington's beer and wine distributors were troubled by the quick turnaround to remove Four Loko and similar products from store shelves. They had hoped the state Liquor Control Board would give the industry a month to handle the change.

Lobbyists for the Washington Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association said the ban would affect about \$3 million worth of products already in retailers' hands, much of it in convenience stores.

Any drinks that can't be sold before Nov. 18 could be returned to wholesalers. Those distributors aren't obliged to buy the products back, but probably will to maintain good standing with their retail customers, lobbyist Ron Main said.

It will then be up to the wholesalers to find a way to return the product to manufacturers or move it to other states.

"We're not going to be able to move \$3 million in inventory in a week," Main said.

Washington's ban is good for 120 days, but could be made permanent by the state Liquor Control Board or Legislature.

INTERNATIONAL

<http://www.asylum.co.uk/2010/11/12/cat-caught-smuggling-drugs-into-russian-prison/>

Cat caught smuggling drugs into Russian prison

12 November 2010

You've heard of a drugs mule, right? Well, here's something ever-so-slightly different. That's right, a drugs cat. [A cat used to smuggle drugs.](#)

A prisoner in the jail at Mendeleyevsk, Russia, came up with the scam to sneak drugs in – but cops got wind of the scheme, and were prepared to check over the feline felon once it arrived.

With 15 grams of heroin taped to its collar by an outside source, the cat tried to get back to its owner inside the jail – unfortunately, the cat's route of getting in took it past guard dogs, who promptly pounced on the poor puss.

"The patrol was expecting the cat to go one way, but it chose a different path though a 'no-go' area guarded by dogs," a representative from the local penitentiary service's press office told the Moscow News.

But though this is a horrific tale of animal cruelty, it seems the bigger problem is, of course, the drugs charges – on top of the fact that prisoners aren't meant to have pets in prison in the first place.

<http://www.irishcentral.com/story/roots/emeraldextracts/seven-out-of-every-1000-in-ireland-use-heroin-107430868.html>

Seven out of every 1,000 in Ireland use Heroin

12 November 2010

An average seven people in every 1,000 in Ireland are heroin users, a Europe-wide report had revealed.

Ireland's heroin problem is worse than in any other EU country and it also has the longest waiting list for treatment for those addicted to the drug, new research shows.

The 2010 annual report for the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction also revealed that the number of heroin users in Ireland is more than twice as high in comparison to other countries.

Waiting lists for heroin addicts in Dublin at up to two years, are the highest in Europe.

The research found that ecstasy use is low in comparison to the rest of Europe and it ranked Ireland fifth for cocaine consumption.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory?id=12126283>

Mexico violence costs \$350K daily in Natgas losses

12 November 2010

Threats and violence by drug gangs are preventing some government oil workers from reaching installations in northern Mexico and costing state-owned Petroleos Mexicanos about \$350,000 every day in lost production, a company official said Thursday.

The official said Pemex has shut down the equivalent of about 100 million cubic feet of natural gas production per day. He talked to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, because company rules do not allow him to be quoted by name.

That amounts to about \$10.5 million per month, or about 2.3 percent of Mexico's \$450 million per month average in monthly natural gas revenues.

The lost production is centered in the Burgos gas field near the east Texas border in an area where drug gangs have threatened and kidnapped Pemex workers at some the company's installations.

The official said that earlier in the year, when the security problems were most acute, gas production was down twice as much — about 200 million cubic feet per day.

The problem came to a head in May, when five workers at a gas compression plant were abducted by armed men. The father of one of the victims has said the workers were warned to stay away, and the kidnapped men have not been heard from since.

The kidnapers are believed to belong to either the Gulf or Zetas drug cartels, which are waging a bloody turf war in northern Tamaulipas state, chasing many inhabitants from their homes. It's not clear which gang nabbed the workers.

However, army troops are now helping Pemex provide increased security.

"This has allowed us to start partially recovering the production we had stopped for this reason," Pemex exploration and production division chief Carlos Morales told local media.

Dozens of families have fled the drug violence in one Tamaulipas town, Ciudad Mier, and taken refuge at a Lion's Club in the nearby city of Miguel Aleman.

Gunmen have killed so many police and local officials in some areas bordering Texas that few are willing to take the posts anymore, leading a number of women to occupy roles traditionally dominated by men. In two northern hamlets, Villa Luz and El Vergel, women were elected as community security leaders this week after men declined to run out of fear.

Both towns are near the southern edge of Ciudad Juarez, where drug violence has claimed over 4,000 lives in the last two years, giving the city one of the highest murder rates in the world.

Olga Herrera Castillo, the new head of security for Villa Luz, said Wednesday that "sometimes I am afraid, but people encourage me and I lose my fear."

Her job will largely consist of filing reports after crimes occur, because Samalayuca has only 2,500 inhabitants, one patrol vehicle and a handful of police officers — none of them permanently assigned to the hamlet.

Last month, 20-year-old Marisol Valles Garcia was sworn in as police chief of Praxedis G. Guerrero, east of Ciudad Juarez, despite not having finished her criminology degree.

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/mexico-drug-cartel-offers-to-disband-20101111-17pd9.html>

Mexico drug cartel offers to disband

11 November 2010

One of Mexico's most brutal drug cartels, a leader in trafficking synthetic narcotics into the United States, has offered to disband if the government guarantees security for citizens in the western state of Michoacan.

The Michoacan Family, one of Mexico's seven largest drug gangs and known here simply as La Familia, said in a letter sent on Wednesday to local media that it was ready to dissolve itself if security was enforced and citizens of the state are protected.

"If the government accepts this pledge publicly and carries it out, the Michoacan Family will disband," said the letter, which was also posted on flyers around the state capital Morelia, urging the authorities to take control of the state "with force and decision."

Advertisement: Story continues below

In Mexico City, however, the federal attorney general's office said it was unclear if the message was authentic, but still dismissed it, insisting the government "could not make deals with criminals."

The gang is known for its religious zeal, notably justifying the beheadings of 12 policemen in June as being the work of "divine violence," and controls drug manufacturing and distribution in and around Michoacan with an iron fist.

The US Drug Enforcement Administration said last week, upon arresting 45 people in Atlanta, Georgia for links to the cartel, that it supplies "vast quantities of cocaine and methamphetamine" to the United States.

More than 28,000 people have died nationwide in suspected drug violence in Mexico since December 2006, when the government launched an offensive against criminal gangs with the deployment of some 50,000 troops.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/11/12/mexico.senate.president/>

Mexican lawmakers, jobs, education key to fighting Drug War

12 November 2010

(CNN) -- Mexico's government must create jobs and improve education to help fight drug trafficking, the country's senate president said in an interview with CNN en Espanol.

"Together they form a true strategy for fighting crime and violence," said Sen. Manlio Fabio Beltrones Rivera, a top official in Mexico's opposition Institutional Revolutionary Party.

Currently, Mexico's war on drugs is a "fight of firepower between criminals and the state," he said.

"We have seen 30,000 people die in the past four years," Beltrones said. "And we are very close to seeing, at the end of this six-year term, an equal number of dead as in the Vietnam War."

Mexican President Felipe Calderon announced a crackdown on cartels shortly after taking office at the end of 2006. Since then, more than 28,000 people have died in drug-related violence across the country. And Calderon's government has dispatched about 50,000 troops to the nation's trouble spots.

A past governor of Sonora state, which borders Arizona, Beltrones also discussed California's recently defeated proposition to legalize marijuana.

Proposition 19, which failed to garner enough support from California voters earlier this month, left many Mexican lawmakers wondering what they would do if it had passed, he said.

California has already legalized medical marijuana. Supporters of Proposition 19 argued that the "prohibition" of marijuana -- much like that for alcohol decades ago -- has created a violent criminal black market, led today by international drug cartels. But opponents prevailed earlier this month.

Still, Beltrones said the debate over legalizing marijuana is an issue Mexican officials will have to tackle "sooner or later."

"But we could not do it without developing a strategy with the United States, which is the drug's largest consumer... Crime and drug trafficking, which are transnational problems, need international solutions," he said.

Peggy Lawson

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Office of Drug Control

Executive Office of the Governor

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From: [McGhee, Darrick](#)
Subject: CNN.com - What's inside alcoholic energy drinks?
Date: Thursday, October 28, 2010 8:02:40 AM



What's inside alcoholic energy drinks?

By **Madison Park**, CNN
STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Caffeinated alcohol drinks boast exotic-sounding ingredients such as taurine, guarana
- These give beverage companies some clever marketing strategies, but do little else
- Most critical ingredients are caffeine and alcohol, experts said

(CNN) -- Neon, caffeinated alcohol drinks often boast exotic-sounding ingredients such as taurine, guarana, ginkgo, bitter orange and ginseng.

These give the beverage manufacturers clever marketing strategies, but do little else, said pharmacology and nutrition experts.

The key ingredients in these drinks are alcohol and caffeine. The rest is "silly window dressing," said David Schardt, a senior nutritionist at the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

Energy drinks became controversial after two colleges banned Four Loko, a caffeinated alcohol beverage, after students became ill.

['Blackout in a can' blamed for student party illnesses](#)

The name "Four" is derived from the major ingredients: caffeine, taurine, guarana and alcohol, according to Phusion Projects, Four Loko's maker.

These types of caffeinated alcoholic drinks fuse sugar-fructose mix, caffeine, alcohol with a blend of supplements.

"Lots of the energy drinks have proprietary substances in them," said Dr. David Weldy, assistant professor of family medicine at the University of Toledo College of Medicine. "We don't know what they are or what the ratios are. Some of the items -- taurine, guarana and certainly caffeine -- are major players. We don't really know all of their main effects."

The amount of the herbal supplements in energy drinks are too small to have any kind of effect, said Kevin Clauson, an associate professor of pharmacy at Nova Southeastern University.

"If you have a headache, it's like taking an aspirin, cutting it in half, then cutting that in half,

then expecting it to have a beneficial effect," he said. "It's just not going to happen."

Many of the energy drinks do not list the percentage of ingredients, glossing them over as "proprietary blend," Clauson said.

Taurine is a seemingly omnipresent natural amino acid, largely found in skeletal muscles. It is one of many building blocks involved in physiological functions in the liver, brain, central nervous system and heart.

"It's one of those things that doesn't fit into the paradigm of one product for one effect," Clauson said. "It has lots of different effects."

Taurine is also one of the major ingredients in Red Bull and touted to improve performance. But there isn't much scientific evidence of that. Despite such lack of research, it has been used in treating alcohol withdrawal, congestive heart failure, diabetes and other conditions.

Guarana is a South American berry that is a natural source of caffeine.

"Some companies put guarana in to hide how much caffeine is in their products," said Schardt. "Lots of people don't realize what it is."

Guarana is recognized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as a generally safe food additive. Its seeds contain more than twice the amount of caffeine found in coffee.

"Functionally, it's another source of caffeine," Schardt said. "Just because the energy drinks put these ingredients in, it doesn't mean the ingredients do anything. We're back to marketing. It's what consumers think these ingredients do."

Young adults and college students aren't drinking these types of energy drinks for health benefits or herbal supplements. The most critical ingredients are caffeine and alcohol.

The stimulant and depressant don't cancel each other, but have a different effect.

"Caffeine seems to partially cancel out the feeling of being drunk, not the actual impairment," said Weldy, who has written about underage drinkers and caffeinated alcoholic products.

Four Loko's maker issued statement after the Washington college incident: "No one is more upset than we are when our products are abused or consumed illegally by underage drinkers -- and it appears that both happened in this instance. This is unacceptable,"

Phusion Projects agreed with "the goals that underlie those sentiments" in Central Washington College's ban. The company abides by "strict standards for our retailers and conduct ongoing training to ensure our products are sold only to adults 21 and older," they said.

A 23.5-ounce can of Four Loko contains either 6 or 12 percent alcohol by volume, depending on state regulations.

The combination of caffeine and alcohol -- which is found in drinks like rum and Coke, Red Bull and vodka, allows drinkers to imbibe for a longer period of time without quickly feeling the headaches, dry mouth and unpleasant side effects of alcohol, Clauson said.

Drinkers of caffeinated alcoholic drinks are more likely to binge, drive drunk, or be taken

advantage of in a sexual situations than those who drink noncaffeinated alcoholic drinks, medical experts said.

This isn't the first time alco-pop has stirred backlash.

In 2007, Anheuser-Busch pulled its 12-percent alcohol beverage called Spykes (a neon amalgam inside a bottle that looked like nail polish) after an outcry by alcohol watchdog organizations and politicians.

In 2008, Center for Science in the Public Interest sued MillerCoors Brewing Company over its alcoholic energy drink, Sparks. The group accused the company of trying to appeal to underage drinkers with a drink that was alcoholic, but similar to soda. The company agreed to reformulate its ingredients.

Find this article at:

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/HEALTH/10/27/energy.drink.ingredients/index.html?hpt=Sbin>

From: [Goudy, Senta](#)
To: [Gail Campbell](#); [Deborah Schlageter](#); skramer@drugfreemantea.org; [Deb](#); Prevspec@aol.com; [Griffin-Doherty, Jackie](#)
Subject: FW: Advocacy Spurs Ban on Alcoholic Energy Drinks
Date: Monday, November 15, 2010 2:14:15 PM

You may want to share the latest news with your youth. A number of states are taking the steps necessary to ban sale all together.

From: Join Together [mailto:updates@jointogether.org]
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2010 2:01 PM
To: Shipley, Claude
Subject: JT Direct Weekly News: Advocacy Spurs Ban on Alcoholic Energy Drinks

www.jointogether.org

 Weekly Edition

November 15, 2010

ORIGINAL FEATURE STORY



[Advocacy Group's Persistence Spurs Mich. Ban on Alcoholic Energy Drinks](#)

The Michigan Liquor Control Commission's decision to ban sales of alcoholic energy drinks is being credited to a convergence of factors, including persistent pleas from advocates and a troubling local crime.

HEADLINES



[Graphic Warnings Coming Soon to U.S. Cigarettes](#)

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) unveiled strong new health warnings for cigarettes that show skin lesions, diseased lungs, and dead bodies.

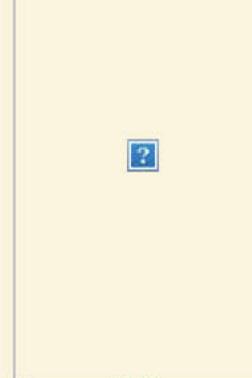
[Okla. Ousts Alcoholic Energy Drinks](#)

[Mass. Hospital Association to Stop Hiring Tobacco Users](#)

[Wash. State Bans Alcoholic Energy Drinks](#)

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RESOURCES

[Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice](#)

RESEARCH NEWS

[Alzheimer's Risk Surges with Heavy Midlife Smoking](#)

Heavy smoking in midlife increases an individual's risk of developing Alzheimer's disease by more than 157 percent, according to a new study sponsored by Kaiser Permanente.

[Smokeless Tobacco Use On the Rise](#)

[More research](#)

FROM THE BLOG



[No Phoolin': Four Loko's Phusion Projects Wants 'Responsible Drinking'](#)

Phusion Projects, LLC, which makes the alcoholic energy drink Four Loko -- known to college students as "blackout in a can" -- has suddenly gotten serious about alcohol abuse and underage drinking on college campuses.

[Ob-Gyns Urged to Screen Pregnant Women for Smoking](#)

[Slippery Slope: Assessing Costs of Risky Behavior](#)

[First State to Ban Alcoholic Energy Drinks? Utah](#)

[More from the blog](#)

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From: [McGhee, Darrick](#)
To: [Grant, Bruce](#)
Subject: FW: FoxNews.com - Four Loko Drops Caffeine From Alcoholic Drink
Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2010 7:58:49 AM

Four Loko Drops Caffeine From Alcoholic Drink

Published November 16, 2010 | Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- The manufacturer of popular caffeinated alcohol drink Four Loko said Tuesday it will remove the caffeine from its products, pulling the blend off the market just as the Food and Drug Administration is poised to ban it.

Phusion Projects said in a statement posted on its website that the company will remove caffeine and two other ingredients from its products going forward.

The announcement came as the FDA is expected to find as early as Wednesday that caffeine is an unsafe food additive to alcoholic drinks. That finding essentially would ban Four Loko and other drinks like it.

The FDA ruling "should be the nail in the coffin of these dangerous and toxic drinks," Sen. Chuck Schumer, who has pushed the Obama administration to ban the beverages, said Tuesday.

Federal regulators would not confirm Schumer's announcement that a ban was imminent, but Four Loko's statement suggests the company believed it had little choice but to reformulate its drinks.

The statement by the company's three co-founders said they were removing caffeine from the drinks after unsuccessfully trying to deal with what they called "a difficult and politically-charged regulatory environment at both the state and federal levels."

"We have repeatedly contended -- and still believe, as do many people throughout the country -- that the combination of alcohol and caffeine is safe," said Chris Hunter, Jeff Wright and Jaisen Freeman, who identify themselves as Phusion's three co-founders and current managing partners.

The statement did not mention several recent incidents in which college students were hospitalized after drinking the beverage. In response to such incidents, four states -- Washington, Michigan, Utah and Oklahoma -- have banned the beverages. Other states are considering similar action.

Four Loko comes in several varieties, including fruit punch and blue raspberry. A 23.5-ounce can sells for about \$2.50 and has an alcohol content of 12 percent, comparable to four beers, according to the company's website.

While there is little known medical evidence that the drinks are less safe than other alcoholic

drinks, public health advocates say the drinks can make people feel more alert and able to handle tasks like driving. A Wake Forest University study found that students who combine caffeine and alcohol are more likely to suffer alcohol-related injuries than those drinking alcohol without caffeine.

Last year the FDA notified more than two dozen manufacturers of caffeinated alcoholic beverages that it never had specifically approved the addition of caffeine to alcoholic drinks and began studying whether it was unsafe and should be outlawed. The agency noted the mix's growing popularity among college students and its potential health and safety issues.

The FDA said then it had not reached a conclusion about the drinks' safety but cited concerns from several state attorneys general who contended the drinks appealed to underage drinkers and encouraged reckless behavior.

FDA spokeswoman Siobhan DeLancey would not confirm any upcoming action Tuesday but said the agency recognizes "this very important public health issue" and will announce the results of its review when it is complete. The Federal Trade Commission, which regulates the marketing of the drinks, declined to comment.

<http://www.foxnews.com/health/2010/11/16/loko-alcoholic-drink-drop-caffeine/>

From: Florida_Prevention
To: fdams@nova.edu; am.tv_chandler@ccps.k12.fl.us; [Angie Ellison](mailto:Angie_Ellison); [Anne Frazier](mailto:Anne_Frazier); anti-drug@cox.net; aventura@unitedwaybroward.org; b_town_00@hotmail.com; bcallah@copscenr.org; [Brooke Baker](mailto:Brooke_Baker); bysaps@bellsouth.net; campbell.gail@gmail.com; [Carri Burkett](mailto:Carri_Burkett); [Carrie Baird](mailto:Carrie_Baird); carrie@ovf.org; ccaps@roundtablefl.org; christfrancetti@aol.com; chrisssy.hymum@ccps.k12.fl.us; [Cindy Coxes](mailto:Cindy_Coxes); cindycoxes@aol.com; [Clarice Powell](mailto:Clarice_Powell); Clay_gparis@nascoasap.com; debbie@seminolepreventioncoalition.org; [Debi MacIntyre](mailto:Debi_MacIntyre); debi@safeclimatecoalition.org; deborah@ovf.org; dlees@highlandsheriff.org; [Doug Leonardo](mailto:Doug_Leonardo); [Douglas Leonardo](mailto:Douglas_Leonardo); baycare.org; [Ellen Piekalkiewicz](mailto:Ellen_Piekalkiewicz); Ellen_P_ekalkiewicz@dcf.state.fl.us; elwoodford@yahoo.com; [Gail D.xon](mailto:Gail_D_xon); geomatrix@aol.com; gerry.brent@mcchfdrensalliance.org; Goldstein_Ron; quen_love@cdfsfl.org; heidt@nactpreventon.org; [Jacob Leonard Robert](mailto:Jacob_Leonard_Robert); [Jan Cairnes](mailto:Jan_Cairnes); jcairnes@hanleycenter.org; [Janet Reilly](mailto:Janet_Reilly); jcarter_theasap@yahoo.com; jdoherly@operpar.org; [Jim Hall](mailto:Jim_Hall); UpFrontin@aol.com; jiswell@aol.com; jmbardes@yahoo.com; [Joan Helms](mailto:Joan_Helms); jah@netally.com; [Joel Kaufman](mailto:Joel_Kaufman); JKaufman@StartingPlace.org; [Jon Ouinon](mailto:Jon_Ouinon); jong.teenalliance@gmail.com; [Karen Perry](mailto:Karen_Perry); KPerry@nopetaskforce.org; [Kathleen Roberts](mailto:Kathleen_Roberts); kmr05g@fsu.edu; [Kay Doughy](mailto:Kay_Doughy); JKDoughy@OperPar.org; [Kelly Johnson](mailto:Kelly_Johnson); kingdav@inc@bellsouth.net; kthomas@roundtablefl.org; hilko@operpar.org; [Lisa Jones](mailto:Lisa_Jones); lisa.mcolhaney@gmail.com; [Mac Waters](mailto:Mac_Waters); lmwaters@miller.fsu.edu; [Maurice Simmons](mailto:Maurice_Simmons); McAfee.org; mckonalds1@windstream.net; meena.harris@myfordalegal.com; [Mike Jordan](mailto:Mike_Jordan); cwjordan44@aol.com; paulbc@bellsouth.net; pcastillo@unitedwaybroward.org; [Penny Detscher](mailto:Penny_Detscher); penny.detscher@fdoe.org; prevention@embargomail.com; provspec@aol.com; ESapp@informedfamilies.org; Putnam; putnamcountyanti@bellsouth.net; [Rebecca R. Toddi](mailto:Rebecca_R_Toddi); rtoddi@cfhbn.org; [Regina Birkenkott](mailto:Regina_Birkenkott); RRBirken@mendofzofoundation.org; [Rick Howell](mailto:Rick_Howell); rjh1995@miller.fsu.edu; r_joy.kims@MAIL.DC.STATE.FL.US; rjablons@tampabay.rr.com; Shiplay_Claude; skramer.mcac@gmail.com; [Sonya Bufe](mailto:Sonya_Bufe); stephanie.geoghagan@cchhc.org; [Substance Free Citrus](mailto:Substance_Free_Citrus); susan@safeandhealthyduval.org; suwanneecoalition@mac.com; [Tiffane Raulerson](mailto:Tiffane_Raulerson); doh.state.fl.us; togetheragain@earthlink.net; [Vicki Kress](mailto:Vicki_Kress); vkress@smabehavioral.org; youthadvocacy@gmail.com

Subject: FW: News Articles, Monday, November 8, 2010
Date: Monday, November 08, 2010 12:37:48 PM

FLORIDA

<http://visitbulgaria.info/15087-four-loko-energy-drink-raises-health-concerns>

Four Loko energy drink raises health concerns

08 November 2010

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/health/a-prescription-drug-addict-and-her-family-fail-to-find-help/1131119>

A prescription drug addict and her family fail to find help

31 October 2010

<http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20101106/ARTICLE/11061018/2055/NEWS?Title=War-against-prescription-drug-abuse-delayed>

War against prescription drug abuse delayed

06 November 2010

<http://www.thedestinlog.com/news/okaloosa-15807-dea-ties.html>

DEA busts Okaloosa Island pill laboratory with "international" ties

07 November 2010

http://www.anesthesiologynews.com/index.asp?section_id=2&show=dept&issue_id=679&article_id=16125

Efforts increase to curb illegitimate pain clinics in Florida

November 2010

NATIONAL

<http://topnews360.tmcnet.com/topics/associated-press/articles/2010/11/07/114899-big-mexican-drug-ring-hit-atlanta-area-busts.htm>

Big Mexican drug ring hit by Atlanta area busts

07 November 2010

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/08/us/politics/08pot.html?_r=1&hpw

Where Marijuana is a point of pride

08 November 2010

http://www.thecyprusstimes.com/article/News/National_News/AGENTS_SEIZE_MORE_THAN_28_MILLION_WORTH_OF_MARIJUANA/35933AgenAg

Agents seize more than \$2.8 million worth of Marijuana

08 November 2010

http://helenair.com/news/opinion/article_65e02736-eaef-11df-9c92-001cc4c002e0.html

Training servers, sellers can make all the difference

08 November 2010

http://www.usatoday.com/yourlife/health/medical/pediatrics/2010-11-08-kidstress08_st_N.htm

Kids of deployed soldiers have more developmental problems

08 November 2010

<http://www.pressconnects.com/article/20101107/NEWS01/11070377/Mental+Health+association+sets+out+to+help+needy+veteransMen>

Mental Health association sets out to help needy veterans

07 November 2010

INTERNATIONAL

<http://itn.co.uk/0243939125bc606a2f25c607b256b9a7.html>

Navy release video after drug baron killed

08 November 2010

FLORIDA

<http://visitbulgaria.info/15087-four-loko-energy-drink-raises-health-concerns>

Four Loko energy drink raises health concerns

08 November 2010

Four Loko is known to everyone and those who don't know it are considered crazy, as one can hardly fail to miss the huge extra large can containing alcohol, caffeine, taurine and guarana, across campuses nationwide.

Titled 'blackout in a can' or 'Liquid Cocaine' by most of its consumers, the 23.5 ounces of Four Loko is 12% alcohol, 660 calories including the caffeine equivalent of two cups of coffee. However, with its youthful appeal and rampant use, Four Loko can endanger more than just the person drinking it.

Dr. Maria Serra, Associate Director for Psychological Services at Rutgers-Camden Student Health Services says they have been hearing about the drink for some time now, but it is only in the past few months that it has proven to be a problem.

It is rather obvious students know of it and love it because it doesn't cost too much. A University of Florida study February shows alcoholic energy drinks are popular as they fuel a feeling of being both wide awake and drunk, with people four times more likely to drive while intoxicated, compared to those who have only drunk alcohol.

Serra says it is hardly surprising that a \$2.50 drink that gives the kick of five or six light beers is so popular amongst college students.

She explains: 'What Four Loko does, with the combination of caffeine and alcohol, is you have someone who is very drunk but also very alert and very awake.'

However, mixing a stimulant like caffeine with a depressant like alcohol can prove to be a deadly combination, as those who combine the two believe they are more in control. This is because caffeine diminishes only the perception of being drunk, not the actual impairment, which feeling of soberness can lead to binge drinking.

According to Phusion Projects, who manufactures Four Loko, the drink with its nine fruity flavours has many fans, evidenced by the annual double digit growth in sales since its creation in 2008. It even has pages dedicated to it on Facebook.

Four Loko sales are brisk and a best selling late night item. But, the police say no matter what alcohol type you consume, driving while impaired is still illegal.

Recent episodes involving Four Loko and which illustrate possible dangers posed by the drink, such as, the hospitalisation of 23 students from Ramapo College in New Jersey, and nine from Central Washington University in Washington, has prompted the ban of the elixir on both college campuses.

While, Michigan state has banned the sale of caffeinated alcoholic drinks, Chicago city is proposing to do the same.

Even so, Serra says bans are unlikely to stop college students from drinking caffeinated combination bar staples like Red Bull, vodka and Coke and rum, as before Four Loko there were other forms of the drink.

As Phusion Projects in a statement posted online on its company website says: 'Our products contain less alcohol than an average rum and cola, less alcohol and caffeine than an average Red Bull and vodka, and is comparable to having coffee after a meal with a couple glasses of wine. . .

'Our products are not energy drinks, as they've been called, and when consumed responsibly, they are just as safe as any other alcoholic beverages.'

But, there are some who believe the pre-mix of alco-pop combinations, potent ingredients packaged together are convenient though dangerous, as large caffeine and alcohol doses, even if consumed separately, can have cardiac side effects.

The US Food and Drug Administration doesn't regulate caffeinated alcoholic beverages, however, it is examining around 40 different caffeinated alcoholic products, including Four Loko, as part of its investigation into the safety of a caffeine and alcohol combination.

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/health/a-prescription-drug-addict-and-her-family-fail-to-find-help/1131119>

A prescription drug addict and her family fail to find help

31 October 2010

There came a day last June when Ann Weeks drove her shaking stepdaughter around to hospitals and drug treatment centers in Pasco County. Ann was exhausted and frustrated. She'd spent three sleepless nights trying to help Karen Hanratty, 27, withdraw from Oxycodone and Xanax at home. She'd watched Karen scream and cry that it hurt. But Karen's kids had been taken away from her for driving under the influence of prescription drugs, and if she wanted to get them back, she needed to get off the drugs.

So Ann, 43, took Karen to three hospitals — all of which refused to take her unless she had threatened to kill herself. Ann and Karen briefly discussed Karen lying. But Karen feared it could stop her from ever reuniting with her children.

Ann pulled her old Cadillac into one last nonprofit drug treatment center in New Port Richey. She'd called before, but she thought that maybe if they saw Karen, they might find a place for her.

A nicely dressed woman answered the door. Ann told the woman that if she didn't get Karen help, she thought Karen would die from an overdose.

The woman looked down at Karen, nauseous and shuddering on the ground, and nodded sympathetically. She told Ann there was simply no room.

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More than 900 drug and alcohol treatment providers operate in Florida.

Three-quarters of them are for-profit companies. They'd like payment up front. Insurance may cover a 30-day treatment, but very few plans do.

Most of them are out of reach for someone like Karen Hanratty, a mother of two who was on disability and Medicaid.

Karen, and people like her with little or no money, do have options. Hundreds of thousands of people find their way to the nonprofit treatment centers that receive money from the state, such as Operation PAR in Pinellas County or DACCO in Hillsborough County. But penetrating the wall of wait lists at nonprofit treatment centers requires luck and perseverance.

Operation PAR, for example, has up to a three-month waiting list to get a bed. The wait for detox is up to a week. The 220-bed operation has lost 100 beds in the past few years.

"Every treatment provider has empty beds," said Sara Romeo, CEO of Tampa Crossroads, a nonprofit treatment program that receives government funding, "meaning we have beds, but they are not paid for by anyone so we can't put a client in them."

Most of these nonprofits get a large part of their funding from the Department of Corrections, which means those who commit crimes get most of the beds.

Very few spots are reserved for the low-income person like Karen who steps in off the street. At the 236-bed DACCO, for example, there are just 14 beds for such people and there is a four-month wait list. But there are 120 beds for felons.

So there's been a shift to outpatient treatment. It's cheaper, more available. It works for some, but not all.

The first step is typically to get into a detox center. Karen couldn't even get into one of these. Her chances of detoxing on her own were slim.

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Karen's family speculates she had been taking Oxycodone for more than a year when she was pulled over on Nov. 17, 2009, by an officer in Pasco County. She had been driving 70 mph in a 45-mph zone on U.S. 19. She nearly hit the car in front of her and almost sideswiped another car.

"What did I do?" she asked the officer.

She stumbled through the sobriety tests. And her then-8-year-old son, Jacob, was in the back seat.

Karen had already been on the radar of child protection investigators. Just weeks before, a police officer had seen her in the parking lot of a gas station, slumped over the steering wheel. Neither her son nor her 2-year-old daughter, Susan, were in the car. But the incident prompted a call to the child abuse hotline.

This time, child welfare investigators removed Jacob and Susan from her custody and placed them with relatives.

Karen was devastated. She was, her family said, a dedicated mother. She read to her kids and threw them birthday parties that she couldn't afford.

Months after the arrest, sometime in March, she showed up in court with her mother, Melissa. Maybe she could get the children back, Karen thought. After all, she had been taking only what her doctor prescribed her.

Melissa knew her daughter suffered chronic pain. She had been sickly growing up and had undergone her first surgery for scoliosis when she was 13 or 14. They had cut her open from her neck to her tail bone again when she was in her early 20s. An infection from that surgery led to a third surgery. She was also diagnosed with fibromyalgia, a chronic pain disorder. Karen's pain was so severe that doctors sent her to a pain management doctor in Zephyrhills in 2008.

Circuit Judge William Webb wanted to see her prescriptions. How many pills was she being prescribed exactly? The answer surprised everyone.

Karen, who was 110 pounds, was taking one 30mg of Oxycodone every three hours. That was eight a day or 240 a month — "too high," Webb said. She didn't tell the court but she also had a prescription for 90 Xanax a month, though she claimed she had stopped taking them.

If she wanted her kids back, the judge told her, she was going to have to get off all prescription drugs. Webb didn't tell her how to get off the drugs or where to go. He would have ordered her into a program, he said, if she'd asked.

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Experts say pain pill addicts need at least 90 days of treatment — inpatient and outpatient combined — to free themselves of the addiction. Anything less is considered a BandAid.

"Like taking aspirin for cancer," said Michael Flaherty, executive director of the Institute for Research, Education and Training in Addictions.

But Karen couldn't even get five days of detox. So last spring, she ping-ponged between bingeing on painkillers and trying to quit on her own with the help of her father and her stepmother.

Ann and Karen were not very close. Ann was strict, no-nonsense. But Karen, 27, had run off all the other family members who tried to help her, including her mother.

So her stepmother picked up the lit cigarettes she dropped on the floor when she passed out. She dragged her out of a drug house in Moon Lake. She found a batch of pawn slips for all of Karen's jewelry, including a gold heart with the word "Mom" on it. She had gotten \$15 for it.

In those final months, Ann called every hospital and drug treatment center in the phone book. Then she got a list of centers and hospitals from around the state and started calling them, around 50 or 60 in all. Either they didn't have a bed or wouldn't take Karen's Medicaid. And private treatment centers quoted her \$10,000 just for detox.

"We tried to detox her ourselves, but we don't know anything about it and we knew she could die at any time," Ann said.

Ann called Operation PAR, the publicly funded treatment center, but she said she learned it used prescription drugs such as Suboxone and methadone to wean people off painkillers. Operation PAR offers two ways to get off drugs, and one is drug-free. But Ann only learned of the one that uses prescription drugs. The judge had ordered Karen to quit completely.

Things came to a head at the end of May when Karen tried to detox on her own one last time. It lasted four days.

Then came June 1, the day that Ann loaded her into the car and drove around New Port Richey looking in vain for an open bed.

A week or so later, Ann and Karen's dad tried to have Karen committed under Florida's Marchman Act. In Florida, you can commit someone involuntarily for an out-of-control substance abuse problem. Ann found Karen a treatment bed in Polk County, but she said the judge wouldn't sign the order unless the bed was in Pasco.

In mid June, Karen showed up at home and admitted she had taken 10 Xanax. Her breathing was shallow, her eyes unfocused. Ann took her to a hospital in New Port Richey.

The next day, the hospital released her. They told Ann it was because Karen was no longer a threat to herself. Wasn't taking 10 Xanax the equivalent of trying to kill yourself? Ann asked.

Ann never understood why Medicaid didn't cover detox.

Shelisha Durden of the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration, the agency that oversees the state's \$18-billion Medicaid program, said Medicaid

covers detox only at hospitals and only if it's deemed by a physician to be medically necessary.

The term medical necessity has a lengthy definition which amounts to this: "necessary to protect life, to prevent significant illness or significant disability, or to alleviate severe pain."

Medicaid doesn't cover inpatient substance abuse treatment, Durden said, but it does cover outpatient.

Later that day, on June 16, Ann sat down on her overstuffed, brown couch and opened the phone book one more time. She handed the phone to Karen.

"If you want help," she said, "if you want to be straight enough for that hearing on your kids next month, you have to do this."

Soon, Karen was on the phone with an intake counselor at Morton Plant Hospital in Clearwater. Crying, she explained she had lost her kids. She wasn't strong enough to quit on her own. Medicaid did not cover detox services, the hospital told her. But they had an open bed on the psychiatric floor, a cost Medicaid would cover.

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On June 25, Karen was released from the hospital to an assisted living facility in Clearwater. It wasn't for drug offenders, her family said. In fact, the man who ran it didn't even know Karen had an addiction. But here were AA and NA meetings nearby.

She was hopeful. She had gained 15 pounds. She started a diary: "I love my 2 beautiful kids and miss them sooooo much! :(God give them back please I beg you!"

"I am off the pain meds for my back and only taking 3 mg of Zanax a day," she wrote on July 2. "I was in touch with a senator of Florida, to get him to pass a bill stating that Medicaid patients shouldn't have to fight a battle to detox and get help if they truly want it . . ."

On July 21, Karen left the assisted living facility with a friend. She went to the apartment of a 27-year-old man whom she'd met at Publix that day.

She popped Oxycodone and Xanax until early in the morning when she started throwing up. The man put her in the bathtub, ran some water over her. Then he passed out. Next morning, she was dead of an overdose.

She died eight days before a custody hearing on whether she was making enough progress to get her kids back. She was one of about 267 people who died of a prescription drug overdose through July this year in Pinellas and Pasco counties.

Times researchers Shirl Kennedy and Connie Humburg contributed to this report. Leonora LaPeter Anton can be reached at lapeter@sptimes.com or (727) 893-8640.

Coming Monday

Many private drug treatment facilities have opened as the prescription drug crisis has grown, but some are having trouble finding clients in a tough economy.

<http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20101106/ARTICLE/11061018/2055/NEWS?Title=War-against-prescription-drug-abuse-delayed>

War against prescription drug abuse delayed

06 November 2010

For years, law enforcement officials and anti-drug activists have clamored for a system to track drug prescriptions in Florida.

HOW IT WORKS

Last year, lawmakers approved a system to track drug prescriptions across the state, though the effort has been delayed.

A look at the program:

- Doctors and pharmacists who dispense medications with a high potential for abuse must input information into an electronic database.
- They enter the patient's name, address and date of birth; the name of the drug, the quantity and dosage; the names of the pharmacy and the prescriber; and how the patient paid.
- Prescribers have 15 days to enter the data.
- Those who give prescription drugs directly to patients, such as in a hospital or nursing home, are not required to enter the information.
- Law enforcement agencies are not allowed to use the database until an active investigation has been started.

The system, they say, could help stop so-called doctor shopping or other abuse of prescription medications that have suddenly become the most popular and dangerous recreational drugs, killing more people each year in Sarasota County than murders and car accidents combined.

Legislators finally took action last year and approved a law that would create a statewide database intended to track prescriptions issued by doctors and pharmacists.

The Prescription Drug Monitoring Program was supposed to debut next month, but will be delayed because of a protest over how the system was put out for bid.

The launch of the PDMP may not happen until early 2011 after a company that lost out on a contract to run the program said the bid was unfairly awarded.

Ohio's Opium Technology Inc. filed a protest and, after a hearing before an administrative judge last month, the state put out a new request for proposals.

Activists and experts concerned about the delay say that it also underscores a deeper flaw in the program: that lawmakers who approved the system neglected to fund it.

Florida is the largest state in the nation without a program to monitor how medications are dispensed to patients.

Yet lawmakers were hesitant to add new programs to the state's budget in a down economy, say the system's backers.

So far, the fundraising efforts are being administered by a nonprofit foundation which has about \$500,000 from private donations and federal grants. It needs \$5 million to get the database in place and run it through 2016. Supporters say Florida should recognize the system's importance and find a way to pay for it.

"We should be funding it," said Bruce Grant, director of the Governor's Office of Drug Control. "I'm on the record saying that. I understand, in this economic climate, that there wasn't a huge appetite for new programs. But in the long run, we have to find a way to keep this going."

The drug monitoring law is seen as a significant tool for doctors to keep tabs on prescriptions. Florida is one of a dozen states without a prescription drug database, making it a haven for out-of-state abusers and dealers who come here to find powerful narcotics such as OxyContin and Xanax.

Activists and law enforcement officials have pushed for tougher laws, saying that prescription medications are the leading cause of drug deaths in Florida and the United States.

In Sarasota County, nearly 70 percent of referrals to child welfare officials are related to prescription drug abuse, and the number of infants born with prescription drug withdrawal symptoms is up by 8 percent at [Sarasota Memorial Hospital](#). The hospital has seen an 54 percent jump in overdose cases at its emergency room since 2006.

Authorities say the problem should be tackled on multiple levels. The sheriff's office is meeting with students and parents to educate them on the prevalence and danger of prescribed medicines. Detectives are going hard after street-level dealers. And legislators pushed through two new laws that crack down on "doctor shopping" -- the process of using multiple physicians to obtain prescriptions -- and the clinics dispensing medication.

"There is no silver bullet," said Detective Don Kennard, head of a prescription drug unit at the Sarasota sheriff's office. "But we're gaining a head of steam in the community."

Lawmakers first went after "pill mills," the pain clinics that are sometimes frequented by abusers to score drugs. A new law requires that clinics be owned by doctors or be licensed and inspected by the state.

The health department plans a series of inspections this month. After that, the Legislature approved the statewide database.

The program forces doctors and pharmacists to enter information about which drugs are dispensed to which patients.

Doctors can also check the database to determine if the patients are currently using any other medications.

Law enforcement investigators cannot check the database until there is an active investigation into prescription fraud or abuse.

"It's a great first step," said Brooke Baker, behavioral health coordinator at the Sarasota County Health Department. "It starts communication between doctors, pharmacists and patients."

Two loopholes have been criticized, though. Doctors have a 15-day window to enter the information -- plenty of time for a drug abuser to get other prescriptions -- and they are not required to check the database before dispensing medicines.

"People are losing their minds over the 15-day period," Kennard said. "But my God, we had nothing before this program. It's a pretty good start."

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<http://www.thedestinlog.com/news/okaloosa-15807-dea-ties.html>

DEA busts Okaloosa Island pill laboratory with 'international' ties

07 November 2010

The Drug Enforcement Administration and Okaloosa County sheriff's deputies arrested a man Thursday afternoon they say was shipping narcotics through the mail.

Fort Walton Beach resident Shawn Wayne Barker, 30, was arrested outside the A Plus Pak-n-Ship next Winn-Dixie on State Road 85 in Crestview.

"The DEA swarmed him and arrested him," A Plus Pak-n-Ship owner Angie McKinney said. "We saw guns drawn and all of the excitement and that was about it."

Barker is charged with trafficking in opiates and possession of schedule 4 narcotics with intent to sell.

He was being held without bond Friday in the Okaloosa County Jail.

Barker was arrested after he picked up two boxes at the Pak-n-Ship containing 67 grams of codeine, according to his arrest report.

Barker was the subject of a multi-agency Drug Task Force case that included federal agents. He was allegedly operating a "clandestine pill laboratory on Okaloosa Island with international ties," according to a Sheriff's Office news release.

After Barker's arrest, lawmen searched his apartment at 349 Bluefish Drive on Okaloosa Island and discovered "a large quantity of Xanax" and "multiple tools and chemicals commonly used in the manufacturing of controlled substances, to include but not limited to, ecstasy," the report said.

McKinney said Barker was a longtime customer who leased a mailbox at her store. He dropped by to collect his mail and delivered boxes "about once a month," she said.

McKinney said she has notified lawmen in the past when she suspected someone was using her store to get drugs. However, there was nothing about Barker to set off any "flags, bells or whistles."

"He is a clean-cut, good looking guy," McKinney said.

On the day of his arrest, Barker picked up his mail and a shipment from FedEx, and was chatting with store employees, McKinney said.

"They must have been watching him the whole time," she said of the DEA agents who arrested him. "I'm glad they are looking out for everybody."

The Sheriff's Office scheduled a news conference Friday to release more information about Barker's arrest, but canceled it.

As far as Barker's suspected "international ties," Sheriff's Office spokeswoman Michele Nicholson said in an e-mail that the department "can't elaborate on specific countries at this point."

http://www.anesthesiologynews.com/index.asp?section_id=2&show=dept&issue_id=679&article_id=16125

Efforts increase to curb illegitimate pain clinics in Florida

November 2010

Florida's state legislators are taking aggressive measures to halt an epidemic of opiate-related deaths in that state, hoping to intervene in the seven-plus mortalities that occur daily as a result of prescription drug overdoses.

Implementing Senate Bill 2272, they hope, will end the proliferation of "pill mills" and help shut down those already in business. The bill, which went into effect Oct. 1, mandates the creation of a state-wide prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP), delineates narrow conditions to establish a pain management clinic, limits the amount of controlled substances physicians can prescribe and restricts advertisement of pain treatments.

The Florida Society of Anesthesiologists (FSA) hailed the new measure.

The Florida Pain Clinic law "was desperately needed by law enforcement so that 'pill mill' operators could be charged with criminal violations, once identified," said Sonya Pease, MD, FSA president.

The FSA has been calling for the establishment of a prescription drug monitoring program since the early part of the decade, Dr. Pease said. "While the first version of the law does have its drawbacks, such as the need for a physical examination by a physician every time a controlled substance prescription is written and the blanket 'guilt by association' clause, these concerns are being addressed ... so the impact on legitimate pain physicians are minimized."

What's more, Dr. Pease added, the rule should improve the quality of pain care in the state by requiring physicians who want to practice pain medicine in Florida to undergo accredited fellowship training in the discipline. That provision, effective 2012, "underscores the need for advanced formal education and training in the young specialty of pain medicine and will elevate the care delivered and enhance patient safety," she said.

The law does allow current pain practitioners a means of grandfathering around the fellowship measure.

Plan 'Not Perfect'

While the new regulations create a difficult climate for would-be high prescribers and drug diverters to thrive in, some pain physicians are wary that the law may hamper their ability to treat patients in legitimate pain.

"Unfortunately, the bill doesn't maintain a balance between the needs of physicians to effectively treat pain and the necessity to root out prescription drug diversion," said Sean Emami, MD, director of legislative and regulatory affairs for the American Academy of Pain Management.

The new law requires that physician managers or owners have subspecialty board certification in pain management as a prerequisite for clinic operation. It also stipulates any clinic treating pain be registered and annually inspected by the Florida Department of Health. Owners must have no criminal records for the 10 years prior to applying for a license, and will be held responsible for ensuring their clinic is in compliance with all the clauses of S.B. 2272.

"You need a background check to get a liquor license; you can't be a convicted felon and open up a bar. But you can be a convicted felon and open up a pain clinic," Broward County sheriff Al Lamberti said in an interview with *Time* published earlier this year, before the new legislation went into effect ("Invasion of the Pill Mills in South Florida," April 13, 2010). At that time, Broward County had 24 of the 50 top oxycodone prescribers in the country, and Florida on the whole had 49 of them.

Law enforcement officials will be able to obtain patient prescription records without requiring a search warrant, a measure Dr. Emami believes is a breach of the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

S.B. 2272 also places strict parameters on when and how physicians can prescribe pain medications. Specifically, each pain medicine prescription must be preceded by a physician's examination, whereas dispensing of prescriptions previously required only examination by a nurse practitioner or physician's assistant. Physicians can dispense only up to three days' worth of opiates to patients who pay with cash or a credit card, exempting patients whose insurance pays. In terms of penalties, the law states that clinics not complying with these rules can be permanently shut down, and owners and physicians may be charged with third-degree felonies and fined up to \$5,000 for each day they are in violation of the law.

According to Sanford Silverman, MD, president-elect of the Florida Society of Interventional Pain Physicians (FSIPP) and a frequent speaker on the subject of prescription drug abuse, S.B. 2272 may be too restrictive in changing the lax regulatory environment that has made Florida a favored place for drug-dispensing entrepreneurs. However, he welcomes the legislative efforts.

"This issue has been boiling over for years and years," said Dr. Silverman, who is also director of Comprehensive Pain Medicine, in Pompano Beach. "The new law may not be perfect, but it's comprehensive and has far-reaching implications, both for illegitimate and legitimate pain clinics."

For legitimate pain clinics, Dr. Silverman said the requirement that physicians personally examine every patient at every visit before prescribing or dispensing pain medicine will slow down busy practices and increase wait times, hampering access to effective pain management for some patients.

Jeffrey Zipper, MD, chief executive officer of the National Pain Institute (NPI), also expressed similar concern in an e-mail sent to Florida's pain physicians in September.

"I think we can all agree these rules and regulations should eliminate if not all, a vast majority of illicit 'pill mills,'" Dr. Zipper wrote. "Unfortunately, S.B. 2272 presents some significant problems and challenges for all legitimate pain management physicians, as well as for patients we treat."

Unlike Dr. Silverman and the FSIPP's qualified acceptance of the bill, Dr. Zipper's organization has filed a constitutional challenge to S.B. 2272. In his missive, Dr. Zipper argued the bill breaches physician and patient privacy rights. Moreover, as the bill empowers the Florida Board of Health to revoke the licenses of all physicians in a group practice that is shut down for violating the law, it creates a situation where individuals are unfairly accused of guilt by association. Dr. Zipper also pointed to the stipulation that only physicians with subspecialty board certification in pain management may practice in, own or manage a pain clinic. He noted that there are no pain medicine residency programs in Florida and only three pain management fellowship programs. Drs. Zipper and Emami expressed concern that this requirement will make an already low number of board-certified pain physicians—254 for an estimated population of 4 million patients with chronic pain in the state—even smaller.

"Diagnosing and treating pain is part of the ordinary practice of medicine," Dr. Emami said. "The various specialties such as orthopedic surgery, rheumatology, palliative medicine, geriatric medicine and primary care do not offer subspecialty certification in pain medicine. If such a restriction were to be implemented, there would be a severe health crisis in the state."

Important and less contentious is the creation of the PDMP mandated by the bill. PDMPs are in place in 38 other states and widely acknowledged to be an effective way to prevent patients from doctor shopping. Florida's PDMP is set to be online by Dec. 1, 2010. Although pain managers welcome its creation, the PDMP is not receiving public funds, Dr. Emami noted. At press time, the Florida PDMP Foundation Fund, a nonprofit organization established to raise funds for the PDMP's implementation, had received just over \$500,000 of the \$1 million it set out to raise by the December deadline, with much of the contribution coming from the coffers of the drug monitoring technology company that had won the bid to install the system.

"It's absurd that the PDMP isn't state-funded," said Dr. Emami. "Not only is it not funded, the proposed maximum time required for physicians to register a prescription is 15 days—far too long."

Dr. Emami believes the maximum drug reporting limit should be seven days, a limit that falls in line with federal standards. He noted the law also does not require Florida's PDMP to be connected with those in other states, potentially leaving the door open to patients and drug diverters to doctor shop in other states.

"Ideally, physicians should be reporting in real time, so that drug diverters don't have the time to shop around for prescriptions," Dr. Emami said.

Patient Education Key

As a corollary to the efforts intended to hinder the practice of poor pain management and excessive prescribing, Dr. Silverman and the FSIPP have created a public education campaign, the centerpiece of which is their Web site, paintruth.org. The site includes resources for individuals in pain and those addicted to pain medicines, and emphasizes pain management need not necessarily include using opiates.

Patient education is something that Dr. Emami also believes is critical to reducing the number of prescription-related deaths. He noted that each time he writes an opiate prescription, he emphasizes to his patients they are receiving a controlled substance, that they need to use it only as prescribed, and that the pills need to be locked up in a location out of the reach of other individuals.

Public and patient education and an improved PDMP, Dr. Emami believes, may go a longer way than restrictive laws toward reducing the number of prescription drug-related deaths, while not impinging on the ability of pain physicians to practice effectively.

"Pain patients really deserve good care, and this legislation is ultimately going to hurt them," Dr. Emami summed up. "It is a bad precedent to set."

NATIONAL

<http://topnews360.tmcnet.com/topics/associated-press/articles/2010/11/07/114899-big-mexican-drug-ring-hit-atlanta-area-busts.htm>

Big Mexican drug ring hit by Atlanta area busts

07 November 2010

JONESBORO, Ga. (AP) — Federal and local law enforcement agents have arrested 45 people and seized cash, guns and more than two tons of drugs as part of an investigation into the Atlanta-area U.S. distribution hub of a major Mexican drug cartel, authorities said Thursday.

Operation Choke Hold began in May 2009 and targeted the Atlanta-area operations of La Familia Michoacana, authorities said at a news conference at a suburban Atlanta courthouse. Known as La Familia, it is one of Mexico's largest and most brutal cartels.

"It has been widely reported that the Atlanta metropolitan area has become a major distribution center for drug cartels based in Mexico," said Jack Killorin, director of the Atlanta High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program. "Let today also document that law enforcement working together is successful in disrupting their operations."

Authorities seized 4,120 pounds of marijuana, 46 pounds of methamphetamine, 43 kilograms of cocaine, 20 guns, six vehicles and about \$2.3 million in cash. The drugs have a street value of more than \$10 million, Clayton County District Attorney Tracy Lawson said.

The operation dealt a major blow to La Familia's operations in Atlanta, Killorin said.

"This here is a mountain of drugs and a lot of cash and guns. For the cartels, all of that is replaceable," he said. "What's not replaceable is the trusted associates, many of whom we arrested during this operation."

Investigators say the La Familia cell based in Atlanta imports cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and marijuana. The network distributes significant amounts of the drugs to Florida, Alabama, Indiana, Illinois and North Carolina.

Suburban Gwinnett County has become a major distribution hub for multiple Mexican cartels to move their drugs throughout the eastern U.S. This investigation began in Gwinnett but quickly extended to other suburban counties, where a majority of the arrests were made.

That signals that traffickers are spreading to other parts of the metro area, in part because of a law enforcement crackdown in Gwinnett, Killorin said.

"This is not the end of anything," Killorin said. "But there are signs that the continued pressure is having an effect out here."

This operation was part of an ongoing effort by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the Atlanta High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area task force to work with local officials to make arrests and prosecute traffickers.

The dozens of people arrested face various drug, trafficking, conspiracy, money laundering and weapons charges.

Eight were allowed to post bond by county officials and are now considered fugitives, according to the DEA. The rest are still in custody. A 46th person has been charged but not arrested.

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/08/us/politics/08pot.html?_r=1&hpw

Where Marijuana is a point of pride

08 November 2010

NEDERLAND, Colo. — Millions of Americans expressed their feelings about [marijuana](#) last week. In Colorado, 24 communities voted to ban or restrict shops selling legal medical marijuana. In California, voters wrestled with the question of legalization for recreational use — with issues of health, crime and taxes all coming into play — then voted no.

But here in Nederland, it was just another beautiful day high in the mountains.

Marijuana has been mainstream in this outpost of the counterculture, 8,000 feet in the Rockies and an hour northwest of Denver, since the days of [Bob Marley](#)'s cigar-size "spliffs" and the jokes of Cheech and Chong.

And to judge by the numbers, things have not changed all that much.

An explosion of medical marijuana sales over the last year in Colorado as well as the District of Columbia and the 13 other states where medical use is allowed has certainly brought a new element into the mix. Dispensaries like Grateful Meds, one of seven medical marijuana providers in Nederland, population 1,400, now have legal compliance lawyers on retainer and sales tax receipts in the cash drawer.

But marijuana is still marijuana, and Nederland's perch overlooking what John Denver immortalized as "the Colorado Rocky Mountain high" has not budged.

State records show that by some coincidence, the concentration of medical marijuana patients and dispensaries selling medicinal cannabis is higher here in Colorado's old hippie heartland than in any other corner of the state.

In Gilpin County, for example, which begins at Nederland's doorstep, almost one in 20 residents qualify for cannabis treatment — the highest level in Colorado and more than three times the statewide average. State law, passed by voter referendum in 2000, allows marijuana treatment for a list of maladies, from [cancer](#) to chronic pain, if a doctor verifies the need.

And doctors have obliged. The sick-enough-for-marijuana pattern extends in a broad band from Nederland west through an archipelago of communities that were equally tintured by tie-dye a generation ago and are now cornerstones of the state's resort and tourism industry.

Summit and Pitkin Counties, home to ski towns like Breckenridge, Keystone and Aspen, pride themselves on a healthy outdoor youth culture, but they also have a disproportionate amount of debilitating pain diagnosed in men in their 20s, state records show.

"Who would think there would be such severe pain among young men in Colorado?" said Ron Hyman, the state registrar of vital statistics and director of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's medical marijuana program.

Nederland residents like Hal Mobley, 56, who was on his way to get a haircut on a recent morning, asked pretty much the same thing. Marijuana is part of the life here, he said — no more available, no less, and no different in its use, he thinks, than it has been for decades.

"It's for pain?" he said, squinting into the bright sun.

Well, it is also good medicine for the Nederland town budget. Tax revenues are way up, in ways that would make many a more buttoned-down town treasurer envious — partly from more tourists spending money in the restaurants and shops, but even more so from marijuana sales.

In June alone, while many communities around the nation were still sputtering through economic doldrums, sales taxes collected in Nederland came in a robust 54 percent above those of June 2009. Without the tax collected on marijuana, the increase would have been 22 percent.

"It's been here, probably in an illegal capacity, for a long time, but now there's an opportunity for industry," said Nederland's mayor, Sumaya Abu-Haidar. "There's an opportunity for free enterprise, an opportunity for people to make a living in a way that wasn't available before."

Philip Dyer, 45, a local musician, put it another way. The government, he said, "has finally gotten smart enough to regulate it and get their piece."

Supporters of medical marijuana say the pattern — medical use most predominant in places of historically high recreational use — is simply a reflection of better knowledge about the drug and its properties. People in communities where marijuana has been accepted, they say, know more about its medical benefits than those in other parts of the state where medical marijuana patients are rare.

Still, residents here say that despite a kind of marijuana status quo on paper, things are changing.

A demographic shift in recent years, with more families, professionals, tech workers and telecommuters moving here, has created tensions, town officials say, over questions of growth, development, tourism — and marijuana, with many of the newcomers less enthusiastic than the old guard about Nederland's ganja-ing reputation.

Earlier this year, Nederland became the third community in Colorado to decriminalize recreational marijuana use. But the vote, mostly symbolic because recreational use is still illegal under state and federal law, deeply divided the community. Legalization passed, but by only 41 of the 477 votes cast. A proposal to hold a cannabis festival in town hit a bigger wall of opposition and was voted down.

"When people think of Nederland as this stoner town, if you will, that is not accurate," Mayor Abu-Haidar said.

But the town still has a reputation for having good marijuana, a point of pride that the legal compliance lawyer for Grateful Meds, Susan Eisman, was happy to talk about during a tour of the shop. Whereas many dispensaries have perhaps five strains of marijuana to choose from, Grateful Meds has 30, and serves about 300 patients.

"We have patients coming from all over Colorado," Ms. Eisman said. "And a lot of it is the quality and quantity and the selection and the reputation.

"A patient just the other day came all the way from Longmont, an hour away, because he liked a particular strain and he can't get it anywhere else."

http://www.thecyprsstimes.com/article/News/National_News/AGENTS_SEIZE_MORE_THAN_28_MILLION_WORTH_OF_MARIJUANA/35933

Agents seize more than \$2.8 million worth of Marijuana

08 November 2010

EDINBURG, TX - U.S. Border Patrol agents in the Rio Grande Valley Sector confiscated more than 1,200 pounds of marijuana November 2 and teamed up later that evening with the La Joya Police Department to keep an additional 2,200 pounds of marijuana off the streets.

Agents assigned to the Weslaco Station were working south of Pharr, Texas, when they discovered fresh footprints leading to a brushy area. During an extensive search of the area agents discovered 28 burlap sacks filled with more than 1,200 pounds of marijuana.

The marijuana was valued over \$1 million and was turned over to the Drug Enforcement Administration for further investigation.

Later that evening the La Joya Police Department requested assistance from the Border Patrol in the execution of a search warrant.

During the search more than 2,200 pounds of marijuana, valued at over \$1.8 million, was recovered on the premises concealed in a cargo van parked inside the garage.

The vehicle and the narcotics were transported to the La Joya Police Department.

"By working together with local law enforcement agencies on operations such as this we significantly multiply the available resources needed to keep drugs out of our communities," Acting Chief Patrol Agent Armando Mercado Jr. said. "Additionally, it bolsters our efforts to secure our nation's borders."

http://helenair.com/news/opinion/article_65e02736-eaef-11df-9c92-001cc4c002e0.html

Training servers, sellers can make all the difference

08 November 2010

R.E.A.L.I.T.Y. (Raise Expectations and Acknowledge the Legacy Impacting Today's Youth) check.

This spring I was selected to represent Whitehall High School at Montana Girl's State. When I attended in June, I presented a bill entitled "Mandatory Responsible Alcohol Sales and Service Training (RASS)." My bill essentially required anyone who sells or serves alcohol to attend an alcohol server class.

The class is a few hours long and focuses on things like how to spot a fake ID, the law that prohibits sales to anyone "who is apparently, obviously or actually intoxicated," and the personal civil liability a server or seller carries if an underage or over served individual gets behind the wheel. These topics teach those who attend how to do their job responsibly while keeping themselves, their customers, and the community safe.

This is a hot button topic in communities around Montana. For the first time in Montana's history, a bartender and manager were charged criminally after they over served the man who hit Trooper Michael Haynes head on. Trooper Haynes died as a result of his injuries. This criminal charge embodies a shift being seen across Montana as lawmakers grapple to get a handle on the state's overwhelming DUI problem. Alcohol sellers and servers are being held accountable for those they serve who get behind the wheel after they over indulge.

A similar bill came out of the Senate Joint Resolution 39 Interim Committee and will be debated and decided before our legislators in 2011. At the September SJR 39 meeting members of REALITY check, including myself, gave public comment on the proposed bills. I specifically spoke on the Mandatory RASS bill because of my previous knowledge and experience at Girl's State where my proposed bill was debated and passed unanimously. I firmly believe that the passage of this bill is a simple action that can help reduce our state's staggering DUI and underage drinking problem.

Many people are required to be trained and licensed to do their jobs. When we get our hair cut, our stylist has his or her license from the state of Montana hanging on their wall. This piece of paper ensures they have been adequately trained to do their job safely. Why not require individuals who sell alcohol to attend three hours of training every two years? Taking time to attend three hours of training is well worth the benefit of lives it can save. If lawmakers want to make a serious dent in our DUI problems, this is one evidence-based solution that must be implemented.

Lizzie Larsen is a senior at Whitehall High School.

http://www.usatoday.com/yourlife/health/medical/pediatrics/2010-11-08-kidstress08_st_N.htm

Kids of deployed soldiers have more developmental problems

08 November 2010

A new study suggests nine years of war is taking a toll on U.S. children.

Children of active-duty military personnel make 18% more trips to the doctor for behavioral problems and 19% more visits for stress disorders when a military parent is deployed compared with when the parent is home, according to a study of children ages 3 to 8 in today's *Pediatrics*.

Those increases are even more striking given that the overall number of doctors' visits declined 11% during deployment, perhaps because the lone parent at home was so busy, says study author Gregory Gorman, who analyzed the medical records of nearly 643,000 children and 443,000 parents from 2006 to

2007.

Gorman, a pediatrician with the [Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences](#) in Bethesda, Md., says military doctors are usually aware of the burden on such children, but he hopes more civilian doctors, who care for thousands of kids in military families, will find out if a parent is deployed and ask how families are coping.

Research shows that kids of enlisted Army soldiers are more likely to suffer maltreatment when a parent is in combat and that Army wives are more likely to be diagnosed with depression, anxiety, sleep disorders or other mental health conditions when their husbands are deployed.

The new study may actually underestimate the psychological stress on military families because it included all branches of the service, instead of concentrating on the Army and Marines, who have done most of the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, says Deborah Gibbs of RTI International in Research Triangle Park, N.C., author of the maltreatment study. The new study also excludes the Reserves and National Guard, some of whose members have completed multiple tours of duty.

"Most military families cope astonishingly well," Gibbs says. But "the National Guard and Reserve families have all the same stresses but none of the support that active-duty families have."

<http://www.pressconnects.com/article/20101107/NEWS01/11070377/Mental+Health+association+sets+out+to+help+needy+veterans>

Mental health association sets out to help needy veterans

07 November 2010

BINGHAMTON -- Veterans in need will have the chance to connect with services, food and even a free haircut this month during a one-day Stand Down.

The event, part of the Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier's Renewed Hope project, focuses on homeless veterans, but is open to all veterans and their families.

"The agency recognized a need for services for certain populations that may be underserved," said MHA's Kim Taro, project manager for Renewed Hope. "Homeless veterans are one of those populations."

Just how many homeless veterans live in the Southern Tier is unknown, although MHA hopes to attract about 100 people. The event will be held from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Nov. 18 at AVRE, located at 174 Court St. in Binghamton. No registration is required.

The event, which will draw participating agencies from as far as Syracuse, will connect veterans to community services, including housing, employment, education and support. Veterans will be able to get mental health screenings, housing assistance, counseling and access the Department of Social Services and employment programs, as well as a mobile [food pantry](#) from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Free haircuts for veterans will also be provided from 3 to 6 p.m.

The event, which MHA hopes to hold annually, is funded through a grant from the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#).

Stand-downs are modeled after a Vietnam War-era initiative that provided a [safe](#) retreat for soldiers returning from combat. It's the first such event for Broome County, although similar stand-downs are held nationwide, from Alaska to Florida. The first was held in San Francisco in 1988 to respond to the plight of homeless Vietnam War veterans.

For information, contact Taro or Jay Jenkins at MHA at (607) 771-8888.

INTERNATIONAL

<http://itn.co.uk/0243939125bc606a2f25c607b256b9a7.html>

Navy releases video after drug baron killed

08 November 2010

Authorities in Mexico report the death of a drug baron as the bodies of men found in a mass grave last week are buried.

Admiral Jose Luis Vergara, spokesman for the Mexican Navy, said marines have shot dead gang leader Ezequiel "Tony Tormenta" Cardenas in the northern city of Matamoros.

Around 150 marines backed by helicopters and soldiers fought running battles with Gulf cartel hitmen for hours in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, across from Brownsville, Texas, terrifying residents and shutting border bridges.

Cardenas is the fourth top drug baron to be killed or captured in Mexico since December last year in a string of coups for President Felipe Calderon's army-led drug war. But beheadings, shootouts and the deaths of innocent bystanders have overshadowed those successes as the war rages.

Meanwhile, the bodies of 18 men found in a mass grave near Acapulco have been brought back to their home city of Morelia where a mass was held at the city's cathedral over their coffins.

The decomposing bodies of the men that were discovered on Wednesday (November 3rd) are those of 18 of the 20 travelers kidnapped in the pacific resort city of Acapulco in September. The bodies of two of the men have still not been found.

Authorities received a tip which led to the discovery of the mass grave on the outskirts of Acapulco.

Peggy Lawson

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From: [Skip Forsyth](#)
To: [Goudy, Senta](#); Amity_Chandler@ccps.k12.fl.us
Subject: Fw: [nnp] Pabst's Horse of a Different Color: Colt 45 Enters Controversial Ring
Date: Monday, March 21, 2011 3:28:39 PM
Attachments: [pic27938.gif](#)
[pic06900.jpg](#)
[pic03788.jpg](#)
[pic18127.jpg](#)

FYI

----- Forwarded by Skip Forsyth/D20/DCF on 03/21/2011 03:28 PM -----

"Marcelle,
George"
<gMarcelle@icfi.c To
om> "NPN List-Serve
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nnp-request@lists <nnp@lists.unr.edu>
.unr.edu cc

Subject
03/21/2011 02:24 [nnp] Pabst's Horse of a Different
PM Color: Colt 45 Enters Controversial
Ring

(thanks to Bob Denniston for this)

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704360404576206621165029478.html?KEYWORDS=Pabst>

(Embedded image moved to file: pic27938.gif)The Wall Street Journal
Pabst's Horse of a Different Color: Colt 45 Enters Controversial Ring
By DAVID KESMODEL

This isn't your father's Colt 45.

The new owners of that malt-liquor brand, with the help of rapper Snoop Dogg, plan to unveil next month a label called Blast by Colt 45. The beverage will contain fruit flavors and 12% alcohol by volume, about twice the level of the original version of Colt 45.

The move places the brand into a rapidly growing category that has drawn criticism from lawmakers and anti-alcohol groups: high-alcohol,

fruit-infused malt beverages. That makes Blast a risky debut for the Metropoulos family, which acquired Colt 45 through its purchase last year of Pabst Brewing Co., the fifth-largest U.S. beer supplier by sales.

A seven-ounce bottle of Blast has the alcohol of about 1 ½ light beers.

(Embedded image moved to file: pic06900.jpg)Blast

Brothers Evan and Daren Metropoulos, who control the company with their father, private-equity investor C. Dean Metropoulos, say Blast is the first of what will be a number of efforts to refresh Pabst's time-worn brands. The elder Mr. Metropoulos made his fortune running companies that sold such pantry basics as Bumble Bee tuna and Vlasic pickles. Terms of the Pabst deal weren't disclosed, but people familiar with the matter said the price was around \$250 million.

The company's flagship brew, Pabst Blue Ribbon, has enjoyed strong growth since 2002 thanks to a newfound hipster appeal. But Colt 45, advertised by actor Billy Dee Williams in the 1980s, has been in decline for over a decade.

The Metropoulos brothers said they signed a long-term marketing agreement with Snoop Dogg (whose real name is Calvin Broadus), under which the rapper will promote the brand during live music, television and other appearances. Snoop already is touting Blast on Twitter. The company declined to discuss the terms of the deal with the artist but said it will spend millions of dollars on the launch of Blast, including ads in Vibe, a music magazine.

Colt 45 has long targeted an urban, African-American audience, but Blast is aimed at a broader array of drinkers, including women, said Daren Metropoulos, 27 years old.

Blast—which will make its debut in stores April 5, or "4-5," for Colt 45—will be sold in six packs of seven-ounce bottles, as well as in single, 23.5-ounce cans. Flavors include strawberry lemonade and raspberry watermelon, with colors to match. The six-pack of seven-ounce drinks will cost about \$7.

Blast will compete with Phusion Projects LLC's Four Loko, United Brands Co.'s Joose and Anheuser-Busch InBev NV's Tilt. Those brands, which also contain up to 12% alcohol, came under fire from regulators in recent years because they contained caffeine, fueling safety concerns that the stimulants could mask a drinker's awareness of the alcohol consumption. (Embedded image moved to file: pic03788.jpg)[BLAST]

The companies have since removed the caffeine under pressure from U.S. and state regulators, but alcohol foes continue to raise objections to the

amount of alcohol in the beverages.

The level of alcohol in the 23.5-ounce single can of Blast is about the same as the amount in four regular 12-ounce beers. Such potent malt beverages have been on the market for only a few years. Colt 45 contains 5.61% alcohol.

Industry watchdogs say the fruit flavorings and colorful packaging make the products attractive to underage drinkers.

"This is a lot of booze in one can, far too much for a product that is potentially sexy and enticing for youth," said Bruce Lee Livingston, executive director of the Marin Institute, a California-based industry watchdog group.

Paul Scott, an African-American community activist in Durham, N.C., and longtime critic of malt liquor, said the marketing of Blast is "irresponsible" and will have a negative influence on "the young hip-hop generation."

Sales of "progressive adult beverages"—an industry category that includes Mike's Hard Lemonade, Tilt and Four Loko—rose 19% to \$959 million in food, drug and convenience stores in the 52 weeks through Feb. 20, according to market researcher SymphonyIRI.

Vermont state Rep. Tom Stevens is co-sponsor of a bill that would ban flavored malt beverages in containers exceeding 12 ounces. "The packaging continues to blur the distinction between alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks," Mr. Stevens said.

The Metropoulos brothers said Blast isn't intended for underage drinkers and that point-of-sale marketing and other efforts will encourage drinkers to put Blast on ice and mix it with ginger ale, juices and other beverages, diluting it. They also said the seven-ounce size gives drinkers a lighter option.

"We are going to pound home the message of drinking responsibly as a main focus," Daren Metropoulos said,

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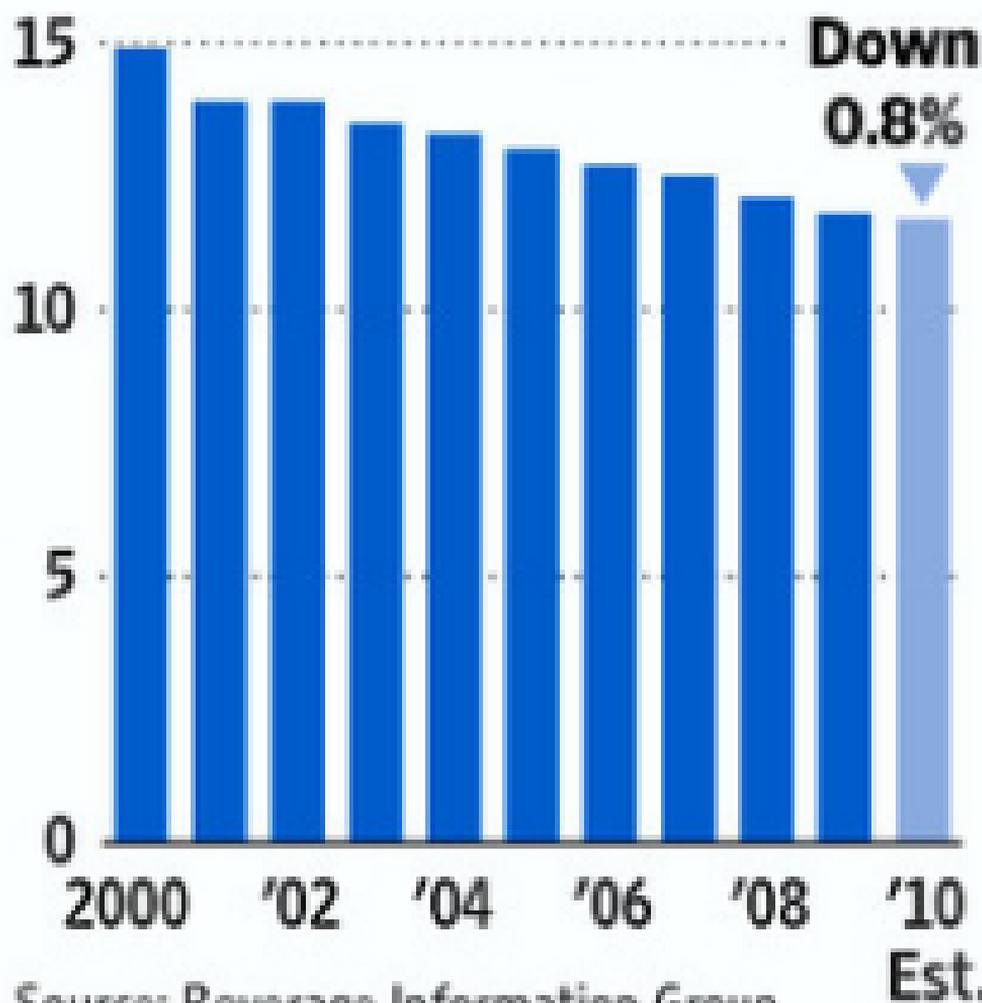
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Subject: Fwd: Four Loko alcohol energy drinks
Date: Wednesday, October 20, 2010 7:41:55 AM

Here is another article on Four Loko, the product we discussed at our last meeting. This is one proposal to ban alcohol energy drinks in Florida that may come up in the next legislative session.
Chris

<http://www2.tbo.com/content/2010/oct/19/nj-college-places-ban-on-boozy-energy-drinks/news-money/>

N.J. college places ban on boozy energy drinks

TRENTON, N.J. It's cheap, it comes in tall cans and it contains caffeine, other common energy-drink ingredients and as much alcohol as four beers. After students at northern New Jersey's Ramapo College were hospitalized last month after drinking Four Loko, the college president ordered that it and similar drinks be banned — and he's encouraging other colleges and the state to follow suit.

"There's no redeeming social purpose to be served by having the beverage," President Peter Mercer told The Associated Press on Monday.

Robert Black, a customer chatting with the clerk at a liquor store near the beach in Atlantic City, explained how a 23.5-ounce can of Four Loko can come in handy. "If you only got \$2 and you need to get drunk, this is what you get," he said.

This is not a rum and Coke.

"These products have higher levels of alcohol content in them, higher levels of caffeine in them," said Steven Schmidt, a spokesman for the National Alcohol Beverage Control Association. "There's a lot of concern about whether combining these two is a good idea."

Mercer, whose college is a state-run liberal arts school in the New York City suburb of Mahwah, has quickly emerged as a major opponent of the products. He said he'll do what he can to push New Jersey lawmakers to pass a bill introduced by Republican Assemblywoman Mary Pat Angelini that would ban the drinks — a step that other states have not taken, though a handful have taken action to limit access.

The drinks have taken off in popularity this fall on college campuses, Schmidt said. And more states have been considering how to handle them.

This month, regulators in Michigan launched a review of the drinks' labels. Those that don't clearly show the percentage of alcohol, a depressant, and stimulants could be taken off shelves in the state. Other states, including Montana and Utah, have taken measures to restrict access to the drinks.

The federal Food and Drug Administration is looking into whether the drinks are safe, and U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., is pushing the Federal Trade Commission to investigate their marketing.

Ramapo's Mercer announced the campus ban, which took effect Oct. 1, after 23 intoxicated students were hospitalized over the span of a few weeks — some after drinking Four Loko. Mercer said that's more hospitalizations than the college usually sees at the start of the school year.

He believes students consume more of the drink than they do of other forms of alcohol because it's designed to go down easily. What's more, he said, high school students also were getting their hands on it.

Such drinks started appearing about five years ago. But the concept has a longer history: Soon after high-caffeine energy drinks like Red Bull started appearing in the U.S. in the late 1990s, people started mixing them with vodka and other alcoholic beverages.

But the new concoctions come in fruity flavors. Joose, made by United Brands Co., of La Mesa, Calif., comes in watermelon, among other flavors; and Four Loko, made by Phusion Projects Inc., of Chicago, is available in several varieties, including fruit punch and blue raspberry.

Neither company returned calls about the Ramapo ban, and websites for both companies say they don't intend to sell the colorful cans to anyone under 21.

Two years ago, the biggest companies to produce the drinks — Anheuser-Busch InBev NV and MillerCoors LLC — stopped selling them under pressure from several states and federal regulators

From: [Cece, Jeffrey](#)
To: [Goudy, Senta](#); "chrisfranzetti@aol.com"; "[Ellen Snelling](#)"
Subject: Gainesville Sun: Alcohol-Energy Drink Craze Fueling Concern
Date: Wednesday, August 18, 2010 3:15:57 PM

[Alcohol-energy drink craze fueling concern](#)

By Kimberly C. Moore
Staff writer

Published: Wednesday, August 18, 2010 at 6:01 a.m.
Last Modified: Tuesday, August 17, 2010 at 10:22 p.m.

(page all of 4)

Dr. Dave Roberts, an emergency room physician at North Florida Regional Medical Center, has seen firsthand the effects excessive drinking can have on students - everything from vomiting to unconsciousness.

"They get so drunk, they can't function safely by themselves and need a place to recover," Roberts said.

The latest drinking craze on college campuses - and even at high school parties - is what many experts call a dangerous mix of caffeinated energy drinks and alcohol. Roberts said the drinks create a "triad of problems," by combining students, whose decision-making skills are underdeveloped, with alcohol, which impairs good decision-making, and caffeine, which simply makes them alert, but not quick to react.

"It's something that we're aware of, particularly in a college town," Roberts said. "It destroys your coordination and judgment."

Which leads some people to actually get behind the wheel of a car.

A University of Florida toxicologist reiterated a call to ban alcohol-energy drinks, saying they are unsafe.

"I don't - and my colleagues don't - believe there's any place for an alcohol-energy drink, especially because they're marketed toward younger people," said Dr. Bruce Goldberger, professor and director of toxicology at the University of Florida's College of Medicine.

Goldberger, along with four other medical professors from around the country, has sent a letter to state attorneys general to say the "consumption of caffeinated alcoholic beverages has been associated with increased risk of serious injury to oneself and to others as the result of driving while intoxicated, sexual assault and other dangerous behavior," including alcohol poisoning.

University of Florida officials say they don't talk to students specifically about these drinks, but do have a discussion with incoming students about alcohol abuse.

"The use of combining energy drinks with alcohol has been going up in the last couple of years and has taken on a life of its own in a very negative way," said Maureen Miller, coordinator for the University of Florida's Alcohol & Other Drug Prevention at GatorWell. "This is an issue that is really gaining attention nationally."

And alcohol-energy drinks are coming under fire again after police say the malt-energy beverage Four Loko might have played a part in a St. Petersburg car accident two weeks ago in which a father and his three sons were killed, allegedly by an underage drunk driver.

St. Petersburg police say on July 31, 20-year-old Demetrius Jordan told them he had been drinking Four Loco and smoking marijuana before he ran a red light and slammed into another car, killing all four of the occupants: Elroy McConnel of Orlando and his adult sons Kelly, Nathan and Elroy McConnel III.

A study conducted by Goldberg and his associates shows that the combined use of caffeine and alcohol is increasing, with the reported prevalence among U.S. college students as high as 28 percent. University of Florida police say they have not had a problem with it, but Gainesville Police Cpl. Tscharna Senn said she has seen its effects on people when she worked the downtown detail for two years.

"It has so much more alcohol than a regular drink," Senn said. "You couple that with the caffeine and I think that's the draw."

That is also the danger, Goldberger said. One 23.5-ounce can has three times the percentage of alcohol as a beer and three to four times the caffeine of a Coke.

"Being wide awake and drunk at the same time increases the risk of engaging in several forms of violent or other high-risk physical behavior that can cause injury," Goldberger's letter states. "College students who consumed alcohol mixed with energy drinks had a significantly higher prevalence of ... being taken advantage of sexually, taking advantage of someone else sexually, riding with a drunken driver and being physically injured, compared to students who drank alcohol alone."

Goldberger said young people who don't normally drink are in particular danger.

"If a young girl, say 100 pounds, drinks one, she'll have the blood alcohol level in the range to make her sick," he said.

GPD's Senn said underage drinkers who buy products like Four Loko know they are buying an alcoholic beverage and are arrested the same as an underage drinker buying a beer.

In fact, Four Loko products clearly state at the top of the can that it is an alcoholic beverage.

But they market to a younger audience with what they acknowledge are "pop-off the shelves graphics." They say their wild Brazilian berry UVA drink "is truly a mind-blowing experience." Other flavors include Loko O.B. - orange with peach - blue raspberry, lemonade, cranberry lemonade, watermelon and fruit punch.

Chris Hunter, a founder and managing partner of Phusion Projects, which manufactures Four Loco, e-mailed a prepared statement to The Sun.

"People have safely enjoyed mixing alcohol and caffeine products for years in their homes,

and in restaurants and bars," Hunter wrote. "Having coffee after a meal with wine, or consuming rum and cola, an Irish coffee or a Red Bull and vodka are all popular practices. However, only the pre-mixed, malt-based caffeinated alcoholic beverages, such as our products, appear to be targeted by some as unsafe."

Hunter said Phusion Products is saddened by the deaths in St. Petersburg and that stores that sell Phusion products to minors should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

"We have a vested interest - both personal and professional - in assuring the continued responsible consumption of our products," he said.

The Florida Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco Products conducted sting operations in stores in 2008 and 2009. Their "Operation Cocktail for Disaster" sting in 2008 found that one in four stores statewide sold alcohol-caffeinated drinks to minors.

"Our focus is to ensure our retailers are complying with underage drinking laws and not selling to someone who isn't of the correct age," said Alexis Lambert, a spokesperson for the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, which oversees the Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco Products.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has been studying the issue since last year, notifying 27 manufacturers in November that their drinks would be under scrutiny. FDA spokesman Michael Herndon said no decision has been made, with 19 companies responding for their call for information.

"The FDA's decision regarding the regulatory status of caffeine added to various alcoholic beverages will be a high priority for the agency," Herndon said.

Dr. Preeti Jois, who works in the emergency room at Shands at the University of Florida, said she has not seen any patients come in suffering from the ill-effects of the drink, but she worries that might not be the case in coming weeks as students return to school and sororities and fraternities hold their annual rushes.

"I'm hoping it won't happen for the sake of our students," she said.

Jeffrey Cece

Program Analyst

Florida Office of Drug Control

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NOTICE: Florida has a broad public records law. Most written communications to or from state officials are public records that will be disclosed to the public and the media upon request. E-mail communications may be subject to public disclosure.

From: [Shipley, Claude](#)
To: [Grant, Bruce](#); [Benard, Andy](#); [Cece, Jeffrey](#); [Goudy, Senta](#); [Kolich, Hayley](#)
Subject: More on the subject FW--Advocacy Spurs Ban on Alcoholic Energy Drinks
Date: Monday, November 15, 2010 2:10:03 PM

There are a number of articles on this subject plus one on Phusion—manufacturer of Four Loko now wanting to work Prevention programs for college students (end of webpage)

From: Join Together [mailto:updates@jointogether.org]
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2010 2:01 PM
To: Shipley, Claude
Subject: JT Direct Weekly News: Advocacy Spurs Ban on Alcoholic Energy Drinks

www.jointogether.org

 Weekly Edition

November 15, 2010

ORIGINAL FEATURE STORY



[Advocacy Group's Persistence Spurs Mich. Ban on Alcoholic Energy Drinks](#)

The Michigan Liquor Control Commission's decision to ban sales of alcoholic energy drinks is being credited to a convergence of factors, including persistent pleas from advocates and a troubling local crime.

HEADLINES



[Graphic Warnings Coming Soon to U.S. Cigarettes](#)

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) unveiled strong new health warnings for cigarettes that show skin lesions, diseased lungs, and dead bodies.

[Okla. Ousts Alcoholic Energy Drinks](#)

[Mass. Hospital Association to Stop Hiring Tobacco Users](#)

[Wash. State Bans Alcoholic Energy Drinks](#)

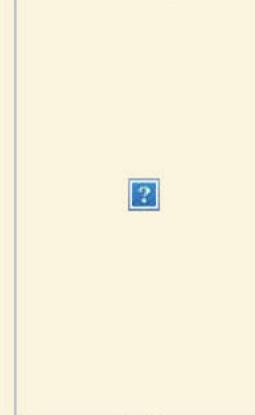
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RESEARCH NEWS

[Alzheimer's Risk Surges with Heavy Midlife Smoking](#)

Heavy smoking in midlife increases an individual's risk of

ACTION Campaign II



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RESOURCES

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developing Alzheimer's disease by more than 157 percent, according to a new study sponsored by Kaiser Permanente.

[Smokeless Tobacco Use On the Rise](#)

[More research](#)

FROM THE BLOG



[No Phoolin': Four Loko's Phusion Projects Wants 'Responsible Drinking'](#)

Phusion Projects, LLC, which makes the alcoholic energy drink Four Loko -- known to college students as "blackout in a can" -- has suddenly gotten serious about alcohol abuse and underage drinking on college campuses.

[Ob-Gyns Urged to Screen Pregnant Women for Smoking](#)

[Slippery Slope: Assessing Costs of Risky Behavior](#)

[First State to Ban Alcoholic Energy Drinks? Utah](#)

[More from the blog](#)

Cessation Tools



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From: [Lawson, Peggy](#)
To: [_Drug_Control](#)
Subject: News Articles, Friday, November 12, 2010
Date: Friday, November 12, 2010 10:04:50 AM

FLORIDA

http://blogs.browardpalmbeach.com/juice/2010/11/bruce_d_grant_drug_control_pill_mills.phpB

Bruce D. Grant, Florida Office of Drug Control explains delays in establishing prescription drug database

11 November 2010

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/11/1920618/prescription-drug-bill-divides.html>

Prescription drug bill divides GOP donors

11 November 2010

NATIONAL

<http://sify.com/news/prosecutor-heroin-mill-found-near-times-square-news-others-klmiEkghfg.html>

Heroin mill found near Times Square

12 November 2010

<http://www.kansas.com/2010/11/12/1585121/ngerous-punch.html>

Kansas scrutinizes alcoholic energy drink

12 November 2010

<http://www.keloland.com/News/NewsDetail6371.cfm?Id=107006>

Underage drinking is legal with parent present

12 November 2010

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ip7r1SIPog5ds_RyeomhhRTvdZxA?docId=CNG.56d1f55752a2aab0626aee89d327544b.9a1

Suicide rate soar among US Veterans

12 November 2010

<http://swampland.blogs.time.com/2010/11/12/as-we-were-saying/>

As we were saying; Veterans mental health

12 November 2010

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101111/ap_on_bi_ge/us_four_loko_ban;_ylt=AlrZ3akt0cLq6ClkxfXahYxzfNdF

Washington State bans energy drinks

11 November 2010

INTERNATIONAL

<http://www.asylum.co.uk/2010/11/12/cat-caught-smuggling-drugs-into-russian-prison/>

Cat caught smuggling drugs into Russian prison

12 November 2010

<http://www.irishcentral.com/story/roots/emeraldextracts/seven-out-of-every-1000-in-ireland-use-heroin-107430868.html>

Seven out of every 1,000 in Ireland use Heroin

12 November 2010

<http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory?id=12126283>

Mexico Violence costs \$350K daily in Natgas losses

12 November 2010

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/mexico-drug-cartel-offers-to-disband-20101111-17pd9.html>

Mexico drug cartel offers to disband

11 November 2010

<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/11/12/mexico.senate.president/>

Mexican lawmakers: jobs, education key to fighting Drug War

12 November 2010

FLORIDA

http://blogs.browardpalmbeach.com/juice/2010/11/bruce_d_grant_drug_control_pill_mills.phpBr

Bruce D. Grant, Florida Office of Drug Control explains delays in establishing prescription drug database

11 November 2010

You've got to admire the spunk and sanity of Bruce D. Grant, director of the Florida Office of Drug Control, appointed by Charlie Crist. He didn't much like the insinuation, in our story [published here yesterday](#), that the Florida government has been lazy about funding legislation that will help curb the practices of the narco-peddling pill-mills that have sprung up like ugly mushrooms across Fort Lauderdale in the last decade, and which are responsible for feeding the drug habits of addicts in West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, and elsewhere. What did he do? Did he stalk off, offended, and refuse to ever again speak to the lamestream media? No! He called us about it, and we had a nice chat.

First of all, he wants us to know that there is more to Florida's prescription problem than the pill mills. Most abused prescription drugs come friends and family. The day-trippers who come to Florida from parts north to return home with hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of pain killers, mostly Oxycontin, represent only the most dramatic manifestation of a problem that kills seven Floridians daily. (And countless more nationally.) "That's only the most egregious, blatant, and ugly example of all the drug diversion going on in Florida," says Grant. He asks: "Are you familiar with *The Tipping Point*, by Malcolm Gladwell?" We are. "Well then -- you know what the tipping point was for the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program? It was Oakland Park. It was the national exposure that embarrassed Florida. You got this national news, people coming from all up the Eastern Seaboard and Appalachia, coming down here for the prescriptions. And we had to get off our seats and pass a law."

And of that embarrassment was born a solution. A partial one, to be sure, and not a solution free of the lugubriousness that plagues any bureaucratic action. But a solution all the same. It's called Florida Statute 893.055 (or "SB 462"), a piece of legislation drafted by Floridian Senator Mike Fasano, Republican of District 11. The legislation mandates the creation of a database, overseen by the Department of Health, that will allow pharmacies and doctors to check on the prescription-filling activities of individual patients -- to see if a patient is doctor-shopping, for example, by visiting three doctors, obtaining three prescriptions, and

filling them at three different pharmacies. Moreover, it will provide an easy way for pharmacists to note if a single doctor is prescribing "medically improbable" quantities of narcotic painkillers. The database, when completed, will make life much more difficult for the white-coated pushers of Oakland Park's pill alleys, and put a "significant dent in prescription drug diversion and abuse," according to Grant.

Problem is, as reported in our story, the legislation cannot be implemented with state funds.

"But it is funded," says Grant. "When the law was passed in 2009, it said in there that it couldn't be funded by the state. It left us with the challenge of raising funds in two different ways." One of these was through a specially-created nonprofit that could raise funds for the creation of the database; this has yielded \$500,000. The other fundraising mechanism was federal grants, which have yielded \$800,000. As it stands, the program is sufficiently well-funded to bring the database online and keep it running through the end of June, 2011. "And another \$250,000 will keep it up through June, 2012," says Grant.

According to the letter of the law, the database should be up and humming by the first of December. It won't be, because Florida's government is a bureaucracy, and bureaucracies are slow, and that's just how it is.

The particular problem in this instance is the drafted contractors. Shortly after Statute 893.055 was passed in early 2009, the Department of Health opened bidding on the contract to create the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. When bidding closed this summer, the losing bidder contested the winner, and the DoH opened bidding again. The same loser, Optimum Technology, lodged another complaint -- this one about the terms of the bidding themselves. Which means construction of the database has yet to get underway. Though Grant cannot know for certain when it will be completed, he guesses it will be sometime in March.

Nevertheless, he's proud of the state's progress, and, we suspect, more pissed off about the delay than he's willing to tell a reporter. As he reminds us, the prescription drug crisis in Florida is "comparable to the crack epidemic." Until the database is complete and operational, that's another seven deaths per day, 49 per week, 200 per month...

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/11/1920618/prescription-drug-bill-divides.html>

Prescription drug bill divides GOP donors

11 November 2010

TALLAHASSEE - A veto override planned by Florida's Republican legislative leaders is driving a wedge between major GOP donors, with business groups and health care giants Wednesday renewing their fight over a prescription drug bill.

Barney Bishop, president of Associated Industries of Florida, said he was pleased - but also stunned -- when the legislation (HB 5603) was added to a list of measures vetoed by outgoing Gov. Charlie Crist that lawmakers want to revive in next week's special session.

Bishop, who had hailed the bill's passage last spring as a "huge victory for the business community," said he followed a simple rule in figuring the vetoed drug bill would remain dead:

Money talks.

"We're very appreciative that it looks like it's coming back," said Bishop, whose organization includes most of the state's largest corporations and major political donors. "It's the right thing to do. But we figured that with the kind of money these doctors had given, it was over and done with."

Among those supporting Crist's veto in June was Automated Healthcare Solutions, a Miramar company headed by a pair of doctors, Paul Zimmerman and Gerald Glass, who later gave more than \$1 million to political spending committees headed by the incoming Senate President Mike Haridopolos and House Speaker-designate Dean Cannon.

The company provides software that helps doctors dispense and manage patient prescriptions, a profitable sidelight for many doctors. The legislation vetoed by Crist would have imposed new restrictions on doctors' "repackaging" prescriptions, lowering costs to the state and private companies, but also threatening Automated Healthcare's services.

Haridopolos and Cannon used the money funneled from the doctors primarily to help Attorney General Bill McCollum in his losing Republican primary fight with Gov.-elect Rick Scott. But the doctors quickly pivoted

following the campaign - pouring \$735,000 into the Florida Republican Party and another \$145,000 to Scott's spending committee - in an attempt to make nice with the GOP nominee.

Until last week, Automated Healthcare Solutions looked well-positioned with the Capitol's new power trio - Haridopolos, Cannon and Scott. Also supporting the veto were the Republican-allied Florida Medical Association and Florida Orthopedic Society - and the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME), a Democratic power base.

Losing Democratic gubernatorial candidate Alex Sink had sided with AIF and other business groups in backing the legislation, which supporters say will save private companies \$34 million in workers' compensation costs by reducing prescription costs.

Zimmerman, the company's CEO, says in a statement on the company's website that its services are designed to "enhance revenue production by allowing physicians to retain profits."

"I think the doctors thought they had done everything to keep this bill down," said Ron Book, who represents them in other matters before the Legislature. "I still think that if the Legislature doesn't want to take up controversial bills in the special session, this bill won't come up."

Incoming Rules Chairman Gary Aubuchon, R-Cape Coral, hinted Wednesday that the lineup of nine bills and a \$9.7 million budget provision for Shands Hospital in Gainesville represented the most that lawmakers may attempt to override next week. But he acknowledged that the entire list may not be taken up - giving some hope to those who want to keep Crist's veto in place.

"It won't exceed that original list," Aubuchon told lawmakers. "But it may not include all the things on that original list."

The legislation was approved last spring 38-0 in the Senate, and by the House, 120-0. But even Bishop, of AIF, said the toughest provisions of the bill - which limits doctors' ability to distribute repackaged prescription drugs to injured workers - were added late through his organization's lobbying.

FMA and other critics said few lawmakers had a good understanding of the bill's effects.

For his part, Cannon, R-Winter Park, said the legislation was proof that lawmakers were willing to take action - without regard for contributors.

"That bill passed overwhelmingly in both chambers," Cannon said. "We think it was good policy then, so we think it's good policy now. It doesn't really matter to me who supported it, or opposed it."

NATIONAL

<http://sify.com/news/prosecutor-heroin-mill-found-near-times-square-news-others-klmiEkgahfg.html>

Heroin mill found near Times Square

12 November 2010

Authorities say a newly renovated apartment two blocks from Times Square was being used as a major heroin-packaging mill to process millions of dollars' worth of the drug for sale.

Three men and a woman were awaiting arraignment Thursday on drug-possession charges after a raid Wednesday at the building.

The New York City Special Narcotics Prosecutor's office says investigators found 28 pounds of heroin, worth about \$6.5 million, in 250,000 small envelopes, and workers busily packing the drug for sale. Some envelopes had been stamped with underground brand names such as King Kong.

The prosecutor's office says the drug ring rented the \$3,800-a-month, duplex apartment two weeks ago from an apparently unsuspecting landlord.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

<http://www.kansas.com/2010/11/12/1585121/ngerous-punch.html>

Kansas scrutinizes alcoholic energy drink

12 November 2010

Kansas liquor officials are taking a hard look at a strong drink that's been banned in three states.

The drink, called Four Loko, mixes the caffeine of an energy drink and the alcohol content of wine in a 23.5-ounce can that sells for about \$2 at local liquor stores.

One can contains the alcohol equivalent of a nearly full bottle of wine, combined with the caffeine of three cups of coffee.

Michigan and Washington have banned the malt beverage and similar products after reports that the mixture caused blackouts and, in one case, a heart attack, among college-age drinkers. Oklahoma is phasing the drink out from its store shelves, allowing liquor stores to sell their remaining stock but prohibiting further supplies from being brought into the state.

Freda Warfield, a spokeswoman for the Kansas Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, said Kansas officials have had no reports of incidents related to the beverage. But they are closely monitoring the situation in other states and an ongoing investigation by the Food and Drug Administration, she said.

Matt Hess, manager of R and J Discount Liquor in Wichita, said the product has been on the shelf since February.

He said he's considered pulling it, but he's waiting for word from the state to see "if they say it's OK."

Initially, the product sold poorly, but controversy has boosted sales, he said.

"The sad thing is, with all the exposure, we have people who don't even know what it is coming in and buying it," he said.

One Four Loko buyer, a young man with a shaved head and tattooed scalp who identified himself only as "Johnny," said "It's the best. Don't cancel it."

The drink will probably remain on Kansas shelves for a while.

Banning it from state-licensed liquor stores would likely require legislative action, Warfield said. The Legislature won't start meeting until January.

Critics say that Four Loko, which comes in a variety of fruity flavors and in brightly colored cans, is explicitly targeted at teens and young adults who might not be aware of the danger of mixing caffeine, a stimulant, with alcohol, a depressant.

"What you get is someone who's drunk, but wide awake," said Brian Smith, spokesman for the Washington State Liquor Control Board, which banned Four Loko and similar drinks on Wednesday. That, he said, makes them more likely to drive drunk or continue drinking to a dangerous blood-alcohol level.

He said that was what happened to a group of nine students at Central Washington University who had to be hospitalized last month after a party featuring the energy-alcohol beverages.

The students had blood alcohol levels ranging from 0.12 to 0.35. Anything more than .30 is considered potentially lethal.

"It's not college students drinking a bunch of beer and getting stupid," Smith said. "The CWU students were all underage... one of them nearly died."

The liquor board's emergency ban will last 120 days and Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire vowed to enact a permanent ban.

"Quite simply, these drinks are trouble," Gregoire said in a statement.

A representative of Phusion Projects, the company that created and makes Four Loko, said no spokesperson was available Thursday and referred inquiries to statements on the company website.

The company portrays itself as "a small business success story," started by three friends at Ohio State University. Starting with a federal loan from the Small Business Administration, they built a company selling products in at least 45 states.

The theme of their comments to regulators in Washington and elsewhere is that their product is being unfairly targeted because the bans don't apply to other caffeine-containing drinks, such as coffee liqueurs.

"If mixing caffeine and alcohol is the most pressing concern, addressing it would be best accomplished by creating laws that apply to the entire caffeinated alcoholic beverage category — not specific, individual products and not just beers or malt-based products," the company said in an open letter to state and federal regulators. "If product-specific bans remain the preferred course of action, we will protect our rights as a business to the fullest extent of the law."

Smith, of the Washington state board, said there's no validity to the company's comparisons to coffee drinks and liqueurs.

Those drinks are far more expensive, marketed to a more mature segment of the drinking public and seldom consumed to intoxication level, he said.

Under pressure from state attorneys general, beer titans Anheuser-Busch and Miller Brewing removed caffeine from similar products they had brought to market.

<http://www.keloland.com/News/NewsDetail6371.cfm?id=107006>

Underage drinking is legal with parent present

12 November 2010

CANTON, SD - The pressures for KELOLAND kids to drink are enormous, and some parents say it's better to be realistic than sorry. A growing number have chosen to slowly introduce alcohol to their underage children, and it turns out, the law is on their side.

In South Dakota, it's perfectly legal for anyone under 21 to consume alcohol as long as a parent is around. The statute says minors may consume alcohol in the immediate presence of a parent, guardian or spouse, as long as that person is of age.

"Whether it be a glass of wine at a Christmas dinner or Thanksgiving dinner, the state feels that's an appropriate level of supervision," Lincoln County State's Attorney Tom Wollman said.

The law differentiates between kids under 18 and adults 18 to 21.

"Eighteen and below can drink at home in the immediate presence of a parent," Wollman said.

Those 18 and above can drink at a bar or restaurant with a parent, as long as the establishment's owner approves.

Wollman has seen several cases where parents try to use the law as a defense in court, saying their child was with them when they were drinking.

"Unfortunately, we've seen parents coming in after the fact where that really wasn't the case, but they're just trying to get their son or daughter out of trouble," Wollman said.

But Wollman says it's a move that's difficult to defend because once a minor leaves the presence of their parents when they've been drinking, all bets are off.

"A parent may have been in the immediate presence of the child when the child drank alcohol, but then the child

goes to the school dance; that's not a legal defense," Wollman said.

Wollman says the law basically says parents have the final word on whether to let their kids consume alcohol in a controlled environment.

"I think parents would like to think their kids are responsible enough and sometimes they are, but I stress that the statute says, 'In the immediate presence of parents,'" Wollman said.

It may be legal to allow minors to drink under supervision, but is it right? It's a discussion you won't want to miss, in Thursday's Eye on KELOLAND at 10.

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ip7r1SIPog5ds_RyeomhhRTvdZxA?docId=CNG.56d1f55752a2aab0626aee89d327544b.9a1

Suicide rates soar among US Veterans

12 November 2010

WASHINGTON — The economic downturn and the trauma of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have pushed more US veterans to suicide, Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki said Thursday.

As Americans across the United States and around the world celebrated the contributions of men and women in uniform on Veterans Day, Shinseki outlined a sobering picture for the approximately 23 million veterans in the United States.

Only eight million of those veterans are currently registered with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Shinseki said. Many slip through the cracks due to crippling mental health problems, homelessness, alcohol and illegal drug abuse or crime.

Several studies have shown that suicides are on the rise among youths who have left the military.

"It's compounded by the stress, the trauma that goes with the current operations, where we have a much smaller military being asked to do so much and then repeat it tour after tour," Shinseki told National Public Radio (NPR).

"I know the suicide numbers are up."

In January, he indicated that 20 percent of some 30,000 suicides in the United States each year are committed by veterans. That means that an average of 18 veterans commit suicide each year.

Suicides claimed the lives of a record 309 servicemembers last year, up from 267 in 2008, according to Pentagon numbers. The number of suicides between 2005 and 2009 -- 1,100 -- exceeded that of the number of US military members killed in Afghanistan since 2001.

The Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs do not keep statistics on veteran deaths.

Shinseki pointed to a backlog of Veterans Affairs cases or disability claims that has soared to over 700,000 this year, up from 400,000 to 500,000 the year before.

He noted that the number of new cases has increased faster than his agency's capacity. Even though the Department of Veterans Affairs closed out 977,000 cases last year, it got another million new cases.

A large number of the new cases involve younger veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The Department of Veterans Affairs has changed its requirements regarding PTSD claims, so that veterans no longer have to prove they got the disorder because they served in a warzone. There has also long been a stigma in the military associated with psychological problems.

"If it's verified, that connection is now automatic, it's provided," Shinseki explained, noting this had increased the number of cases he has to address.

"We have PTSD treatment going on with veterans that go back to World War II, Korea, Vietnam. So it's a large generational issue."

Asked whether the dour economy had increased veterans' reliance on his agency, Shinseki noted that "the economic downturn has had that impact on families" over the past year and half, while he has struggled to meet a goal to end homelessness among veterans in five years.

"We're doing fine, just not going fast enough," he added.

A July report by the army on suicide prevention found that senior leaders have failed to track reckless behavior and monitor alcohol and drug abuse among soldiers back home as the military focused on fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan over nearly a decade.

Repeated deployments with shortened dwell time have also strained the military, and the army hopes to soon give soldiers two years at home for every year deployed.

<http://swampland.blogs.time.com/2010/11/12/as-we-were-saying/>

As we were saying: Veterans mental health

12 November 2010

Tough story in the Clarksville, Tenn., *Leaf-Chronicle* this morning about a soldier with PTSD who says he went AWOL, instead of returning to Afghanistan, because of the lack of mental-health services at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. "All I wanted was to be treated," Specialist Jeff Hanks, who also served in Iraq in 2008, said outside the fort's gate Thursday as he turned himself in. "Hopefully they'll listen to me and treat me." Hanks said he went absent without leave nearly a month ago after his post-traumatic stress disorder and the collapse of his family convinced him he couldn't get the help he needed in a war zone:

Hanks said he reached out to his commanders while home on leave, but he was met with resistance and delay. He said he was told he would immediately have to go back to Afghanistan.

We [wrote](#) about this sad state of affairs at Fort Campbell in the August 16 issue of *Time*:

The Army has spent \$7 million building at Fort Campbell what it calls its first behavioral-health campus (soldiers call it "the mental-health mall") with a half-dozen new clinics filled with the latest technology for diagnosing and treating posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury. The fort's mental-health staff has grown from 31 in January 2008 to 95 today...But the trend at the base remains clear; the workload per mental-health worker has nearly doubled from 2008 to 2010, jumping from 19 to 32 visits per week.

Additional [reporting](#) for that story revealed:

The focus on Fort Campbell's mental health has been driven, in part, by a 2008 probe that tried to figure out why its 2007 suicide rate was 50 percent higher than the overall Army's. Outside Army experts found that even as Fort Campbell's mental-health visits increased fivefold from 2005 to 2007, the staff shrunk from 28 to 18. That led to longer waits between visits and individual troops being seen in clinics beset by "frequent staff turnover," forcing the soldier to "start over" with a new therapist each visit. The mental-health workload led to poor care and morale, as well as "compassion fatigue," among counselors. The first recommendation to curb suicides: "address critical behavioral-health shortages."

The Army's didn't care for the attention garnered by the young soldier. "It seems a shame to focus attention on this particular young man on Veterans Day," a post spokeswoman said in a statement, "when we have 15,000 men and women from the 101st Airborne Division bravely supporting the fight and placing themselves in harm's way in Afghanistan and Iraq."

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101111/ap_on_bi_ge/us_four_loko_ban;_ylt=AlrZ3akt0cLq6ClkkfXahYxzfNdF

Washington state bans energy drinks

11 November 2010

OLYMPIA, Wash. – Retailers have a week to clear millions of dollars worth of alcoholic energy drinks from their shelves after state regulators banned them Wednesday, citing the hospitalization of nine dangerously drunk college students last month.

The emergency ban, similar to those in Michigan, Utah and Oklahoma, takes effect Nov. 18. Washington's rule

targets beer-based drinks that also feature caffeine, such as the malt-liquor energy drink Four Loko.

Some universities also have banned boozy energy drinks from campus while the federal Food and Drug Administration reviews their safety, and U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., called Wednesday for a ban in his state.

Democratic Gov. Chris Gregoire, who requested Washington's ban, said a strong caffeine-and-alcohol combination could encourage drinking too much by masking alcohol's regular depressant effects. She also said alcohol-based energy drinks — sometimes fruit-flavored, often sold in brightly colored cans — are too appealing to young drinkers.

"It's no different than the kind of appeal that Joe Camel had to our kids when it came to cigarettes," she said Wednesday.

Alcoholic energy drinks drew national attention after an October party in Roslyn, a picturesque mountain town known as the place where part of the 1990s television series "Northern Exposure" was filmed.

Nine Central Washington University students who drank Four Loko were hospitalized with blood-alcohol levels ranging from 0.12 percent to 0.35 percent, and a female student nearly died, university President James L. Gaudino said. A blood-alcohol concentration of 0.30 percent is considered potentially lethal.

Police reported a chaotic scene, with students passed out and so drunk officers originally thought they had overdosed on drugs.

All the hospitalized students were inexperienced drinkers — freshmen ranging in age from 17 to 19. Toxicology results showed no drugs in anyone's bloodstream, other than a small amount of marijuana, university police Chief Steve Rittereiser said.

Some students admitted drinking vodka, rum and beer with Four Loko, which is made by Phusion Projects Inc., of Chicago. A Phusion spokesman did not immediately respond with comment on Washington's ban, but the company has said it takes pains not to market to underage drinkers.

Washington's emergency ban specifically covers products that combine beer, strong beer or malt liquor with caffeine, guarana, taurine or other similar substances found in regular energy drinks.

Washington's beer and wine distributors were troubled by the quick turnaround to remove Four Loko and similar products from store shelves. They had hoped the state Liquor Control Board would give the industry a month to handle the change.

Lobbyists for the Washington Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association said the ban would affect about \$3 million worth of products already in retailers' hands, much of it in convenience stores.

Any drinks that can't be sold before Nov. 18 could be returned to wholesalers. Those distributors aren't obliged to buy the products back, but probably will to maintain good standing with their retail customers, lobbyist Ron Main said.

It will then be up to the wholesalers to find a way to return the product to manufacturers or move it to other states.

"We're not going to be able to move \$3 million in inventory in a week," Main said.

Washington's ban is good for 120 days, but could be made permanent by the state Liquor Control Board or Legislature.

INTERNATIONAL

<http://www.asylum.co.uk/2010/11/12/cat-caught-smuggling-drugs-into-russian-prison/>

Cat caught smuggling drugs into Russian prison

12 November 2010

You've heard of a drugs mule, right? Well, here's something ever-so-slightly different. That's right, a drugs cat. [A cat used to smuggle drugs.](#)

A prisoner in the jail at Mendeleyevsk, Russia, came up with the scam to sneak drugs in – but cops got wind of the scheme, and were prepared to check over the feline felon once it arrived.

With 15 grams of heroin taped to its collar by an outside source, the cat tried to get back to its owner inside the jail – unfortunately, the cat's route of getting in took it past guard dogs, who promptly pounced on the poor puss.

"The patrol was expecting the cat to go one way, but it chose a different path though a 'no-go' area guarded by dogs," a representative from the local penitentiary service's press office told the Moscow News.

But though this is a horrific tale of animal cruelty, it seems the bigger problem is, of course, the drugs charges – on top of the fact that prisoners aren't meant to have pets in prison in the first place.

<http://www.irishcentral.com/story/roots/emeraldextracts/seven-out-of-every-1000-in-ireland-use-heroin-107430868.html>

Seven out of every 1,000 in Ireland use Heroin

12 November 2010

An average seven people in every 1,000 in Ireland are heroin users, a Europe-wide report had revealed.

Ireland's heroin problem is worse than in any other EU country and it also has the longest waiting list for treatment for those addicted to the drug, new research shows.

The 2010 annual report for the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction also revealed that the number of heroin users in Ireland is more than twice as high in comparison to other countries.

Waiting lists for heroin addicts in Dublin at up to two years, are the highest in Europe.

The research found that ecstasy use is low in comparison to the rest of Europe and it ranked Ireland fifth for cocaine consumption.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory?id=12126283>

Mexico violence costs \$350K daily in Natgas losses

12 November 2010

Threats and violence by drug gangs are preventing some government oil workers from reaching installations in northern Mexico and costing state-owned Petroleos Mexicanos about \$350,000 every day in lost production, a company official said Thursday.

The official said Pemex has shut down the equivalent of about 100 million cubic feet of natural gas production per day. He talked to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, because company rules do not allow him to be quoted by name.

That amounts to about \$10.5 million per month, or about 2.3 percent of Mexico's \$450 million per month average in monthly natural gas revenues.

The lost production is centered in the Burgos gas field near the east Texas border in an area where drug gangs have threatened and kidnapped Pemex workers at some the company's installations.

The official said that earlier in the year, when the security problems were most acute, gas production was down twice as much — about 200 million cubic feet per day.

The problem came to a head in May, when five workers at a gas compression plant were abducted by armed men. The father of one of the victims has said the workers were warned to stay away, and the kidnapped men have not been heard from since.

The kidnapers are believed to belong to either the Gulf or Zetas drug cartels, which are waging a bloody turf war in northern Tamaulipas state, chasing many inhabitants from their homes. It's not clear which gang nabbed the workers.

However, army troops are now helping Pemex provide increased security.

"This has allowed us to start partially recovering the production we had stopped for this reason," Pemex exploration and production division chief Carlos Morales told local media.

Dozens of families have fled the drug violence in one Tamaulipas town, Ciudad Mier, and taken refuge at a Lion's Club in the nearby city of Miguel Aleman.

Gunmen have killed so many police and local officials in some areas bordering Texas that few are willing to take the posts anymore, leading a number of women to occupy roles traditionally dominated by men. In two northern hamlets, Villa Luz and El Vergel, women were elected as community security leaders this week after men declined to run out of fear.

Both towns are near the southern edge of Ciudad Juarez, where drug violence has claimed over 4,000 lives in the last two years, giving the city one of the highest murder rates in the world.

Olga Herrera Castillo, the new head of security for Villa Luz, said Wednesday that "sometimes I am afraid, but people encourage me and I lose my fear."

Her job will largely consist of filing reports after crimes occur, because Samalayuca has only 2,500 inhabitants, one patrol vehicle and a handful of police officers — none of them permanently assigned to the hamlet.

Last month, 20-year-old Marisol Valles Garcia was sworn in as police chief of Praxedis G. Guerrero, east of Ciudad Juarez, despite not having finished her criminology degree.

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/mexico-drug-cartel-offers-to-disband-20101111-17pd9.html>

Mexico drug cartel offers to disband

11 November 2010

One of Mexico's most brutal drug cartels, a leader in trafficking synthetic narcotics into the United States, has offered to disband if the government guarantees security for citizens in the western state of Michoacan.

The Michoacan Family, one of Mexico's seven largest drug gangs and known here simply as La Familia, said in a letter sent on Wednesday to local media that it was ready to dissolve itself if security was enforced and citizens of the state are protected.

"If the government accepts this pledge publicly and carries it out, the Michoacan Family will disband," said the letter, which was also posted on flyers around the state capital Morelia, urging the authorities to take control of the state "with force and decision."

Advertisement: Story continues below

In Mexico City, however, the federal attorney general's office said it was unclear if the message was authentic, but still dismissed it, insisting the government "could not make deals with criminals."

The gang is known for its religious zeal, notably justifying the beheadings of 12 policemen in June as being the work of "divine violence," and controls drug manufacturing and distribution in and around Michoacan with an iron fist.

The US Drug Enforcement Administration said last week, upon arresting 45 people in Atlanta, Georgia for links to the cartel, that it supplies "vast quantities of cocaine and methamphetamine" to the United States.

More than 28,000 people have died nationwide in suspected drug violence in Mexico since December 2006, when the government launched an offensive against criminal gangs with the deployment of some 50,000 troops.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/11/12/mexico.senate.president/>

Mexican lawmakers, jobs, education key to fighting Drug War

12 November 2010

(CNN) -- Mexico's government must create jobs and improve education to help fight drug trafficking, the country's senate president said in an interview with CNN en Espanol.

"Together they form a true strategy for fighting crime and violence," said Sen. Manlio Fabio Beltrones Rivera, a

top official in Mexico's opposition Institutional Revolutionary Party.

Currently, Mexico's war on drugs is a "fight of firepower between criminals and the state," he said.

"We have seen 30,000 people die in the past four years," Beltrones said. "And we are very close to seeing, at the end of this six-year term, an equal number of dead as in the Vietnam War."

Mexican President Felipe Calderon announced a crackdown on cartels shortly after taking office at the end of 2006. Since then, more than 28,000 people have died in drug-related violence across the country. And Calderon's government has dispatched about 50,000 troops to the nation's trouble spots.

A past governor of Sonora state, which borders Arizona, Beltrones also discussed California's recently defeated proposition to legalize marijuana.

Proposition 19, which failed to garner enough support from California voters earlier this month, left many Mexican lawmakers wondering what they would do if it had passed, he said.

California has already legalized medical marijuana. Supporters of Proposition 19 argued that the "prohibition" of marijuana -- much like that for alcohol decades ago -- has created a violent criminal black market, led today by international drug cartels. But opponents prevailed earlier this month.

Still, Beltrones said the debate over legalizing marijuana is an issue Mexican officials will have to tackle "sooner or later."

"But we could not do it without developing a strategy with the United States, which is the drug's largest consumer... Crime and drug trafficking, which are transnational problems, need international solutions," he said.

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From: [Lawson, Peggy](#)
To: [Drug Control](#)
Subject: News Articles, Thursday, August 12, 2010
Date: Thursday, August 12, 2010 8:59:10 AM

FLORIDA

<http://wokv.com/localnews/2010/08/update-teen-baby-bong-picture.html>

Baby bong picture was a joke, Cops not laughing

12 August 2010

<http://wdbo.com/localnews/2010/08/some-doctors-blame-pill-mills.html>

Some doctors blame Pill Mills for rise in drug abuse

12 August 2010

http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2010-08-11/news/os-four-dead-stpete-four-loko-20100810_1_energy-drinks-alcoholic-energy-phusion-projects

Did high-octane drink fuel deadly crash?

12 August 2010

NATIONAL

<http://www.heraldonline.com/2010/08/12/2377092/drug-agents-crack-down-on-pain.html>

Drug agents crack down on pain pill trafficking

12 August 2010

<http://www.dddmag.com/news-Cocaine-Addiction-Linked-to-Protein-That-Causes-Retardation-81110.aspx>

Cocaine addiction linked to protein that causes retardation

11 August 2010

<http://www.thesunnews.com/2010/08/12/1632572/millions-in-heroin-seized-by-police.html>

Millions in Heroin seized by police

12 August 2010

<http://www.helium.com/items/1919583-how-do-you-know-the-difference-between-teenage-drama-and-moodiness-and-the-warning-signs-of-suicide>

Early warning signs of suicide

11 August 2010

<http://thecrimereport.org/2010/08/12/feds-gather-experts-seek-solutions-to-bullying-problem/>

Feds gather experts seek solutions to bullying problems

12 August 2010

INTERNATIONAL

<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/metro-manila/08/12/10/chocolate-box-used-hide-140k>

Chocolate box used to hide \$140,000

12 August 2010

FLORIDA

<http://wokv.com/localnews/2010/08/update-teen-baby-bong-picture.html>

Baby bong picture a joke, Cops not laughing

12 August 2010

It's been one of the most popular stories on WOKV.com, and has even been featured in other countries. But now the picture that started it all has led to the arrest of the mother police said took it.

The Florida Department of Children and Families said the picture shows the baby, from Keystone Heights, holding a bong up to its mouth as if the infant is using it to smoke marijuana.

According to First Coast News, Rachel Stieringer, 19, was arrested and charged with one count of possession of drug paraphernalia, a first-degree misdemeanor.

Assistant state attorney Lara Mattina reportedly said Stieringer has not been charged with child abuse, because that would only apply if the child is exposed to drugs. The

report said DCF gave the infant a drug test and it came back negative.

John Harrell of DCF confirmed the agency had launched an investigation into the 11-month-old baby's parents.

"We are alarmed that any parent would take pictures of their child next to what is obviously drug paraphernalia," he said.

The mother posted this message on her Facebook page: "If u look at the picture u can see that there is no bowl in the TABACCO (sic) pipe. And i took a pic to show one (expletive) person and it was a mistake. I would never ever ever let him get high."

DCF investigators said they have already been to the home twice.

<http://wdbo.com/localnews/2010/08/some-doctors-blame-pill-mills.html>

Some doctors blame pill mills for rise in drug abuse

12 August 2010

Orlando is primarily known for theme parks, but some doctors say it's becoming a haven for drug dealers looking to score prescription painkillers. And they blame the high number of pain clinics in the area.

Some advocates for tighter controls on these clinics say they're pervasive in the Orlando area. Dr. Lora Brown calls these facilities pill mills. She says there are more than 500 of them in Central Florida, and the majority are in Orlando.

"Almost every patient that comes through the door gets the same list of prescriptions," said Brown. "They're given enormous quantities of these medications, and most of those medications end up on the street."

Brown is a pain-management specialist at Coastal Orthopedics, Pain Management and Rehabilitation in Bradenton. She describes prescription-drug abuse as a deadly problem.

"We're seeing now more deaths related to prescription-drug abuse than in fact we see to illegal-drug abuse," said Brown.

Brown says in Florida seven people die from prescription-drug abuse every day. She puts part of the blame on addicts having a false sense of security.

"I think there are a lot of people that feel like because these drugs are prescribed by a doctor that they're safe and that they're not deadly," said Brown.

It's not uncommon for patients who are addicted to prescription drug to go from doctor to doctor to obtain the drugs they crave in what's known as doctor shopping. A new state law, which goes into effect this fall, seeks to curb the problem by requiring

doctors to enter every prescription they write into a database.

Brown says the law should make it easier for competent doctors to spot signs of abuse. She'll be leading a weekend training session in Orlando for hundreds of doctors from all over the state on prescription-drug abuse and the new state law.

http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2010-08-11/news/os-four-dead-stpete-four-loko-20100810_1_energy-drinks-alcoholic-energy-phusion-projects

Did high-octane drink fuel deadly crash?

11 August 2010

After the crash that killed an Orange County man and his three sons, police found a crumpled can of an alcoholic energy drink called Four Loko inside the mangled remains of Demetrius Jordan's Chevrolet Impala.

Jordan, 20, told St. Petersburg officers he had been drinking the high-octane malt beverage and other alcohol, plus using marijuana, before the Aug. 1 collision that claimed the lives of Elroy "Roy" McConnell Jr., 51, and sons Elroy "Roy" McConnell III, 28, Nathan, 24, and Kelly, 19.

Four Loko and similar beverages are sold in colorful cans that resemble iced tea and ordinary energy drinks. At about \$2.50 for a 23.5-ounce can, this affordable buzz has outraged attorneys general and advocates for sobriety in recent years.

"It's a very bad combination having alcohol, plus caffeine, plus the brain of a young person," said Bruce Goldberger, a professor and director of toxicology at the University of Florida College of Medicine. "It's like a perfect storm."

Aficionados, however, say they like the taste — and the effects.

Juan Fernandez, 41, said these drinks are so strong, he drinks just one daily.

"If you're not a drinker and you drink one, you'll be really twisted [drunk]," said Fernandez, who stocks shelves at Parramore Corner Store in Orlando.

On the market since 2006, Four Loko contains 12 percent alcohol and is sold in flavors including lemonade, watermelon and fruit punch. By contrast, most beer contains between 4 and 5 percent alcohol.

Adding to Four Loko's jolt are guarana, taurine and caffeine — ingredients commonly found in energy drinks — and plenty of sugar.

It's a popular product among teens and young adults — Four Loko has a Facebook page with more than 150,000 fans.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warn that caffeine-laced alcoholic beverages are harmful. But Phusion Projects, a Chicago company that

markets Four Loko and a related brand, Four MaXed, defends the safety of its drinks.

In statements to the *Orlando Sentinel*, Phusion said its products are only for those of legal drinking age, and that they contain less caffeine than a 12-ounce cup of coffee.

The company also extended sympathies to the McConnell family.

"This tragedy speaks to the serious, societal concerns regarding the misuse of alcohol in our society – alcohol abuse, drunk driving and underage drinking are problems we would all like to see discussed and solved," wrote managing partner Chris Hunter.

NATIONAL

<http://www.heraldonline.com/2010/08/12/2377092/drug-agents-crack-down-on-pain.html>

Drug agents crack down on pain pill trafficking

12 August 2010

York County authorities are putting the brakes on a multistate prescription pill trafficking scheme.

This summer, York County drug agents have stopped four vehicles full of people traveling south to Florida to obtain prescriptions for Oxycodone, Hydrocodone and other pain medications and getting those medications at pharmacies along the highway on their return to sell them, said Marvin Brown, commander of the county's multijurisdictional drug unit.

"Law enforcement up and down the East Coast is on alert, trying to put a stop to this," Brown said. "It's people from the northern states going to pain clinics in Florida, getting prescriptions for pain meds, filling them up the interstate and selling them. It's not just a York County problem, it's all the towns between here and Florida."

Those four stops have led to 11 arrests of "pill billies," or drug runners getting the strongest legal prescription medications available to sell, Brown said.

A traffic stop on southbound Interstate 77 in Rock Hill on Tuesday of a Ford Expedition that was speeding led to the arrest of three people, Brown said. The seven occupants of the SUV were headed from Ohio to Florida to obtain Oxycodone for illegal purposes, according to a York County Sheriff's Office report.

The group - four from Ohio, two from Florida and one from Michigan - was en route to get more pills. Officers seized more than 100 pills and nearly \$15,000 in cash, according to the report. In the vehicle they also found "clean" urine wrapped in plastic

to use at doctor's offices in case a drug test is required to obtain prescriptions and maps detailing pharmacies to fill the medications, Brown said.

Prescription pill abuse is a problem in York County, Brown said.

"Oxycodone especially, it's nothing more than synthetic heroin," he said. "We're doing pill drops to try to stop its abuse."

The object of these runs are to get as many pills as possible. A dealer will give the runner, who is often a pill-abuser, about \$5,000, Brown said. They load as many people as possible in a vehicle - the more people, the more pills.

In Florida, there's little regulation on pain management clinics, which often operate out of strip malls. Those who plan to sell medications can easily obtain a prescription or a controlled substance quickly and more easily than from doctors in other states.

New laws designed to close down "pill mills" that sell to drug dealers and substance abusers have been proposed this year.

After the car-loads from the north scam clinic doctors, they fill them at various pharmacies on the way back, Brown said.

There's a network of people doing the same thing that share which pharmacies fill these prescriptions. Some of these pharmacies are in Charlotte and Rock Hill.

"When someone filling a prescription lives in one state, has a prescription for another, is filling it in a third state and getting the strongest legal pain medication, there should be some red flags," Brown said. "But some pharmacies still fill the prescriptions."

When the runners get back, they split the pills with the dealer. One Oxycodone pill can sell for \$20 on the street.

"When you're looking at bottle of 60 pills, you can make \$1,200 selling it. That's a good profit margin," Brown said.

During Tuesday's stop on I-77, officers arrested three people: Kevin Wayne Simon, 41, Teresa Marie Newland, 37, Donna Jenkins, 43, all of Columbus, Ohio.

All three were being held Wednesday at the Moss Justice Center in York on charges related to this stop.

Simon and Newland each face possession of controlled substance charges. Simon also has a possession of Oxycodone with intent to distribute charge.

Jenkins faces two charges including giving false information to police.

<http://www.dddmag.com/news-Cocaine-Addiction-Linked-to-Protein-That-Causes-Retardation-81110.aspx>

Cocaine addiction linked to protein that causes retardation

11 August 2010

Scientists from the Florida campus of The Scripps Research Institute have identified a protein that may act as the trigger controlling the addictive impact of cocaine in the brain. The findings may one day lead to new therapies to treat addiction.

The study was published on August 15, 2010, in the journal *Nature Neuroscience*.

The results from the new study strongly suggest that a protein known as methyl CpG binding protein 2 (MeCP2) interacts with a type of genetic material known as microRNA to control an individual's motivation to consume cocaine.

“The study shows that MeCP2 blunts the amount by which microRNA-212 is increased in response to cocaine,” said Paul Kenny, an associate professor in the Department of Molecular Therapeutics at Scripps Florida who led the study. “We have previously shown that miR-212 is very protective against cocaine addiction. Therefore, the conclusion is that MeCP2 may regulate vulnerability to addiction in some people through its inhibitory influence on miR-212. Without this influence, the expression of miR-212 would be far greater in response to cocaine use, and the risk of addiction would likely be far lower.”

This is the first time that MeCP2 has been shown to play a role in regulating cocaine addiction. Previously, the protein was most linked to Rett syndrome, a progressive neurodevelopmental disorder and one of the most common causes of mental retardation in females.

Interactions Shape Vulnerability

These new findings come on the heels of another cocaine addiction study by Kenny and his Scripps Florida colleagues published in the journal *Nature* in early July. That study showed for the first time that miR-212 — a type of small non-protein coding RNA that can regulate the expression levels of hundreds or even thousands of genes — influenced response to the drug in rats. Animals with increased miR-212 expression were less motivated to consume cocaine, pointing to the protective effects of miR-212 against cocaine addiction.

“The new findings are a significant advance from this previous study,” Kenny said, “because they clearly demonstrate why microRNA-212 is not always fully protective — because MeCP2 regulates by how much miR-212 levels will increase in response to cocaine. This suggests that our initial findings may be central to explaining the complex process of addiction, and understanding how miR-212 signaling is regulated will be important. This study adds another level of detail to the blueprint.”

A major goal of drug abuse research is to understand why certain individuals make the switch from casual to compulsive drug use and develop into addicts. Periods of easy access to the drug, along with repeated overconsumption, can quickly trigger the emergence of addiction-like abnormalities in animal models.

In the new study, the scientists first looked at the expression of MeCP2 in the brain after exposure to cocaine. They found that expression was increased in those animals given extended access to the drug.

“At that point,” Kenny said, “we wanted to know if this increase was behaviorally significant – did it influence the motivation to take the drug?”

Using a virus to disrupt expression of MeCP2, the scientists found that rats consumed less and less cocaine. Intriguingly, levels of miR-212 were also far higher in those animals. Because increases in miR-212 suppress attraction to cocaine, the disruption of MeCP2, in essence, put miR-212 in charge and reduced vulnerability to the drug.

“We concluded that MeCP2 may play an important role in addiction by regulating the magnitude by which miR-212 expression is increased in response to cocaine,” said Kenny. “In other words, MeCP2 seems to control just how much you can protect yourself against the addictive properties of cocaine.”

Intriguingly, that was not the end of the story. In addition to MeCP2 blunting miR-212 expression, the scientists also found that the opposite was also true – that miR-212 could in turn decrease levels of MeCP2. This suggests that both are locked together in a regulatory loop. Importantly, the two had opposite effects on the expression of a particular growth factor in the brain – called BDNF – that regulates just how rewarding cocaine is.

While the new study fills in an important piece of the puzzle, the Kenny lab is hard at work to further increase our understanding of addiction.

“We still don’t know what exactly influences the activity levels of MeCP2 on miR-212 expression,” Kenny said. “Now we plan to explore what drives it – whether it’s environmentally driven, and if genetic and epigenetic influences are important.”

<http://www.thesunnews.com/2010/08/12/1632572/millions-in-heroin-seized-by-police.html>

Millions in Heroin seized by police

12 August 2010

Horry County police found an estimated \$12 million worth of heroin and other drugs in the Myrtle Beach area in what the police department is calling its largest seizure of the drug to date.

The drugs were found recently after an investigation led police to a home in the Arrowhead subdivision in the Myrtle Beach section of the county. Sgt. Robert Kegler, spokesman for the Horry County Police Department did not report that anyone was arrested at the time of the seizure.

Kegler said detectives with the Horry County Police Department's narcotics and vice section and agents from the U.S Drug Enforcement Agency in Florence worked

together on the drug case, which resulted in officers finding heroin and cocaine. The seizure that occurred on Aug. 2. resulted from a yearlong investigation into "large quantities of black tar heroin to the Grand Strand," according to a press release from Kegler.

Horry County drug operation results in three arrests

Horry County police have charged three people, including one man who fought with police officers during his arrest a year ago, following an undercover drug investigation in the Little River community, according to authorities.

Krishmer Shamar Bessent, 31, and Jerry Wayne Vereen, 55, both of Little River, were each charged with distribution of crack cocaine on Wednesday, Sgt. Robert Kegler said. Both men are being held at J. Reuben Long Detention Center and bond has not been set.

During the investigation, an undercover police officer purchased crack cocaine from the men along Bellamy Drive, Kegler said. Police began the investigation after reports of illegal drug activity in the area.

According to the press statement, police collected 8 kilograms of black tar heroin with an estimated street value of \$10 million, 1 1/2 kilograms of heroin in powder form with an estimated street value of \$2.2 million and 1/2 kilogram of cocaine with an estimated street value of \$20,200.

Kegler said an investigation concerning the drugs is ongoing and related arrests are expected soon. He did not indicate how many suspects might be arrested or whether the investigation is likely to reach into other parts of Horry County, and police did not identify the specific location where the drugs were found earlier this month.

<http://www.helium.com/items/1919583-how-do-you-know-the-difference-between-teenage-drama-and-moodiness-and-the-warning-signs-of-suicide>

Early warning signs of suicide

11 August 2010

If you have teenagers of your own, you probably know many of their friends and have experienced, first hand, the drama and moodiness that frequently characterizes many of them. But before you dismiss the emotional upsets of all teenagers as just a part of the maturing process, ask yourself this question: Do you know the early warning signs of suicide among adolescents? You should know that suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 10 and 24.

[1] Even more staggering is the fact that in the time it takes for you to watch a two-hour movie, another teen will take his/her life somewhere in America. Yet, with societies' growing awareness of the increase in reported depression and anxiety among teens, together with an increase in programs targeting adolescent [mental](#)

[health](#) and safety, adolescent suicide statistics continue to rise.

While you may not be able to prevent the deaths of countless adolescents whose names and faces you have never heard or seen, by knowing the early warning signs of potential suicide, you might just save a young person you know from attempting to end his/her own life.

Perhaps you know a teenager that seems depressed. What signs should you look for that might be early indicators of the potential for suicide? Although some attempted suicides occur abruptly due to unforeseen events that tend to catapult a teen into a highly reactive state, most adolescents have been considering suicide for a number of weeks prior to the attempt.

Perhaps the earliest and most comprehensive warning that you may have of the potential for an adolescent to attempt suicide is a history of increasing depression over a period of several weeks. Symptoms of depression might include:

Withdrawal from friends and normal activities - Be aware, however, that many teens will remain in contact with one or two of their closest friends and may even confide their talk their thoughts of killing themselves. Changes in eating and sleeping habits – Some teens will begin sleeping a lot while others may experience sleeplessness. They may either show signs of a decreased appetite and even [weight loss](#), or begin to overeat as a means of self-medicating feelings of sadness, guilt, or increased anxiety. Loss of interest in appearance – A depressed adolescent may begin to dress sloppily, and pay little, if any, attention to grooming. Mood swings – Some teenagers who are severely depressed will withdraw and appear sullen or even ambivalent while others may exhibit outbursts of anger. Mental confusion - Falling grades are often a symptom that a teen may be troubled. If depression is severe enough he may even exhibit a fugue-like behavior.

Earliest warnings do not always accurately predict whether an adolescent is considering suicide, but they are symptoms of severe depression that need attention. Even if only one of the symptoms persists, parents, guardians, and loved ones should be alerted to the potential that their teen may need outside help. More than one of these indicators increases the likelihood of depression and potential suicide.

Unfortunately, earlier symptoms of depression are often overlooked or interpreted as normal teenage angst. When this happens, a potentially suicidal adolescent will begin to exhibit more severe symptoms that place him at high risk for a suicide attempt. Warning signs that, when dismissed or overlooked, may result in an adolescent suicide include:

Frequent references to death and/or suicide – A teenager who is consider ending his life will often talk with a best friend about what death is like or even confide that he is thinking about suicide. Giving away personal possessions - This is usually items of importance to the adolescent like a school trophy, a favorite collection, or a special piece of jewelry. An abrupt change in mood for the better – Once an individual has made the decision to end attempt suicide, he/she often feels a sense of relief which

can be exhibited by a false sense of cheerfulness or peacefulness. Breaking up with a girlfriend or boyfriend for no good reason – Remember that this is only significant if it has been preceded by increasing symptoms of depression. Attempting to repair a poor relationship with a loved one – If a teenager's relationship with either parent or with a sibling has been poor, he will sometimes reach out to make peace before ending his life. Confiding a plan to commit suicide to a friend – Tragically, friends of adolescents who have committed suicide, often reveal that there were indicators that were either not recognized or dismissed. All adolescents need to be made aware of the warning signs that a friend might be considering ending his/her life.

Suicide at any age is a tragic and senseless act that leaves loved ones and friends to cope with deep sadness, grief, and often, feelings of regret and guilt. But the suicide of a young person is especially painful for the ones who are left behind who are deprived of the love, companionship, and all the future dreams and hopes that will never be realized.

If you know an adolescent who seems depressed and could be potentially suicidal don't mistake the mistake of doing nothing. If you feel incapable of discussing your concerns with him/her, find someone to confide in and make sure that the teenager gets the help needed to address depression and prevent another needless adolescent suicide.

<http://thecrimereport.org/2010/08/12/feds-gather-experts-seek-solutions-to-bullying-problem/>

Feds gather experts seek solutions to bullying problems

12 August 2010

After several high-profile bullying incidents, the U.S. Department of Education is hosting the first federal school bullying summit this week, reports the Christian Science Monitor. Suicides linked to bullying – including the January suicide of Phoebe Prince in Massachusetts, which has resulted in nine felony charges against her classmates – have drawn particular attention to the issue, and several states are considering or enacting anti-bullying laws.

“People are really feeling the heat now,” says David Waren of the Anti-Defamation League, noting that 43 states have now enacted some form of anti-bullying legislation. “This is the first time this kind of initiative has taken place, bringing together so many disparate elements, and there really is a hope that it will create a critical mass or tipping point [] and out of that will create a more strategic and aligned and leveraged effort,” he adds.

INTERNATIONAL

<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/metro-manila/08/12/10/chocolate-box->

[used-hide-140k](#)

Chocolate box used to hide \$140,000

12 August 2010

MANILA, Philippines – A 59-year-old Filipino woman was arrested for attempting to smuggle into the country P5.7 million worth of dollars hidden in a box of chocolates.

Nabbed was Carolina Gozon of Bataan province. Gozon arrived from Seoul, Korea, on board an Asiana Airlines flight OZ 701 at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 1.

Customs Collector Tess Roque said the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and the customs police have been monitoring Gozon for several weeks now.

Based on PDEA's intelligence report, Gozon was supposed to attempt to smuggle high-grade cocaine from Korea.

The PDEA's inspection team, including a drug-sniffing dog, failed to find drugs from Gozon's belongings.

However, further inspection of Gozon's personals led to the discovery of \$140,000 cash, which were hidden inside a box of imported chocolates.

Gozon admitted that the money belongs to her son, Joselito Gozon, a businessman in Korea. She claimed that the money was intended to pay off the family's debts and for a parcel of land in Bataan.

Authorities confiscated the undeclared money from Gozon for violating a regulation of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

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From: [Lawson, Peggy](#)
To: [Drug Control](#)
Subject: News Articles, Tuesday, October 19, 2010
Date: Tuesday, October 19, 2010 10:51:00 AM

FLORIDA

<http://www.beckersasc.com/stark-act-and-fraud-abuse-issues/florida-pain-physician-sentenced-to-9-years-in-prison-for-illegal-drug-distribution-medicare-fraud.html>

Pain physician sentenced to 9 years in prison for illegal drug distribution

18 October 2010

<http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/editorials/give-drug-courts-a-real-chance-to-work/1128370>

Give Drug Courts a real chance to work

18 October 2010

<http://www.bradenton.com/2010/10/19/2664461/red-ribbon-breakfast-for-businesses.html>

Red Ribbon Breakfast for businesses

19 October 2010

<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/crime/pain-clinic-owner-indicted-on-gun-charges-979065.html>

Pain Clinic owner indicted on gun charges

19 October 2010

NATIONAL

http://www.kake.com/news/headlines/Kansas_Missouri_Warrant_Sweep_105172639.html?ref=639

Five arrested in Kansas, Missouri warrant sweep

18 October 2010

<http://www.examiner.com/parenting-multiples-in-houston/red-ribbon-week-what-can-you-do-at-home>

Red Ribbon Week-what can you do at home?

18 October 2010

<http://blogs.laweekly.com/informer/marijuana/dare-child-snitch-parents/>

Parents arrested after fifth grader turned them in for having marijuana joints

18 October 2010

<http://www.kansascitykansan.com/blogs/16-indicted-kck-cocaine-dealing/8797>

16 indicted on KCK Cocaine dealing

18 October 2010

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/10292/1096384-28.stm>

Caffeinated alcohol drinks getting closer look by FDA

19 October 2010

<http://www.walb.com/Global/story.asp?S=13346450>

Florida Cocaine trafficking rink linked to Albany

19 October 2010

INTERNATIONAL

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1010/43809.html>

Secure the border

19 October 2010

<http://news.gather.com/viewArticle.action?articleId=281474978615111>

105 tons of Marijuana seized in Northern Mexico

19 October 2010

<http://www.dvb.no/news/opium-production-soaring-warns-un-drugs-tzar/12294>

Opium production soaring warns UN Drug Tzar

19 October 2010

FLORIDA

<http://www.beckersasc.com/stark-act-and-fraud-abuse-issues/florida-pain-physician-sentenced-to-9-years-in-prison-for-illegal-drug-distribution-medicare-fraud.html>

Pain physician sentenced to 9 years in prison for illegal drug distribution

18 October 2010

Jeffrey Friedlander, MD, has been sentenced to nine years in prison and ordered to pay more than \$317,000 in restitution for illegal distribution of prescription pain medication and Medicare fraud, according to a Bradenton news report.

Dr. Friedlander, who practiced out of Neurology and Pain Center, which has locations throughout the state of Florida, allowed unlicensed employees to prescribe controlled substances without his supervision. The unauthorized employees would use blank prescriptions that Dr. Friedlander pre-signed, according to the report.

Many of the patients who received the illicit prescriptions were issued controlled substances without medical examination, proper diagnosis or being offered alternative treatment options. All defendants involved were aware that the patients were misusing or abusing the controlled substances, according to the report.

Additionally, court documents show that between 2005 and 2009, Dr. Friedlander and his business associated filed false claims to Medicare for services that were never rendered. The two conspired to falsify information in patients' files to support the fraudulent claims to Medicare, according to the report.

<http://www.bradenton.com/2010/10/19/2664461/red-ribbon-breakfast-for-businesses.html>

Red Ribbon Breakfast for businesses

19 October 2010

MANATEE — The Manatee County Substance Abuse Coalition is holding its eighth annual Red Ribbon Breakfast to talk about businesses becoming drug free workplaces.

The free breakfast will feature Professor Calvina L. Fay, executive director of Drug Free America Foundation and Save Our Society from Drugs. She is a former adviser to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and is considered an expert on workplace drug abuse prevention programs.

Following breakfast, a workshop will be presented through the National Drug Free Workplace Alliance. The coalition will join the Manatee Chamber of Commerce in focusing attention on a growing problem in the business community. Employers and small businesses owners can learn how to help the company's bottom line and curb substance abuse in the workplace.

The breakfast will be held at Pirate City, 1701 27th St. E. on Oct. 28 at 7:30 a.m. followed by the workshop at 8:45 a.m.

<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/crime/pain-clinic-owner-indicted-on-gun-charges-979065.html>

Pain Clinic owner indicted on gun charges

19 October 2010

A pioneer in the South Florida pain clinic industry now blamed for multi-state drug trafficking and soaring rates of overdose deaths was indicted on federal gun charges and appeared before a magistrate judge this morning.

Already the target of a separate drug trafficking investigation, Chris George, 29, of Wellington was charged Thursday with possessing firearms and ammunition despite a past felony conviction. George was convicted of felony drug possession in 2002.

A single-count indictment unsealed Monday morning accuses George of having a handgun, two shotguns and more than 100 rounds of ammunition.

The document makes no mention of the federal drug investigation, but authorities found the guns in March during a simultaneous raid of George's pain clinic, American Pain in Lake Worth, and his properties in Wellington, said his attorney, Fred Haddad.

George pleaded not guilty Monday before Magistrate Judge James M. Hopkins in West Palm Beach.

"We plan to fully defend against the charges," Haddad said.

Before the federal raids, George and his twin brother, Jeff, ran some of the most brazen pain clinics in South Florida, opening them first in Broward County and then making their way here.

The clinics openly appealed to out-of-state patients - the kinds authorities say act as drug couriers to Kentucky, Tennessee and elsewhere in Appalachia - and dealt only in cash.

American Pain, housed in a sprawling 14,000-square-foot complex, generated \$50,000 in a single day, federal agents said in court documents. On March 3, the DEA, FBI and local authorities raided American Pain as well as Jeff George's pain clinics, Executive Pain and East Coast Pain Clinic in West Palm Beach. On the same day, agents moved to seize three properties Chris George owns in Wellington's upscale Talavera neighborhood, a process that since has been stayed. Agents alleged at the time that Chris George piled up \$40 million in assets by hiring doctors who knowingly prescribed oxycodone and other powerful drugs to traffickers from Kentucky, Ohio and South Carolina. No drug-related charges have been filed against either twin.

Jeff George declined to comment on his brother's arrest .

Chris George remained in custody, awaiting a bond hearing on Thursday.

NATIONAL

http://www.kake.com/news/headlines/Kansas_Missouri_Warrant_Sweep_105172639.html?ref=639

Five arrests in Kansas-Missouri warrant sweep

18 October 2010

Law enforcement officers from the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, Coffeyville Police Department, Independence Police Department, Southeast Kansas Drug Enforcement Task Force, Joplin Police Department, Jasper County Drug Task Force, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation served multiple search warrants Friday, October 15, 2010 in Kansas and Missouri following a long-term investigation into the possession and distribution of illegal drugs. The Kansas Department of Revenue and the Montgomery County Environmental Health also assisted in the investigation.

The multi-agency operation included the service of six search warrants resulting in five arrests.

Delandick Lynn Smith was arrested for sale of marijuana, possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Darryle James Vernon was arrested for sale of cocaine within 1000 feet of a school, possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, drug tax stamp violation and criminal possession of a firearm.

Chadd Johnson was arrested for sale of marijuana, possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, possession of drug paraphernalia, criminal use of a weapon and unlawful conduct in regards to dog fighting.

Willie Lamont Hayes was arrested for possession of cocaine with intent to distribute, possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, drug tax stamp violation and possession of dog fighting paraphernalia.

Cornelius Colbert was booked into the Joplin City jail pending the filing of formal charges in Missouri.

The investigation is ongoing and future arrests are anticipated.

<http://www.examiner.com/parenting-multiples-in-houston/red-ribbon-week-what-can-you-do-at-home>

Red Ribbon Week-what can you do at home?

18 October 2010

As many of you may already know, this week is Red Ribbon Week. Your kids may have already brought home papers talking about the activities they will be participating in to celebrate, such as wearing sunglasses to "shade out drugs" or wearing crazy socks to "sock it to drugs." While your child is participating in this week long celebration at school you may be wondering what you can do at home.

First a little history. What is Red Ribbon week and how did it get started? Red Ribbon Week began after Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena was murdered by a Mexican drug cartel in 1985. After the death of Agent Camarena, people started wearing red ribbons and badges as a symbol of his memory and to show their commitment to lead drug free lives.

Here are some activities you can do at home with your kids to show you support Red Ribbon Week and drug awareness.

- Wear red or red ribbons every day during the week
- Make a pledge as a family to be drug free
- Hang red ribbons in your yard/on trees
- Red Ribbon Week Coloring Pages
- Red Ribbon Week Word Search
- More Printables

<http://blogs.laweekly.com/informer/marijuana/dare-child-snitch-parents/>

Parents arrested after fifth grader turned them in for having Marijuana joints

18 October 2010

You gotta love D.A.R.E., the anti-drug program created by late Los Angeles police Chief Daryl Gates in 1983. It's done a great job of eradicating drugs in schools. More importantly, it's made snitches out of children who have been taught by cops to turn in their parents.

That's what happened this week in Matthews, North Carolina, a suburb of Charlotte, where an 11-year-old elementary school kid brought a few joints to campus and turned them in, saying they belonged to mom and dad.

This, of course, was after the good officers at D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) came to school to give their anti-drug lecture.

Matthews police Officer Stason Tyrrell told WBTV the 5th grader did the right thing:

"Even if it's happening in their own home with their own parents, they understand that's a dangerous situation because of what we're teaching them. That's what they're told to do, to make us aware."

The dad, age 40, and the mom, age 38, were arrested on suspicion of marijuana possession and possession of drug paraphernalia -- misdemeanors.

The dad, who's name was withheld by the TV station, told WBTV it's "no one's business" how the 11-year-old got a hold the joints, and that "I don't give drugs to my kids."

D.A.R.E. has been widely criticized as ineffective, a product of the Just-Say-No '80s. But its L.A.-based proselytizers carry on as if Nancy Reagan is still the first lady.

What's ironic is that, had this case happened in D.A.R.E.'s hometown, the parents very well could have had a prescription for their weed, and the cops might have had to lay off.

<http://www.kansascitykansan.com/blogs/16-indicted-kck-cocaine-dealing/8797>

16 indicted on KCK cocaine dealing

18 October 2010

U.S. Department of Justice

Sixteen people are charged in a federal indictment alleging they were part of a drug trafficking organization that distributed more than \$4.2 million worth of cocaine on the streets of Kansas City, Kan., U.S. Attorney Barry Grissom said today.

A 49-count indictment filed in U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Kan., alleges the organization distributed cocaine and crack cocaine from five locations in the city, including a house located within 1,000 feet of Northwest Middle School.

“Drugs are destroying Kansas City neighborhoods, contributing to a climate of violence and victimization, ruining the lives of users and their families,” Grissom said. “I want this indictment to send a message to drug traffickers. Stay away from our schools. Stay away from our kids. Stay away from our homes.”

In addition to seeking a money judgment against the traffickers of more than \$4.2 million, the government is asking for the forfeiture of six houses in Kansas City, Kan., that the indictment alleges were used by the traffickers:

- 2648 N. 21st Street
- 2636 N. 20th Street
- 2635 N. 20th Street
- 2632 N. 20th Street
- 2111 N. 49th Street
- 2016 N. 27th Street

Among the 49 counts of the indictment are the following charges:

- Conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than 5 kilograms of cocaine and more than 280 grams of crack cocaine
- Distribution of cocaine and possession with intent to distribute cocaine.
- Drug trafficking within 1,000 feet of a school
- Maintaining a residence in furtherance of drug trafficking
- Unlawful possession of a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking
- Unlawful possession of a firearm after a felony conviction.
- Unlawful use of cellular telephones in furtherance of drug trafficking

Fourteen of the 16 defendants were arrested Wednesday, Oct. 14, when the FBI, the Kansas City, Kan., Police Department, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department and other agencies assisting with the investigation served arrest warrants and search warrants. Investigators also seized cash, drugs, guns and other evidence.

Grissom said the investigation, which began in 2006, was a joint effort.

“Effective coordination between federal, state and local agencies is absolutely essential for us to identify and disrupt drug trafficking organizations and associated criminal networks,” Grissom said. “I commend the many law enforcement officers who worked on this case without

letting jurisdictional boundaries stand in the way.”

Charged in the indictment are:

Antonio D. Quinn, 32, Kansas City, Kan.

Steven L. Quinn, 34, Kansas City, Kan.

Marcus L. Quinn, 29, Kansas City, Kan.

Lavaughn J. Brown, 31, Kansas City, Kan.

Andrew J. Price, 32, Olathe, Kan.

Mark A. Brooks, 32, Kansas City, Kan.

Willie F. Ford, 29, Kansas City, Kan.

Keyaun C. James, 23, Kansas City, Kan.

Rocquel Jones-Quinn, 37, Kansas City, Kan.

Dale E. Talley, II, 54, Shawnee, Kan.

Daniel Cardenas Garcia, 23, Kansas City, Kan.

Adrian A. Melendez, 27, Kansas City, Kan.

Polley E. Smith, 33, Kansas City, Mo.

Janis Diggins, 43, Kansas City, Mo.

Juan D. Lopez, Jr., 31, Kansas City, Mo.

Ruth A. Alvarado-Lopez, 26, Kansas City, Mo.

Upon conviction, the alleged crimes carry the following penalties:

- Conspiracy: Not less than 10 years and not more than life in federal prison and a fine up to \$4 million.
- Maintaining and conspiracy to maintain a drug-involved premises within 1,000 feet of a school: A maximum penalty of 40 years and a fine up to \$4 million.
- Maintaining and conspiracy to maintain a drug-involved premises: A maximum penalty of 20 years and a fine up to \$2 million.
- Distribution of crack cocaine within 1,000 feet of a school: Not less than one year and not more than 40 years and a fine up to \$2 million.
- Distribution of marijuana within 1,000 feet of a school: Not less than one year and not more than 10 years and a fine up to \$500,000.
- Possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine within 1,000 feet of a school: Not less than five years and not more than 80 years and a fine up to \$4 million.

- Possession of a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking: Not less than five years and not more than life, consecutive to any sentence for drug trafficking.
- Unlawful possession of a firearm after a felony conviction: A maximum penalty of 10 years and a fine up to \$250,000.
- Possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine: Not less than 10 years and not more than life and a fine up to \$4 million.
- Distribution of crack cocaine: Not less than five years and not more than 40 years and a fine up to \$2 million.
- Unlawful use of a cellular telephone in furtherance of drug trafficking: A maximum penalty of four years and a fine up to \$250,000 on each count.
- Distribution and possession with intent to distribute cocaine: A maximum penalty of 20 years and a fine up to \$1 million.

Grissom commended the following agencies for their work on the case: The FBI; the Kansas City, Kan., Police Department; the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department; the Lee's Summit Police Department; the Jackson County Sheriff's Department; the Leavenworth Police Department and the Internal Revenue Service. Assistant U.S. Attorney David Zabel and Assistant U.S. Attorney Tris Hunt are prosecuting.

<http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/editorials/give-drug-courts-a-real-chance-to-work/1128370>

Give Drug Courts a real chance to work

18 October 2010

Drug courts and the supervised drug treatment they offer help addicts turn their lives around. Success is not guaranteed, but it occurs with enough regularity that these programs are better than locking addicts up. That should have been the guiding philosophy behind an extended drug court pilot program launched this year. But because the Legislature attached too many strings, the program is far short of its goals. Judges need more discretion — an easy fix that can be accomplished when lawmakers meet next.

A \$19 million federal grant allowed the Legislature to establish new, extended drug courts in eight Florida counties, including Pinellas and Hillsborough. The hope was that 4,000 offenders would be diverted from prison and into treatment programs over two years, saving the state \$95 million in corrections costs. But according to a new report by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, the program won't come close to that savings. After six months there were only a total of 324 admissions. In Pinellas there were 48; in Hillsborough, 77.

The problem is that the Legislature tightly restricted who could qualify for the offer of 12 to 18 months of drug treatment as an alternative to state prison. For example, only those probation violators who have failed a drug test can be placed in treatment. If they have any other violations they are barred from participating.

In the real world, this restriction is unworkable. Statewide, 74 percent of all offenders who violate probation by failing a drug test have another technical violation. Often these are also indicators of a relapse in drug use, such as failing to pay court-ordered fees or failing to report to a probation office.

Judges would also like to offer treatment to some offenders who have a violent felony in their past. If a crime was committed long ago it probably shouldn't be a bar to entering the program. And a legislative limit that opened treatment only to offenders with a sentencing score of 52 points or fewer — points assigned for current and past crimes — should be raised.

Florida has to use this federal grant by next October or the money will be forfeited. At this pace, exhausting the grant money is not going to happen, and neither will the anticipated cost savings to the prison system. At its earliest opportunity, the Legislature needs to loosen the restrictions on participation. Trial judges, not legislators, meet the offender and hear recommendations by prosecutors and others on an appropriate sentence. They are in the best position to make the call between treatment or prison.

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/10292/1096384-28.stm>

Caffeinated alcohol drinks getting closer look by FDA

19 October 2010

From the same small town brewery that conjured Rolling Rock from mountain spring water comes a brew that, depending on whom you talk to, is either as conventional as a rum and Coke or the beverage from hell.

Four Loko, a caffeinated malt beverage produced at City Brewing's Latrobe plant, offers a fruit-favored blend of 12 percent alcohol and about as much caffeine as a 12-ounce coffee -- all packed in a 23.5-ounce can that sells for about \$2.50.

Like Joose and other caffeinated alcoholic beverages, Four Loko provides a ready-to-drink version of what its originators observed young drinkers doing on their own: combining energy drinks with alcohol.

"Mixing caffeine and alcohol has been around a long time. It's nothing new or novel," said Jaisen Freeman, a former Ohio State University hockey player who started Phusion Projects, the Chicago-based maker of Four Loko, with two other OSU grads.

But while Mr. Freeman views Four Loko as an extension of traditional mixes such as Irish Coffee and Jack Daniels and cola, some doctors and behavioral scientists say caffeinated alcoholic beverages turn drinkers into wide-awake drunks who are more dangerous to themselves and those around them.

"I think the science is clear that consumption of alcohol with caffeine leads to risky behaviors," said Bruce Goldberger, director of toxicology at University of Florida College of Medicine.

Dr. Goldberger and former University of Florida College of Public Health professor Dennis Thombs published a study on alcoholic energy drinks this spring in *Addictive Behaviors*, a scientific journal.

Their findings: College-age adults who had consumed energy drinks mixed with alcohol left bars later and were more likely to leave intoxicated than those who drank just alcohol. They also were more inclined to think they were capable of driving than those who consumed just alcohol.

"When you mix caffeine with alcohol, you get problems," said Dr. Thombs, who is now with the

University of North Texas Health Science Center.

He called caffeinated alcoholic beverages "a new, emerging drug problem."

Doctors and state attorneys general have taken their concerns to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. In November, the agency sent letters to Phusion Projects and 26 other alcoholic energy drink makers, asking them to document why it is safe to mix caffeine with alcohol. The FDA has approved caffeine as an additive for soft drinks, but has never made a similar ruling with alcohol.

Nearly a year later, 19 of the 27 companies have responded, including some who asked for more time, FDA spokesman Michael Herndon said.

The agency will evaluate what the producers have to say as quickly as possible but "a decision regarding the use of caffeine in alcoholic beverages could take some time," Mr. Herndon said in an e-mail.

The delay angers Mary Claire O'Brien, who teaches emergency medicine at Wake Forest University.

"I'm mad as a hornet that they didn't do something in the first place, and I'm mad as a hornet that they haven't done anything yet," Dr. O'Brien said.

Research shows that those who use the beverages drink more often, binge drink more often and are more likely to engage in risky behavior, such as driving with a drunken driver, than those who drink just alcohol, Dr. O'Brien said.

"There is no general consensus among health professionals and the scientific community that the use of caffeine in alcoholic beverages has been demonstrated to be safe," Dr. O'Brien wrote in a September 2009 letter to the National Association of Attorneys General's committee on youth access to alcohol.

The letter also was signed by Dr. Goldberger and three other doctors. A few days later, the attorneys general group asked the FDA to immediately remove the drinks from the market. MillerCoors and Anheuser-Busch InBev agreed to stop making alcoholic energy drinks in 2008 following complaints from a group of state attorneys general.

Ramapo College in Mahwah, N.J., banned all caffeinated alcoholic drinks, including Four Loko, from campus this month after about two dozen students were hospitalized with alcohol-related problems this semester. Only a handful of those cases involved Four Loko, spokeswoman Anna Farneski said.

Mr. Freeman said Phusion Projects submitted its report this summer on why Four Loko is safe. The findings, which were based on a study conducted by scientific and food safety experts, are being reviewed by the FDA, he said.

Alcoholic energy drinks are a relatively new product. Mr. Freeman said Phusion Projects produced its first version in late 2005. The product will be available in all 50 states by the end of the year, he said. The market for the drinks is growing faster than the overall beer market, but not as fast as demand for craft beer, Mr. Freeman said.

"It's a relatively small part of the beer market, less than 1 percent," he said.

He declined to speculate how sales could be affected by the outcome of the FDA review.

City Brewing's D.J. O'Donnell, who is in charge of business development and scheduling for the LaCrosse, Wis., company, said Four Loko represented a good portion of production at the Latrobe brewery, which employs about 115.

He said it would be hard to speculate on how production might be affected by what, if anything, the FDA decides to do. Whatever the outcome, Mr. O'Donnell does not believe jobs in Latrobe would be affected.

Those who want the FDA to act concede that the regulations would apply to only ready-to-drink versions of the cocktail. They wouldn't stop drinkers from buying energy drinks and alcohol and mixing them on their own. The combination is appealing to young drinkers because "it's rapidly intoxicating," Dr. Goldberger said.

"It's consistent with that instant gratification that young people crave today," he said.

<http://www.walb.com/Global/story.asp?S=13346450>

Florida Cocaine trafficking rink linked to Albany

19 October 2010

ALBANY, GA (WALB) – Investigators in Bay County, Florida say they broke up a cocaine trafficking operation linked to Albany.

Drug agents searched three hotels in the Panama City area last week and found cocaine, prescription pills, and drug paraphernalia.

They arrested six suspects including 34-year-old Michael Rambo and 23-year old Jimmy Wallace of Albany.

Officials with the BADGES Task Force say the investigation is ongoing and more arrests could be made.

This is the fourth drug bust in Bay County in recent months in which people from Albany have been arrested.

INTERNATIONAL

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1010/43809.html>

Secure the Border

19 October 2010

Homeland Security secretary Janet Napolitano told the Senate Judiciary Committee that the southern U.S. border is "as secure as it has ever been." This surprising statement came only a few weeks after an Arizona rancher was shot and killed on his own property by a suspected illegal immigrant.

Many citizens in Arizona and other border states thought the tragic death of an U.S. citizen on his own property would finally wake up the Obama administration to the growing violence along the U.S.-Mexico border.

If the Obama administration really wants to address drug-related violence along the U.S.-Mexico border, it needs to cut off the cash crop for Mexican drug cartels. That means enforcing all federal drug laws—including those that outlaw marijuana.

Drug trafficking and drug-related violence isn't the only problem along the U.S.-Mexico border. Lax border security is a serious national security risk.

So far in 2010, 447,731 immigrants have been apprehended trying to cross the Southwest border illegally. Of those, 50,912 are from countries other than Mexico -- including terrorist-sponsoring countries like Syria, Pakistan and Yemen.

We already know terrorists exploit weaknesses in the U.S. immigration system to come here. Several of the 9-11 hijackers had overstayed their visas and should have been deported. It is no surprise that terrorists are trying to exploit weak border security on the U.S.-Mexico border to enter the United States undetected.

In addition to national security concerns, illegal immigration along the U.S.-Mexico border hurts U.S. citizen and legal immigrant workers. Last year, 556,041 individuals were apprehended while trying to enter the U.S.

According to T.J. Bonner, the head of the U.S. Border Patrol Council, for each illegal immigrant apprehended, two illegal immigrants enter successfully. That means an estimated one million people succeed in crossing into the United States illegally each year. That's roughly the population of cities like Dallas; San Jose, Calif., or Detroit.

While millions of Americans are struggling to find work, there are an estimated seven million illegal immigrants in the U.S. workforce. Legal American workers should not have to compete with illegal immigrants for scarce jobs.

Worksite enforcement could help make those much-needed jobs available for U.S. citizen and legal immigrant workers. But under President Barack Obama, worksite enforcement administrative arrests are down 77 percent.

Real border security means stopping the flow of illegal drugs into the United States and putting an end to illegal immigration. The Obama administration can do much more to protect American lives and jobs.

Though Napolitano may not want to admit it, the southern U.S. border is far from secure. Illegal immigration, drug smuggling and drug-related violence continue to threaten Americans across the country. Since President Felipe Calderon took office three years ago, there have been more than 28,000 violent deaths on the Mexican side of the U.S.-Mexican border due to drug cartel violence.

More than 900 U.S. Border Patrol agents have been assaulted this year. This includes the murder of Robert Rosas, who was on patrol near San Diego, Calif..

Drug cartel violence is a serious problem in Mexico. An Investor's Business Daily editorial noted last month, "Beheadings, stonings, car bombs and terrorist attacks speak to a lust for power every bit as implacable as that of the Afghanistan's Taliban or insurgents in Iraq."

Unfortunately, the Obama administration continues to promote policies that fund the violence

along the border.

Marijuana, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration, is the “top revenue generator for Mexican drug trafficking organizations, a cash crop that finances corruption and the carnage of violence year after year.”

But rather than enforce federal drug laws that prohibit marijuana use, the Obama administration issued a directive to prosecutors not to investigate medical marijuana dispensaries in the 14 states that allow them. These dispensaries are often fronts for illegal marijuana distribution.

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We already know terrorists exploit weaknesses in the U.S. immigration system to come here. Several of the 9-11 hijackers had overstayed their visas and should have been deported. It is no surprise that terrorists are trying to exploit weak border security on the U.S.-Mexico border to enter the United States undetected.

In addition to national security concerns, illegal immigration along the U.S.-Mexico border hurts U.S. citizen and legal immigrant workers. Last year, 556,041 individuals were apprehended while trying to enter the U.S.

According to T.J. Bonner, the head of the U.S. Border Patrol Council, for each illegal immigrant apprehended, two illegal immigrants enter successfully. That means an estimated one million people succeed in crossing into the United States illegally each year. That's roughly the population of cities like Dallas; San Jose, Calif., or Detroit.

While millions of Americans are struggling to find work, there are an estimated seven million illegal immigrants in the U.S. workforce. Legal American workers should not have to compete with illegal immigrants for scarce jobs.

Worksite enforcement could help make those much-needed jobs available for U.S. citizen and legal immigrant workers. But under President Barack Obama, worksite enforcement administrative arrests are down 77 percent.

Real border security means stopping the flow of illegal drugs into the United States and putting an end to illegal immigration. The Obama administration can do much more to protect American lives and jobs.

<http://news.gather.com/viewArticle.action?articleId=281474978615111>

105 tons of Marijuana seized in Northern Mexico

19 October 2010

Mexican law enforcement has reported confiscating a massive 105 tons of marijuana while it

was en route to the US. The grab was heralded as the largest in recent history. Along with the marijuana, authorities also confiscated the trailers, two trucks, and two large firearms” in the haul. Eleven arrests were made.

Did someone forget to pay their bribe to Mexican officials for selling grass? Naughty naughty!

According CNN, authorities targeted vehicles suspected of hauling the reefer and after some resistance in which one government agent, and one drug-runner were injured, the suspects were subdued. After arrest, the suspects were said to have offered information on where to find more pot. Altogether law enforcement collected 10,000 packages of marijuana bundled for shipment.

Yay! Mexico's financial problems are over! Now they can sell the marijuana to stupid Americans!

In an unrelated piece of information, CNN wire staff also mentioned that, in the past year, 28,000 people have died in drug-related violence. These deaths are the fault of the American people for both criminalizing a plant, which creates the black market initially, and for continuing to buy the stuff thereafter. Were we to just decriminalize marijuana, tax it, and regulate it, we would take the profit incentive out of the scheme for drug cartels.

<http://www.dvb.no/news/opium-production-soaring-warns-un-drugs-tzar/12294>

Opium production soaring warns UN Drug Tzar

19 October 2010

Following years of decline, opium production in Burma is now trending “relentlessly upward”, the UN’s top drugs official warned in a speech yesterday.

Gary Lewis, head of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for East Asia, said Burmese output had soared over the past four years and now accounted for more than 95 percent of Southeast Asian production. “We cannot afford to take our eyes off the drug threat – something which I rather fear has happened in our region over the past decade,” he told an international crime conference in Melbourne.

Ethnic rebel groups such as the United Wa State Army (UWSA) and the Kokang used to dominate poppy cultivation in Shan state, where the vast majority of Burma’s opium is produced. In recent years such groups have shifted to amphetamine production, which is more reliable and difficult to detect.

But as the Wa and Kokang have moved out of opium, others in western Shan state have moved in. “It’s the balloon effect. When the Wa and Kokang stopped growing, investors in other parts of Shan state decided to grow,” said Khuensai Jaiyen of Shan Drug Watch.

Journalist and Burma expert Bertil Lintner said there was still some poppy cultivation in Wa areas, but most now took place west of the Salween River. “It’s a larger area with more groups involved,” he said.

The Burmese military’s policy of self-reliance for its units was pushing it into opium cultivation and the industry is now dominated by junta-controlled militias, Khunsai said. “It has to look after itself. If you look closely you will find that the expansion of opium fields corresponds to the expansion of the military units in Shan state.”

Shan Drug Watch reports the Burmese regime’s nominal drugs eradication programme “has

fallen way behind schedule, with 46 of Shan State's 55 townships still growing opium". It attributed this to the army's "reliance on taxation of opium, and its policy to allow numerous proxy local militia to deal in drugs, including methamphetamines, in exchange for policing against resistance activity".

All sides, including the UWSA, continue to refine opium into heroin, said Khuensai. Burma remains the second-largest source of the drug after Afghanistan. Most is smuggled into China, India, Southeast Asia and, to a lesser extent, North America.

China has recently seen a rapid increase in drug addiction, as heroin floods across the border from Shan state. More than 60,000 people registered as heroin addicts in Yunnan province last year, a leap from 50,000 the year before, according to an official at an organisation which provides treatment for drug users along the China-Burma border.

Most experts agree that as long as there is conflict in ethnic Burma, drugs production will follow as a means to fund it. The Burmese army's plans to absorb the UWSA and other ethnic armies as border guard forces is the latest source of tension. The UWSA opposes the plan and is believed to be flooding Thailand with methamphetamine to raise funds in preparation for a showdown with the junta.

Thailand's northern branch of the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) reported a surge in seizures of amphetamine tablets to 10.8 million between January and August 2010, from 2.9 million in the same period last year.

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FLORIDA

<http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2010/nov/15/editorial-drug-abuse-down-among-students-but-a/>

Drug abuse down among students

16 November 2010

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/16/1929589/caffeinated-alcohol-risk-or-reward.html>

Caffeinated alcohol: Risk or reward?

17 November 2010

NATIONAL

<http://healthland.time.com/2010/11/16/will-the-fda-ban-sales-of-four-loko/>

Will the FDA ban sales of Four Loko?

16 November 2010

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/loko-removes-caffeine-energy-drink/story?id=12167659&tqkw=&tqshow=GMA>

Four Loko removes caffeine from energy drink

17 November 2010

<http://www.delawareonline.com/article/20101117/OPINION11/11170304/1004/OPINION/Parental-involvement-is-key-to-drug-prevention>

Parents involvement is key to drug prevention

17 November 2010

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More states doing employee drug testing

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Heroin addiction rose 90% since 2007 according to SAMHSA

17 November 2010

INTERNATIONAL

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Sister of tragic Megan Gillian: "Make bullying a crime"

17 November 2010

FLORIDA

<http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2010/nov/15/editorial-drug-abuse-down-among-students-but-a/>

Drug abuse down among students

16 November 2010

An annual survey of drug use among Florida middle and high school students offers some encouraging news. While marijuana use is up slightly and alcohol use remains above national figures, overall drug abuse among students is down.

The recently released Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey of nearly 73,000 middle school and high school students was done by the Florida Office of Drug Control.

"I see this as great news for Florida," said Bruce Grant, director of the agency. "It shows that prevention does work and that if you focus communities, you focus neighborhoods and you focus the state on these issues, you can make a difference. But, you can't overcome everything."

The annual survey has been conducted since 2000, and while the trends for drug abuse are generally down, there needs to be concern that early intervention and education remain strong and that only programs that work be adequately funded.

In recent years, there has been reduced funding at the state level for some education and prevention programs, such as in tobacco use prevention. If funding for quality anti-drug programs is not sufficient, positive trends could quickly reverse.

The survey found that the use of alcohol or other drugs has declined among students from 60 percent to 56 percent in the past decade.

During the past three years, however, marijuana use has increased among students from 15 percent to 19 percent.

Among those releasing the survey results was Gil Kerlikowske, former Port St. Lucie and Fort Pierce police chief, director of the White House Office of Drug Control Policy.

Increased marijuana use in Florida is similar to increased use nationwide, he said, calling the trend "very concerning."

Still, the biggest concern in Florida is with alcohol abuse. Overall, 28.8 percent of students said they use alcohol. While that is down from 34.3 percent during the decade, it remains excessively high. Binge drinking, which has declined from 18.8 percent to 14.1 percent, is also worth concern and action.

One positive note in regard to alcohol abuse is that students are waiting longer to try alcohol.

Prevention programs that work must be replicated and adequately funded. Some programs work better than others.

In recent years, concerns have been raised, for example, about the effectiveness of the popular Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program.

Whatever programs a community or school district adopts, though, the goal must be to encourage young people to avoid drugs and to do so in a positive and continuing way.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/16/1929589/caffeinated-alcohol-risk-or-reward.html>

Caffeinated alcohol: risk or reward?

17 November 2010

What will college kids miss most about high-octane alcoholic energy drinks like Four Loko -- aka "blackout in a can" -- which the Food and Drug Administration is expected to ban?

"I'm gonna miss the shakes, the headaches, the blackouts, the colorful vomit," someone with the Twitter name eriinneuwirth tweeted Tuesday, after word of the FDA's decision spread.

"RIP Four Loko."

After a yearlong study, the FDA has concluded that caffeine is an unsafe food additive to alcoholic drinks. At least six deaths in Florida have been linked to Four Loko, the top-selling brand, including University of Miami rugby player Kelly McConnell, who police say was hit by a drunken driver.

FDA spokeswoman Siobhan DeLancey would not confirm any upcoming action but said the agency recognizes "this very important public health issue."

The brightly colored cans could be off store shelves in a week. If there's any left.

"I've already heard students talking about stocking up," said University of Miami student Nicolette Roque, who wrote a front-page story about the drinks for the UM Hurricane newspaper on Sept. 22. "They're wanting to hoard. They think it's less threatening to their health than a couple of beers."

So what's the attraction?

A fast, cheap drunk -- with the illusion of extreme alertness, according to Four Loko fans.

The concoction comes in fruity flavors like punch, lemon-lime, cranberry, orange, grape and blue raspberry. A 23.5-ounce can sells for about \$2.50 at convenience stores and gas stations and, with a 12 percent alcohol content, packs the punch of four beers.

One can has about the same amount of caffeine as a cup of coffee, and contains energy-drink ingredients like taurine, guarana and wormwood -- a key ingredient in absinthe.

UM junior Yorence Ramiz, 20, said that since the cans look like energy drinks, "many of the employees don't even think there is alcohol in them, making it easier for teenagers to get it."

Several studies have suggested that people who drink products like Four Loko engage in riskier behavior than alcohol alone. Caffeine masks the effects of alcohol, making drinkers think they can continue to imbibe past the point of drunkenness.

Four states have already banned the drinks.

Dr. Mary Claire O'Brien, a professor of emergency medicine at Wake Forest University, warned the FDA last year that the alcohol-caffeine combination is dangerous.

"There's a particular interaction that goes on in the brain when they are consumed simultaneously," she said. "The addition of the caffeine impairs the ability of the drinker to tell when they're drunk. What is the level at which it becomes dangerous? We don't know that, and until we can figure it out, the answer is that no level is safe."

This fall, UM administrators passed out fliers on campus titled "The Lowdown on Four Loko: By The Numbers," to educate students about risks.

Pat Whitely, UM's vice president of student affairs, said she has heard student leaders responding positively.

Phusion Projects, which makes Four Loko, defends its product on the company website.

"While we don't agree with the notion that mixing caffeine and alcohol is inherently unsafe, we do agree with the goal of keeping adults of legal age who choose to drink responsibly as safe and as informed as possible," company officials wrote.

They continued: "If product-specific bans remain the preferred course of action, we will protect our rights as a business to the fullest extent of the law."

Although Four Loko flies off his shelves on the weekends in Coral Gables, Gulf Liquors manager Noel Delvalle said he supports a ban of caffeinated alcoholic drinks.

"The problem is not the product, it's that the kids drink it too fast so they get high or drunk," said Delvalle, who sells 10 cases of Four Loko a week at \$2.39 a can. "The kids don't care about the flavor. They care about the alcoholic content."

Ramiz, the UM junior, said that "you usually start to feel tipsy after one can. After the second one, you should be good for the night.

"If you dare to pop a third can, be ready to pray to the porcelain god."

NATIONAL

<http://healthland.time.com/2010/11/16/will-the-fda-ban-sales-of-four-loko/>

Will the FDA ban sales of Four Loko?

16 November 2010

On the heels of several statewide [bans](#) on alcoholic energy drinks like Four Loko and Joose, the Food and Drug Administration is expected to weigh in this week on the safety of drinks that mix caffeine and alcohol.

This past weekend, a collective of New York State's largest beer distributors, along with Four Loko-maker Phusion Projects, [agreed](#) to stop supplying the drinks to local stores by Dec 10. So far, four other states have banned the drinks outright, following several incidents of serious drunkenness, illness and death. (**More on Time.com:** [4 Reasons Binge Drinking Is a Public Health Problem](#))

Four Loko, the top-selling alcoholic energy drink, was [implicated](#) in the recent deaths of two Florida teenagers — one mixed the drink with diet pills and the other shot himself after drinking several cans of Four Loko. The drink was also recently found at the [scene](#) of a kidnapping and torture case in New York City, and has been blamed for the hospitalization or illness of students who consumed it at college parties at Central Washington University, Skidmore College and Ramapo College in New Jersey, among others.

Four Loko contains about 12% alcohol (the equivalent of two beers) and about as much caffeine as a cup of coffee. The combination [tricks](#) drinkers into thinking they are not as drunk they are, because the caffeine keeps them alert. For many drinkers — especially teenagers and college students, among whom the drink is popular — this mixing of alcohol and caffeine can turn deadly. (**More on Time.com:** ['Blackout in a Can': Alcoholic Energy Drinks Keep Wreaking Havoc](#))

"There's a particular interaction that goes on in the brain when they are consumed simultaneously," Dr. Mary Claire O'Brien, a professor of emergency medicine at Wake Forest University [told](#) the New York Times. "The addition of the caffeine impairs the ability of the drinker to tell when they're drunk. What is the level at which it becomes dangerous? We don't know that, and until we can figure it out, the answer is that no level is safe."

The FDA has been reviewing the safety of alcoholic energy drinks, which come in about 40 different varieties, for the past year. The agency is expected to come to a decision as soon as Wednesday, Nov. 17. The Times reports:

The agency declined to say what it would do, but several food safety lawyers who once worked for it said a likely option was to use warning letters to inform manufacturers that the drinks were adulterated and, therefore, not safe.

...

Such letters would probably give the companies a deadline to reformulate the drinks voluntarily or take them off the market.

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/loko-removes-caffeine-energy-drink/story?id=12167659&tqkw=&tqshow=GMA>

Four Loko removes caffeine from energy drink

17 November 2010

The makers of a controversial [caffeinated alcoholic energy drink](#) are removing the caffeine from the product following widespread outcry over safety concerns.

Dozens of students have been hospitalized after drinking [Four Loko](#), police said.

Four states have now banned the product, and New York Sen. Charles Schumer's office is reporting that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is set to rule as early as today that the drink is unsafe and may be banned.

The makers of the drink, Chicago-based Phusion Projects, maintain their product is safe, but say they're removing the caffeine "after trying unsuccessfully to navigate a difficult and politically-charged regulatory environment at both the state and federal levels," in a statement posted on their [website](#).

It's a bittersweet victory for Joe and Vicki Keiran, who say their 20-year-old son, Jason, died after becoming wired and drunk after drinking at least three cans of the energy drink Four Loko. The amount he consumed was the equivalent of 18 light beers and 6 cups of coffee.

Each fruit punch-flavored 23.5-ounce can has about 2.82 ounces of alcohol and about 156 milligrams of caffeine.

The family's attorney, Don Van Dingenen, says the Florida State sophomore picked up a friend's gun after partying with his roommates for 30 hours straight on Sept. 17.

"They say he started to act crazy. He pointed the gun at his head and everyone else. He said 'I realize I'm freaking you guys out take the gun away from me,'" Van Dingenen said.

The Keirans believe the drink caused their son to become so manic and erratic that he accidentally shot himself. They say they are suing the makers of Four Loko to send a message that this and other similar products need to be banned.

The medical examiner's office has not ruled on whether Jason Keiran's death was an accidental shooting or suicide.

However, friends who witnessed the tragedy say it was an accident and his parents say he would never have taken his own life on purpose.

"I just miss him more and more every day I wish he would e-mail me I wish he would call me -- I wish he was coming home for Thanksgiving," Vicki Keiran said.

The Keirans say they talked with their son's friends after his death, and the drink kept coming up in conversation. Then, they started hearing stories about young people across the country who had behaved erratically after ingesting the product.

Police say dozens of students have been hospitalized including nine from Central Washington University who became violently ill at a party.

Four Loko "should have a skull and crossbones on it and sitting up there beside rat poison on the shelf," said Joe Keiran.

The makers of Four Loko had no comment on the Keirans' lawsuit, but they condemned underage drinking, noting that their product was intended for adults only.

<http://www.delawareonline.com/article/20101117/OPINION11/11170304/1004/OPINION/Parental-involvement-is-key-to-drug-prevention>

Parental involvement is key to drug prevention

17 November 2010

The softening of young people's perception of the harms from illegal drug use continues with the starkest impact on the nation's minority teens.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy data show significant increases in drug use among young African-American teen girls and Hispanic teen boys between 2008 and 2009.

Drug use among black/non-Hispanic females ages 12 to 17 increased from 7.3 percent in 2008 to 10.4 percent in 2009, and

Hispanic males of the same age group from 9.2 percent in 2008 to 12.8 percent in 2009; increases of 43 percent and 39 percent, respectively.

The government's prescription for the problem is continued aggressive outreach with vital prevention and treatment resources from community, school and religious leaders, in partnership with parents, who truly bear the mother lode of responsibility.

And to do so each one will need to keep up to date on the latest trends. For example, many students combine perfectly legal ingredients to make illegal drugs. Cans of whipped cream camouflage for dangerous inhalants, including nitrous oxide.

In Delaware, officials cite a rise in methamphetamine, Ecstasy and "date rape" sedatives at the beach resorts provided by outsiders and made available at nightclubs and teen parties during the summer.

Such knowledge becomes useless, though, without a mutually respectful relationship between parents and their soon-to-be young adult children.

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/more-states-doing-employee-drug-testing-firing-108650029.html>

More states doing employee drug testing

17 November 2010

CHICAGO, Nov. 17, 2010 /PRNewswire/ -- The increase in prescription painkillers is prompting more states to conduct employee drug testing. Now 15 states have pro-drug testing laws that allow employers to test and terminate workers based on results. Yet, some employees who are testing positive for prescription meds went on them due to work-related injuries.

Recently, The New York Times featured Americans who suffered job loss due to positive drug tests (http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/25/us/25drugs.html?_r=2&pagewanted=1&src=twr). Now pro-drug testing states are expanding testing to go beyond cocaine, marijuana and natural opiates – codeine and morphine – and into synthetic opiates such as OxyContin and Vicodin. Pro-drug testing laws give companies a benefit – a discount on their workers' compensation premium – for screening employees. Advocates say that incentive supports a safer workplace; opponents say the real issue -- dangerous drug dependency – isn't being addressed or treated.

Now Americans who are jobless as a result of positive drug testing are asking why their companies didn't take a more caring approach. One company has developed a program that takes *care* into consideration. Rising Medical Solutions' (www.risingms.com) "Ask-A-Nurse" program adds a medical professional's guidance back into the claims process, resulting in faster, healthier return-to-work cases and safer workplaces.

Companies refer cases to "Ask-A-Nurse" for several reasons:

- A patient's care becomes static or worsens.
- A patient doesn't understand the diagnosis or prescribed treatment.
- A patient's drug use is potentially hazardous.
- A patient's claim isn't getting resolved in a reasonable timeframe.

Rising receives these types of cases and a nurse evaluates treatment guidelines, care provided and drugs prescribed. Often, the patient has been using opiates or short-acting narcotics for too long. Rising's Physician Pharmacy Reviewer gathers the drug use data and provides a summary to the treating physician to discuss a healthier treatment plan, timeline and drug weaning program. This is just one way the "Ask-A-Nurse" program impacts costs.

"Runaway cases impact America's whole healthcare cost structure," says Jamey Masingill, Vice President of Claims, FirstComp Insurance Company. "Rising keeps an eye on the injured party's long-term picture, returning to work stable and healthy."

Rising's Medical Review Unit Director, Anne Kirby cites "runaway" cases as destructive to all parties. "When cases go unmonitored there's a higher propensity for rebound. Too often meds go unsupervised and an injured worker returns to work on heavy doses of narcotics, jeopardizing their own life and others."

As Americans struggle to hold onto their jobs and healthcare coverage, medical oversight on workers' compensation cases is imperative. Moreover, with healthcare reform, monitoring prescription use will become more necessary as additional people enter the system. So while losing a job is a difficult pill to swallow, it is perhaps even more difficult knowing that preventative tools are available that could have helped an employee avoid such a devastating loss.

About Rising Medical Solutions Inc.

Rising Medical Solutions is a national medical-financial solutions firm that provides medical bill review, hospital bill review and medical cost containment services to the group health, auto, workers' compensation, and liability markets. *Inc.* magazine and the Private Company Index (PCI) rank the Chicago-based company as one of the fastest growing private enterprises in America.

<http://www.staho.com/heroin-addiction-rose-90-percent-since-2007-according-to-samhsa/207320/>

Heroin addiction rose 90% since 2007 according to SAMHSA

17 November 2010

Beverly Hills, California – A recent study by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health released by the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) showed the overall number of individuals struggling with heroin addiction rose by nearly 90 percent since 2007, from 213,000 to 399,000 people.

The study also revealed that within the same time frame, the number of first-time users increased 70 percent – from 106,000 to 180,000 individuals – with the average age of 25 but also with kids as young as 12 trying the drug.

The Wasimann Method of Opiate Detoxification is a pioneering medical opiate detoxification procedure, and on November 16 it reported a substantial increase in the number of teenagers and young adults seeking treatment for their heroin addiction. According to Clare W. Kavin, addiction specialist with the Wasimann Method, Oxycontin is still the number one opiate among patients, but increasingly more impressionable teens and young adults experience heroin addiction.

Kavin added that the number of young people with a heroin addiction has already reached alarming dimensions, and it is extremely important to educate both parents and young adults about the health risks and potentially fatal dangers of the drug before heroin addiction develops into a life-long social-psychological dependency issue. According to the same SAMHSA survey, one in eight teenagers under the age of 18 find heroin to be “fairly” or even “very” accessible. In such situations, the Wasimann Method encourages teens and young adults to acknowledge the dangers of drug abuse and take charge of their heroin addiction by seeking proper care.

The Wasimann Method of Opiate Detoxification provides a safe and humane treatment for opiate dependency, performed in a hospital intensive care unit. It carefully administers medications to reverse the psychological dependence on opiates, while also addressing the symptoms of withdrawal. The patient experiences minimal conscious withdrawal during the procedure, and will be able to return home within days.

INTERNATIONAL

http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1371450_sister_of_tragic_megan_gillan_make_bullying_a_crime

Sister of traffic Megan Gillian: “Make bullying a crime”

17 November 2010

The sister of a schoolgirl who took a fatal overdose because she was being bullied has called for the government to make bullying a crime.

Megan Gillan was 15 and a pupil at Macclesfield High School when she was found dead in her bedroom by her parents at Flying Fields Drive in January last year. An inquest recorded it as an accidental death.

Megan's parents, Mark and Margaret Gillan, called for social networking sites to be monitored when the inquest into Megan's death heard she took painkillers to kill herself after classmates waged a hate campaign against her on Bebo.

Megan's oldest sister Hayley Heffernan, 31, became an ambassador for bullying charity Beatbullying which wants a bill to protect children and teachers at school or online. Hayley, a travel agent, is due to hand over a petition with 700,000 signatures to deputy prime minister Nick Clegg today.

It is part of an internet protest – the first of its kind – to ask the government to make bullying a criminal offence.

Hayley said: "There needs to be a change in the law – both online and in schools

Schools have to have a bullying policy but they should be made to use it so bullies pay for their actions. Schools choose not to act because it looks bad. Megan's high school didn't handle it properly."

Beatbullying's The Big March is the world's first virtual protest for children's rights and started on Monday to mark Anti-Bullying Week.

The 750,000 'virtual demonstrators' includes Archbishop Desmond Tutu, teachers, more than 100 parliamentarians and thousands of children.

A Cheshire East Council spokesman said: "Megan's death shocked and saddened the whole school. She was a bubbly and intelligent young person with a bright future.

"Social networking sites cannot be accessed from school computers.

"Macclesfield High School has a robust anti-bullying policy which is annually reviewed.

Following Megan's death the headteacher and governing body examined the policy and were satisfied."

n Youth centre Just Drop-In and anti-bullying champion Jade Prest teamed up to run three Macclesfield events, including a road trip to Macclesfield College where Jade studied.

A window display at 14 Duke Street where people can get advice was also produced.

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FLORIDA

http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2010-10-26/news/os-synthetic-marijuana-crackdown-20101026_1_synthetic-marijuana-herbal-smoking-blends-packages

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26 October 2010

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Prescription drug drop off this weekend

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Florida, State military studying suicide prevention

27 October 2010

NATIONAL

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Guidance targeting harassment outlines local and federal responsibility

26 October 2010

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Alcoholic energy drink sweeping college campuses along with its dangerous side effects

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Teen Heroin addiction rising

27 October 2010

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Know when your teen is showing signs of depression

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27 October 2010

INTERNATIONAL

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Expert labels alcohol health risks among youngster shocking

27 October 2010

FLORIDA

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[packages](#)

Polk officials threaten to arrest sellers of synthetic marijuana

26 October 2010

Law-enforcement agencies in Polk County plan to be the first in the state to crack down on the sale of so-called synthetic marijuana products sold under names such as K2 and Spice.

Florida's Drug Policy Advisory Council recently urged the Florida Legislature to join 11 other states in banning the substances, but since that hasn't happened, Polk County authorities plan to use an existing state statute that makes it illegal to sell imitation controlled substances.

At least initially, only those selling the products will be targeted, said assistant State Attorney Chip Thullberry in Bartow.

The products, usually sold at small gasoline stations and mom-and-pop food stores, are sprayed with synthetic "cannabinoids" and can be purchased legally in Florida and most other states as incense.

"These synthetic marijuana products are not just being sold to adults throughout Polk County, they are routinely sold to our kids," Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd said in a statement. "K2, Spice, or whatever this stuff is packaged as, is being sold as incense or potpourri, but the sellers clearly know it is being smoked with the purpose of getting high.

K2 comes in more than a dozen aromas, with fruits such as grape, orange and strawberry, and names such as Summit, Blue, Pink and Standard. It is sold in retail packages of 3 grams, usually for about \$15 a package.

The substances are packaged as "herbal incense" or "potpourri" and warnings on packaging state they are not intended for human consumption. The packages contain herbs, spices, and various types of dried plant material sprayed with chemicals

"Because the wholesalers are telling retail stores that it is 'legal' to sell this drug, we are providing this warning to stores in Polk County: stop selling this product today, or you will be arrested for selling an imitation controlled substance, a third degree felony," Judd said.

"The compounds in Spice work on the brain in the same way as marijuana's active ingredient, THC, or tetrahydrocannabinol," Judd said. They primarily affect the central nervous system, he said.

There is no requirement to list packaging contents or ingredient amounts because the product purports that it is "not for human consumption," Polk County authorities said.

<http://www.floridatoday.com/article/20101026/BREAKINGNEWS/101026030/1006/news01/Candlelight+service+Thursday+for+victims+of+drug+abuse>

Candlelight service held Thursday for victims of substance abuse

26 October 2010

The Brevard County sheriff's office will hold a special candlelight vigil this week to draw attention to the growing problem of drug addiction and prescription drug abuse by teens and young adults.

The event is also sponsored by the Narcotic Overdose Prevention and [Education](#) Task Force, Wuesthoff Hospice and HealthFirst and will take place 7 p. m. Thursday near the reflecting pool in front of Building "C" of the Brevard County Government Center.

The public is invited to attend.

The one-hour, inaugural vigil will also feature musical selections and food for attendees.

The featured speaker will be the parent of a teenager who succumbed to a drug overdose, sheriff's officials report.

The event is free to attend and candles will be provided to participants.

<http://www.bradenton.com/2010/10/27/2686243/prescription-drug-drop-off-this.html>

Prescription drug drop off this weekend

27 October 2010

MANATEE — Manatee County residents can dispose of any unused or expired prescription and over-the-counter medication on Saturday at five Walgreens locations throughout the county from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the sheriff's office reports.

The Palmetto Police Department, Bradenton Police Department, Manatee County Substance Abuse Coalition and Walgreens have collaborated with sheriff's office on the event dubbed: Project Drug Drop.

Those who drop off their medication will receive a coupon for 15 percent off a Walgreens purchase.

At the last drug drop off in September about 175 pounds of pills were collected.

"We usually get a good turn out," said Dave Bristow, spokesman for the sheriff's office. The event is a "good opportunity for people to get rid of prescription medication," whether it's leftover pills in a bottle or a prescription that was never used.

Lt. Scott Tyler of the Palmetto Police Department said this event is important because of the number of people who abuse prescription drugs in the state.

"Statistically we know prescription drug abuse is on the rise," Tyler said.

Sharon Kramer, the executive director of the Manatee County Substance Abuse Coalition, said Florida is the largest state without a prescription drug monitoring program, according to the Broward County grand jury interim report on the proliferation of pain clinics in South Florida.

"Hopefully it will help create an awareness," Kramer said, "seven people die each day from prescription drug abuse," in Florida.

Since the drop-offs are designed so people have a safe place to dispose of their unwanted drugs, she is hopeful that there will be a successful turn out.

According to Bristow and Tyler, theft is a problem that often accompanies addiction.

"A lot of people are developing addictions with prescription drugs and will steal from their friends and family," Tyler said.

Some resort to stealing from stores, such as Walgreens.

"We've had cases when they will hold them up just for prescription narcotics," Bristow said.

Kramer echoes their message of safety when it comes to removing unused medications from homes.

"By getting them out you're making the community a safer place," she said.

The sheriff's office is planning on more of these drop off days throughout the year.

Walgreens locations with Project Drug Drop:

* 4220 Manatee Ave. W., Bradenton

* 5896 Cortez Road, Bradenton

* 4210 State Road 64 E., Bradenton

* 6003 14th St. W., Bradenton

* 930 Eighth Ave. W., Palmetto

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/10/27/1893855/fla-state-military-studying-suicide.html>

Florida-State Military studying suicide prevention

27 October 2010

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- Florida State University is preparing to announce a new research effort into military suicides.

Florida State professor Thomas Joiner, who has studied suicide issues for many years, will join researchers from the U.S. Army and the Denver VA Medical Center to discuss an initiative they believe can help reduce military suicides.

More than 1,100 members of the armed forces killed themselves from 2005 to 2009, and suicides have been rising again this year.

Just last month, Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius launched the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, a public and private coalition dedicated to reducing suicides across the U.S. population.

NATIONAL

<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/guidance-targeting-harassment-outlines-local-and-federal-responsibility>

Guidance targeting harassment outlines local and federal responsibility

26 October 2010

Washington, D.C. — Today, the Department of Education issued guidance to support educators in combating bullying in schools by clarifying when student bullying may violate federal education anti-discrimination laws. The guidance issued today also makes clear that while current laws enforced by the department do not protect against harassment based on religion or sexual orientation, they do include protection against harassment of members of religious groups based on shared ethnic characteristics as well as gender and sexual harassment of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgender individuals.

The guidance, which comes in the form of a "Dear Colleague" letter sent to schools, colleges and universities, explains educators' legal obligations to protect students from student-on-student racial and national origin harassment, sexual and gender-based harassment, and disability harassment. The letter provides examples of harassment and illustrates how a school should respond in each case.

The White House and Department of Education also announced next steps to address bullying and harassment in schools. Early next year, the White House will host a conference to raise awareness and equip young people, parents, educators, coaches and other community leaders with tools to prevent bullying and harassment. This conference will build upon efforts led by the U.S. Department of Education and other federal agencies to spark a dialogue on the ways in which communities can come together to prevent bullying and harassment.

"We've got to dispel the myth that bullying is just a normal rite of passage, or an inevitable part of growing up. It's not," said President Obama. "We have an obligation to ensure that our schools are safe for all of our kids. Every single young person deserves the opportunity to learn and grow and achieve their potential, without having to worry about the constant threat of harassment."

"Bullying is a problem that shouldn't exist. No one should ever feel harassed or unsafe in a school simply because they act or think or dress differently than others," said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "To every student who feels threatened or harassed—for whatever reason—please know that you are not alone. Please know that there are people who love you. And please know that we will protect you," Duncan continued.

"Students cannot learn if they feel threatened or harassed," said Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Russlynn Ali. "We want to keep students safe and learning, and today's guidance will help us do that."

Following the release of today's guidance, the Department plans to hold technical assistance workshops around the country in early 2011 to help educators better understand their obligations and the resources available to take prompt and effective steps that will end harassment and bullying in schools and on college campuses.

The guidance issued today is just one of several efforts in the Department of Education's comprehensive approach to end bullying. In 2009, the Department joined the Departments of Defense, Justice, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, and the Interior to form the Obama Administrations Inter-Agency Task Force on Bullying. In August of this year, the Obama administration hosted the first ever National Bullying Summit and launched both the *Stop Bullying Now Campaign* and www.bullyinginfo.org, a national database of effective anti-bullying programs.

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/alcoholic-energy-drink-sweeping-college-campuses-along-with-its-dangerous-side-effects-105797918.html>

Alcoholic energy drinks sweeping college campuses along with dangerous side effects

26 October 2010

CHICAGO, Oct. 26 /PRNewswire/ -- Nicknamed "blackout in a can" or "liquid cocaine," alcoholic energy drink Four Loko seems like the perfect cocktail because the combination of alcohol and caffeine can heighten the buzz for those drinking it. The mix can be especially tempting for college students, even more so if they have or are predisposed to alcoholism. Dr. Kimberly Dennis, Medical Director at [Timberline Knolls Residential Treatment Center](#), warns the effects can be seriously damaging to one's health, and even deadly.

Colleges across the country are banning Four Loko after the [recent events](#) at Central Washington University, where a group of students "partying" with the drink

began to pass out and suffer symptoms of toxicity. Over nine students were rushed to the hospital and more than fifty suffered serious illness.

"This incident shows just how dangerous alcohol and caffeine mixes can be when taken rapidly and in excess. Students and college administrators need to recognize the added risks of products like this," Dr. Dennis said. "One can of Four Loko contains 12 percent alcohol, significantly higher than regular beers, and then it adds high amounts of caffeine on top of that."

Dr. Dennis says the caffeine in Four Loko can suspend the effects of [alcohol consumption](#), allowing a person to consume more than usual without being aware of his or her level of intoxication. When the caffeine wears off the results can be deadly. "The caffeine masks awareness of the effects of the alcohol, even though the blood alcohol level changes with each drink," she warns. "As a result, those drunk on energy drink and alcohol mixes are able to stay awake, even when their bodies would normally shut down from alcohol intoxication, which makes them more prone to health risks, including death." A [University of Florida](#) study also showed that Four Loko drinkers are more inclined to attempt to drive after consuming the beverage in excess than those who consumed only alcohol.

Once the caffeine wears off, the full force of the alcohol content will hit the body, with all of the physical ramifications. And with its low price point (\$2.50 a can) the drink seems perfectly tailored to the college-age drinker that may not know when enough is enough. "Regulatory bodies need to consider taking this off the market...college students die from alcohol poisoning regularly in this country using standard products alone," said Dr. Dennis.

<http://behavioralhealthcentral.com/index.php/20101026240341/Latest-News/jennifer-act-would-give-parents-new-way-to-push-adult-children-into-addictions-treatment-herald-times-bloomington-ind.html>

Jennifer Act would give parents new way to push adult children into addictions treatment

26 October 2010

Oct. 26--In 2002, when Jennifer Reynolds was addicted to heroin, her mother, Sharon Blair, began writing the Jennifer Act, a bill that provides procedures for the involuntary commitment of a person due to alcohol or drug abuse.

She finished the bill shortly after Jennifer died Jan. 15, 2009, at age 29.

"Parents feel helpless when their kids are addicted to drugs," Blair said. "They are paralyzed by fear, and don't know what to do."

She said if an adult child is enveloped in full-blown addiction and unwilling to get assessed and treated, parents need something to help that become a reality.

"The Jennifer Act is a tool that can help parents provide their child with the help he or she needs," she said. "As things are now, there's nothing a parent can do unless the child breaks the law."

Blair said if the Jennifer Act were to pass, parents of a drug-addicted adult child could go to a courthouse and file a petition with a judge.

The judge could sign an order for the person to be picked up involuntarily and taken to a hospital or drug treatment facility to get assessed and have a plan of action put together. The parent could then go back to the judge, and the judge could order the person to do the treatment plan.

The act also would allow a judge to order a person to go to a lock-down treatment facility from which they could not escape.

"These are treatment facilities where you can't just walk out the front door," Blair said. "If you do, the sheriff will pick you up and take you back."

Blair thinks forcing an addicted adult child into treatment is the right thing to do.

"If you have an elderly family member with dementia, you can obtain power of attorney over them because they can no longer make rational decisions," she said. "The Jennifer Act is similar, in the sense that it gives parents the power to make decisions about what is best for a child because the child is not in his or her right mind due to drug addiction."

The Jennifer Act also requires the Department of Correction and county jails to provide rehabilitation services to all offenders with alcohol or drug addictions. The offenders would have their choice between faith-based treatment or secular treatment.

"If offenders don't receive treatment for the root cause of their problem, we end up arresting and re-arresting them," Blair said. "Most of them never get a chance to get treatment outside the prison system, because they are too poor to pay for it. If we can successfully rehab them while they're in jail, we are not only saving their lives, but saving taxpayers a lot of money."

Blair said Florida state Rep. Darryl Rousen officially drafted the bill last year, but was unable to introduce it.

"He's up for re-election this year and if he wins, he will re-draft the bill and try to introduce it," she said.

Blair and her husband, Andy Blair, moved from Largo, Fla., to Bloomington last year. Once in Indiana, Blair wasted little time showing the bill to state Sen. Vi Simpson.

Simpson and state Sen. Sue Errington from Muncie drafted the bill -- Senate Bill 380 -- and introduced it to the Indiana General Assembly Jan. 12. It was referred to the Senate corrections committee, where it did not get a hearing and died. Simpson plans to redraft the bill and introduce it to the General Assembly again in January.

"My hat's off to Sen. Simpson for working so hard on this bill," Blair said. "In Indiana, we have no bill that can help parents intervene on behalf of their addicted kids. It's something this state desperately needs."

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130832710>

Will Legalizing Pot wipe out the Black Market?

27 October 2010

In California, supporters of Proposition 19 liken their cause to the lifting of prohibition on alcohol nearly 80 years ago. Making pot legal and regulating it like alcohol, they say, could raise millions in tax revenues, and wipe out the black market, along with the social costs associated with it.

But breaking the underground trade in marijuana might not be so easy.

This past summer, dozens of drug agents in paramilitary gear marched into a remote area of northern California, west of the town of Redding. As helicopters swirled over the sun-baked hills, the agents used machetes to chop down more than 10,000 bright green marijuana plants. The plants were then lashed into 500-pound bundles and airlifted out.

For Lt. Steve Solus of the Shasta County sheriff's office, this operation was one of dozens of raids on illegal pots farms this year.

"There's lots of water. The growing temperature is just right. The elevations are just right. And the big thing they have here is I-5 [Interstate 5]," Solus says. All of those conditions make it easy to transport the marijuana out, he says.

Marijuana Fields In Northern California

Marijuana seizures are running at record levels in California, having more than tripled since 2005. But drug agents say they are getting only a fraction of the total

crop. And in California's saturated pot market, dealers big and small are moving the drug out of state in ever larger quantities, using everything from overnight delivery services to tractor-trailers.

"We're seeing more and more of the marijuana cultivated in California being exported where there is a market that will pay more," says Bill Ruzzamenti, a former special agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration who now heads a regional agency that monitors drug trafficking in California.

Ruzzamenti says the pot cultivation boom in California began soon after voters legalized medical marijuana 14 years ago. Now, he believes, California could be a net exporter of the drug.

Literally, we have had shipments of marijuana from California seized in all 50 states. And they're going to where they can maximize their profits.

The surging demand for California-grown marijuana is good news for some growers and bad news for the drug war. But the trend could challenge a key goal of Proposition 19 - wiping out the illegal drug trade.

The Effect On The Black Market

A TV ad featuring former San Jose police chief Joe McNamara began airing this week, claiming that if passed, Proposition 19 "will generate billions of dollars for local communities, allow police to focus on violent crimes and put drug cartels out of business."

In an interview, McNamara drew parallels to the repeal of alcohol prohibition.

"Al Capone and his bootleg gangsters were shooting up the streets not because they were drunk on booze. It was for the vast underworld profits. And once alcohol was legalized, it put them out of business as bootleggers. And that's the goal of Prop 19 that would be achieved very quickly," McNamara said.

But opponents argue the black market will persist because the measure will not change federal law or statutes in other states.

"There are millions of plants being grown illegally," says George Mull, who heads the California Cannabis Association, a medical marijuana group that opposes Proposition 19. "A lot of it is being sent out of the state. There's no way to think that if Prop 19 passes, those same people are going to register their [marijuana] grows and then keep all of their plants here in California."

Mull says even if Proposition 19 passes, the black market will continue, because prices will stay higher in other states where pot remains illegal, leaving in place a premium for smugglers.

"There's a great deal of incentive to sell your product where you can get a higher price," Mull says.

NPR Special Series

NPR spoke with more than a dozen growers, from big illegal players to small-scale cultivators, and they agreed that the black market would persist, unless marijuana is legalized at a national level.

One of them is an illegal grower who works in a bunker-like growing facility located in a rural area north of San Francisco. In a large garage retrofitted with vents, fans and expensive air filters, several rows of squat marijuana plants stand in 20-gallon pots with buds about the size of golf balls, almost ready for harvest.

The grower, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, has grown marijuana illegally for years. He has also acted as a broker to major trafficking groups that ship thousands of pounds of pot out of California every six months. He says legalization in California would force prices down and probably take street dealers out of business.

But higher prices for exports would keep other illegal growers and dealers afloat. Even a massive crackdown by law enforcement probably would not affect the underground market. Where there is demand and big profits to be made, there will always be supply, the man said. But other growers say it's not just money that keeps the black market alive.

'The Cowboy Mentality'

"There is a tradition that we come from here that is of the cowboy mentality. And that is steeped and it runs very, very deep," says Gabriel Martin who runs a legal medical marijuana collective in the coastal town of Ft. Bragg, Calif.

On a recent evening, Martin was busy making a batch of his award-winning hash, which requires mixing marijuana stems and leaves with crushed ice and then filtering the concoction through a washing machine.

Martin says many growers like himself support Proposition 19 because they are willing to trade high profits for a greater sense of security and community. But he says that does not mean the underground trade will go away.

"This is what I tell people: I mean, if you're going to engage in contraband sales - or private sales, as we call them - that market is going to consistently exist," he says. "It's anywhere you have finance, you're going to have [a] black market."

Parallels Between Alcohol and Marijuana?

Some California law enforcement officials worry that the black market could grow even stronger, with criminal gangs using legalization as a cover for massive smuggling operations.

But former police chief McNamara says similar arguments were made against the lifting of alcohol prohibition and they proved wrong. He says marijuana is no different.

"Commercial growers would be regulated," he says. "They would be controlled. They would be subject to law enforcement. And if they were illegally exporting the drug, that would be against California law as well."

McNamara says he hopes the push for legalization will spread across the country, making it easier to enforce state regulations. California voters will decide for themselves on Nov. 2.

This story was produced as part of a collaboration between member station KQED and the Center for Investigative Reporting's California Watch.

<http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/healthscience/2010/October/Report-Teen-Heroin-Addiction-Rising/>

Teen Heroin addiction rising

27 October 2010

A disturbing report on the rise of heroin use by teenagers in America's suburbs has some parents and educators worried. They're alarmed that seemingly normal teens are becoming addicted to the deadly drug.

Residents at a town hall meeting in a suburb of Washington state recently received a startling revelation. Close to 50 kids at one high school were addicted to heroin.

"To walk into your son's room and see him and friends with needles," said one parent of a heroin addict. "It's gut wrenching."

Gone are the days when marijuana reigned. Heroin is now the drug of choice for many teens in suburbs across America.

Cities and towns in Utah, Kansas, even rural Wisconsin are reporting a record number of overdoses.

Drug enforcement officials said dealers even put the logos of popular films like "Twilight" on heroin bags or give it away for free in the suburbs just to get kids hooked -- knowing that once they're addicted, they will come back for more.

"Yep, you could buy one of these bags for \$5," said John Gilbridge, a special agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Oxycontin, another popular drug among teens, has been harder to get because of stricter Food and Drug Administration guidelines.

Heroin is easier to get and it's stronger. Most heroin was about 3 percent pure in the 1970's. Today's drug is at least 60 percent pure or higher -- something that makes kicking the habit even harder.

The DEA said the problem of teen drug abuse must be confronted by parents, educators as well as the faith community.

http://www.usatoday.com/yourlife/parenting-family/teen-ya/2010-10-26-parent26_ST_N.htm

Know when your teen is showing signs of depression

26 October 2010

The news lately has been full of heartbreaking stories of suicide among teens and college students. Most of the coverage has focused on the despicable bullying these young people experienced and the fact that several were gay.

But parents of teens and young adults need to know this: While bullying may push a despairing youth over the edge, and while gay youths may be especially vulnerable, most who kill themselves have something else in common. They are depressed or have another mental illness. And while some act with youthful impulsivity, many have been flashing warning signs for months or years.

"There are signs, but a lot of times parents are not very good at detecting them," says Paula Clayton, medical director of the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#).

One problem is that "a lot of the warning signs are very similar to typical adolescent angst," says Courtney Knowles, director of The Jed Foundation, a non-profit group devoted to preventing suicide among college students.

And, often, teens do their best to hide their pain, says Laurie Flynn, executive director of TeenScreen, a non-profit group that promotes mental health screening and treatment. "Kids try so hard to put their game faces on," she says. Flynn knows: She was shocked when her own daughter attempted suicide in high school. The star student had been troubled for a while, but "I thought she was doing just fine," Flynn says.

Since then, Flynn has spoken to many young people who've "thought about killing themselves for months and months."

That means there's often time for kids to get help. "Suicide is the most preventable form of death," says Joseph Fraioli, a 22-year-old law student at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Fraioli, who says he was deeply depressed in high school, is a spokesman for Active Minds, a mental health advocacy group.

In an ideal world, these advocates say, all teens and young adults would get routine screening tests that can pick up signs of distress and suicidal thinking. Some pediatricians and some schools offer such screening, and parents should ask for it at every routine check-up, Flynn says.

But the experts say parents should call a child's doctor right away if they see signs of distress that last more than a couple of weeks. These might include:

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/27/us/27drink.html?_r=1&hp

Caffeinated Alcoholic drinks dangers are cited

27 October 2010

kids.

[More Info](#)

Mixing alcohol and caffeine is hardly a new concept, but a rash of cases involving students and others who landed at hospitals after drinking beverages that combine the two in a single large can has alarmed college and health officials around the country.

Related

- [A Mix Attractive to Students and Partygoers](#) (October 27, 2010)

The drinks are dangerous, doctors say, because the caffeine masks the effects of the alcohol, keeping consumers from realizing just how intoxicated they are.

A brand called Four Loko — a fruit-flavored malt beverage that has an alcohol content of 12 percent and as much caffeine as a cup of coffee — has come under particular scrutiny after students who drank it this fall at [Ramapo College](#) in New Jersey and [Central Washington University](#) in Ellensburg, Wash., ended up in emergency rooms, some with high levels of alcohol poisoning.

"This is one of the most dangerous new alcohol concoctions I have ever seen," said Dr. Michael Reihart, an emergency room doctor at Lancaster General Hospital in Lancaster, Pa., who said he had treated more than a dozen teenagers and adults over the last three months who had been brought there after drinking Four Loko. "It's a recipe for disaster because your body's natural defense is to get sleepy and not want to drink, but in this case you're tricking the body with the caffeine."

At the urging of 18 attorneys general, the [Food and Drug Administration](#), which has never approved adding caffeine to alcohol, is reviewing whether the drinks are safe. And in July, Senator [Charles E. Schumer](#) of New York asked the Federal Trade Commission to investigate whether the drinks, with colorful packaging and flavors like watermelon, blue raspberry and lemon-lime, are "explicitly designed to attract under-age drinkers."

Lawmakers in several states, including New York, have sought to ban the drinks, though no legislation has passed yet.

Peter Mercer, the president of Ramapo College in Mahwah, N.J., went so far as to ban energy drinks that combine caffeine and alcohol this month after six students were taken to the hospital after drinking Four Loko. One, he said, "admitted to drinking three cans of Four Loko and several shots of tequila in just over an hour."

That student had a blood alcohol level of .40 afterward, Dr. Mercer said.

"I do not see any socially redeeming purpose being served by these beverages," he said. "At the end of the day, they're aimed at a young, inexperienced market for the purpose of enabling them to become rapidly intoxicated."

Chris Hunter, a co-founder and managing partner of Phusion Projects, the five-year-old Chicago company that owns Four Loko, said Tuesday that the drink, introduced in August 2008, was being unfairly singled out. The company takes steps to prevent its products from getting into the hands of minors, he said.

"Alcohol misuse and abuse and under-age drinking are issues the industry faces and all of us would like to address," Mr. Hunter said. "The singling out or banning of one product or category is not going to solve that. Consumer education is what's going to do it."

In a [separate statement](#) published on its Web site, Phusion Projects questioned why a police investigation into the Central Washington University incident had focused on Four Loko when, according to the police report, a number of other alcoholic beverages, including beer, vodka and rum, were also found at the off-campus party where students got sick.

Rob McKenna, the attorney general in Washington, said that while many students at the party had mixed alcohols, some of those who were hospitalized had drunk only Four Loko.

"You have a product where people don't appreciate how much alcohol they're consuming," Mr. McKenna said.

Students at several universities around the country said Tuesday that Four Loko and similar drinks were catching on among their peers because they were cheap and potent yet did not taste like alcohol.

"You can get drunk for \$5 all night," said Christine Binko, a junior at Boston University who said she had noticed Four Loko cans littering streets near campus on weekends. "But I definitely think it brings out the aggression in people."

Ms. Binko and most others interviewed expressed wariness about the drinks.

At Xavier University in Cincinnati, Adam Stowe, a sophomore, said that Four Loko was showing up much more at parties, but that most people only drank one to start their night with a powerful drink and then switched to beer. "I just tasted it once and said, 'That's gross,'" he said.

Also under scrutiny is Joose, a caffeinated alcoholic beverage made by United Brands, a San Diego company. It comes in the same 23.5-ounce can as Four Loko but has a lower alcohol content, 9.9 percent, and, according to Michael Michail, the company president, less caffeine. Mr. Michail said a can of Joose contained 54 milligrams of caffeine; Mr. Hunter said a can of Four Loko contained 156 milligrams.

"It is ludicrous for someone to come out and say we are targeting under-age drinkers," Mr. Michail said. "We understand what the laws of the land are, and we stick with it."

Both Mr. Michail and Mr. Hunter said their beverages came in 23.5-ounce cans because when they started out, that was the standard for malt [liquor](#) drinks. Mr. Michail said he was considering a smaller can; Mr. Hunter said Four Loko drinkers could already choose between the version with 12 percent alcohol and another with 6 percent alcohol, though the former is far more popular.

Both Four Loko and Joose are sold in 47 states; Mr. Hunter said his company had added 10 states in the last three months alone.

"We have seven spots on our labels that identify it's an alcoholic product," he said. "We go above and beyond industry standards."

Critics, though, say that the brightly colored cans Four Loko comes in look like iced tea, soda or energy drink containers, and that it is easy to mistake the product for nonalcoholic drinks.

"I've talked to parents who were shocked because the can was in their refrigerator and they didn't realize it was an alcoholic beverage," Dr. Reihart said. "It looks like every other energy drink out there."

INTERNATIONAL

http://www.alcolim.com/Alcohol-Treatment-News/800160030_Expert-labels-alcohol-health-risks-among-youngsters-%22shocking%22.html

Expert labels alcohol health risks among youngsters shocking

27 October 2010

An expert has described the level of apparent unawareness of [alcohol health risks](#) among the UK's younger population as "shocking".

Recent research conducted by Alcohol Concern found that the cost to the NHS of treating [alcohol abuse](#) cases in people under the age of 18 was around £19 million in 2007-08, while the London Ambulance Service alone has spent £2.5 million on such instances since 2005.

And Chris Sorek, chief executive of Drinkaware, has stated that these figures provide a stark reminder about how much needs to be done to educate youngsters in Britain about the hazards of consuming the substance.

He added that the "developing bodies and low tolerance levels" of underage drinkers makes excessive drinking "extremely dangerous".

"Even drinking small amounts of alcohol is risky for children," Mr Sorek went on to say.

The expert concluded that parents have a vital role to play in making sure their offspring are aware of the damage they may be causing themselves by consuming the substance.

Peggy Lawson

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From: [Florida Prevention](#)
To: brandon@pactprevention.org
Subject: RE: (CAN YOU ADD ME TO THIS EMAIL LIST?) News Articles, Friday, November 12, 2010
Date: Monday, November 15, 2010 11:37:26 AM

Yes!

From: Brandon Colee [mailto:brandon@pactprevention.org]
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2010 11:21 AM
To: Florida Prevention
Subject: (CAN YOU ADD ME TO THIS EMAIL LIST?) News Articles, Friday, November 12, 2010

Hello Florida Prevention,

Wonderful news email! Will you please add me to your email list☺

Thank you so much.

Brandon Colee

Manager

PACT Prevention Coalition of St Johns County
1400 Old Dixie Highway
St Augustine, FL 32084
office: 904-829-6261 ext 20
email: brandon@pactprevention.org

Mission ~ To make St Johns County a healthy substance-free community through the reduction and prevention of alcohol and drug abuse by our youth with Prevention, Advocacy, Choices and Teamwork

From: Heidi Matheny [mailto:heidi@pactprevention.org]
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2010 10:56 AM
To: brandon@pactprevention.org
Subject: FW: News Articles, Friday, November 12, 2010

FYI...

Heidi L Matheny
Coalition Coordinator
PACT Prevention Coalition of St Johns County
Office: (904) 829-6261 x 43
Cell: (904) 501-1275

Mission To make St. Johns County a healthy substance-free community through the reduction and prevention of alcohol and drug abuse by our youth with Prevention, Advocacy, Choices and Teamwork.

From: Florida Prevention [mailto:FloridaPrevention@eog.myflorida.com]
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2010 10:44 AM
To: dams@nova.edu; amity_chandler@ccps.k12.fl.us; Angie Ellison; Anne Frazier; anti-drug@cox.net; aventura@unitedwaybroward.org; b_town_00@hotmail.com; bcallahan@copecenter.org; Brooke Baker; bysapc@bellsouth.net; campbell.gail@gmail.com; Carol Burkett; carrie@ovfv.org; cepps@roundtableslc.org; chrisfranzetti@aol.com; chrissy_bynum@ccps.k12.fl.us; cindyconey@aol.com; Clarice Powell; Clay; cparris@pascoasap.com; debbie@seminolepreventioncoalition.org; debi@safecimatecoalition.org; deborah@ovfv.org; dlees@highlandsheriff.org; Douglas.leonardo@baycare.org; Ellen_Piekalkiewicz@dcf.state.fl.us; elwoodford@yahoo.com; Gail Dixon; geometrics@aol.com; gerry.brent@mcchildrensalliance.org; Goldstein, Ron; gwen_love@cdfsfl.org; heidi@pactprevention.org; Jacob, Leonard Robert; jairnes@hanleycenter.org; Janet Reilly; jcarter_fheasap@yahoo.com; jdoherly@operpar.org; UpFrontin@aol.com; jjswell@aol.com; jmbardes@yahoo.com; jah@nettally.com; JKaufman@StartingPlace.org; jonq.teenalliance@gmail.com; KPerry@nopetaskforce.org; kmr05g@fsu.edu; KDoughty@OperPar.org; Kelly Johnson; kingdavidinc@bellsouth.net; kthomas@roundtableslc.org; lhilko@operpar.org; Lisa Jones; lisa.mcelhaney@gmail.com; mwaters@mailier.fsu.edu; Maureen.Simmons@C4BF.org; mcdonaldg1@windstream.net; meena.harris@myfloridalegal.coM; cwjordan44@aol.com; nwflpc@bellsouth.net; pcastillo@unitedwaybroward.org; penny.detscher@fldoe.org; prevention@embarqmail.com; prevspec@aol.com; PSapp@informedfamilies.org; Putnam; putnamcountyanti@bellsouth.net; rtodd@cfbhn.org; RBirrenk@mendezfoundation.org; rlh1995@mailier.fsu.edu; riley.kim@MAIL.DC.STATE.FL.US; rjablons@tampabay.rr.com; Shipley, Claude; skramer.mcac@gmail.com; Sonya Bufo; stephanie.geoghagan@ccbhc.org; Substance Free Citrus; susan@safeandhealthyduval.org; suwanneecoalition@mac.com; Tiffane_Raulerson@doh.state.fl.us; togetheragain@earthlink.net; vkress@smabehavioral.org; youthadvocacy@gmail.com
Subject: FW: News Articles, Friday, November 12, 2010

FLORIDA

http://blogs.browardpalmbeach.com/juice/2010/11/brce_d_grant_drug_control_pill_mills.phpB

Bruce D. Grant, Florida Office of Drug Control explains delays in establishing prescription drug database

11 November 2010

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/11/1920618/prescription-drug-bill-divides.html>

Prescription drug bill divides GOP donors

11 November 2010

NATIONAL

<http://sify.com/news/prosecutor-heroin-mill-found-near-times-square-news-others-klmiEkgahfg.html>

Heroin mill found near Times Square

12 November 2010

<http://www.kansas.com/2010/11/12/1585121/ngerous-punch.html>

Kansas scrutinizes alcoholic energy drink

12 November 2010

<http://www.keloland.com/News/NewsDetail6371.cfm?id=107006>

Underage drinking is legal with parent present

12 November 2010

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ip7r1SIPog5ds_RyeomhhRTvdZxA?docId=CNG.56d1f55752a2aab0626aee89d327544b.9a1

Suicide rate soar among US Veterans

12 November 2010

<http://swampland.blogs.time.com/2010/11/12/as-we-were-saying/>

As we were saying; Veterans mental health

12 November 2010

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101111/ap_on_bi_ge/us_four_loko_ban;_ylt=AlrZ3akt0cLq6ClkkfXahYxzfNdF

Washington State bans energy drinks

11 November 2010

INTERNATIONAL

<http://www.asylum.co.uk/2010/11/12/cat-caught-smuggling-drugs-into-russian-prison/>

Cat caught smuggling drugs into Russian prison

12 November 2010

<http://www.irishcentral.com/story/roots/emeraldextracts/seven-out-of-every-1000-in-ireland-use-heroin-107430868.html>

Seven out of every 1,000 in Ireland use Heroin

12 November 2010

<http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory?id=12126283>

Mexico Violence costs \$350K daily in Natgas losses

12 November 2010

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/mexico-drug-cartel-offers-to-disband-20101111-17pd9.html>

Mexico drug cartel offers to disband

11 November 2010

<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/11/12/mexico.senate.president/>

Mexican lawmakers: jobs, education key to fighting Drug War

12 November 2010

FLORIDA

http://blogs.browardpalmbeach.com/juice/2010/11/bruce_d_grant_drug_control_pill_mills.phpBr

Bruce D. Grant, Florida Office of Drug Control explains delays in establishing prescription drug database

11 November 2010

You've got to admire the spunk and sanity of Bruce D. Grant, director of the Florida Office of Drug Control, appointed by Charlie Crist. He didn't much like the insinuation, in our story [published here yesterday](#), that the Florida government has been lazy about funding legislation that will help curb the practices of the narco-peddling pill-mills that have sprung up like ugly mushrooms across Fort Lauderdale in the last decade, and which are responsible for feeding the drug habits of addicts in West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, and elsewhere. What did he do? Did he stalk off, offended, and refuse to ever again speak to the lamestream media? No! He called us about it, and we had a nice chat.

First of all, he wants us to know that there is more to Florida's prescription problem than the pill mills. Most abused prescription drugs come friends and family. The day-trippers who come to Florida from parts north to return home with hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of pain killers, mostly Oxycontin, represent only the most dramatic manifestation of a problem that kills seven Floridians daily. (And countless more nationally.) "That's only the most egregious, blatant, and ugly example of all the drug diversion going on in Florida," says Grant. He asks: "Are you familiar with *The Tipping Point*, by Malcolm Gladwell?" We are. "Well then -- you know what the tipping point was for the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program? It was Oakland Park. It was the national exposure that embarrassed Florida. You got this national news, people coming from all up the Eastern Seaboard and Appalachia, coming down here for the prescriptions. And we had to get off our seats and pass a law."

And of that embarrassment was born a solution. A partial one, to be sure, and not a solution free of the lugubriousness that plagues any bureaucratic action. But a solution all the same. It's called Florida Statute 893.055 (or "SB 462"), a piece of legislation drafted by Floridian Senator Mike Fasano, Republican of District 11. The legislation mandates the creation of a database, overseen by the Department of Health, that will allow pharmacies and doctors to check on the prescription-filling activities of individual patients -- to see if a patient is doctor-shopping, for example, by visiting three doctors, obtaining three prescriptions, and filling them at three different pharmacies. Moreover, it will provide an easy way for pharmacists to note if a single doctor is prescribing "medically improbable" quantities of narcotic painkillers. The database, when completed, will make life much more difficult for the white-coated pushers of Oakland Park's pill alleys, and put a "significant dent in prescription drug diversion and abuse," according to Grant.

Problem is, as reported in our story, the legislation cannot be implemented with state funds.

"But it is funded," says Grant. "When the law was passed in 2009, it said in there that it couldn't be funded by the state. It left us with the challenge of raising funds in two different ways." One of these was through a specially-created nonprofit that could raise funds for the creation of the database; this has yielded \$500,000. The other

fundraising mechanism was federal grants, which have yielded \$800,000. As it stands, the program is sufficiently well-funded to bring the database online and keep it running through the end of June, 2011. "And another \$250,000 will keep it up through June, 2012," says Grant.

According to the letter of the law, the database should be up and humming by the first of December. It won't be, because Florida's government is a bureaucracy, and bureaucracies are slow, and that's just how it is.

The particular problem in this instance is the dratted contractors. Shortly after Statute 893.055 was passed in early 2009, the Department of Health opened bidding on the contract to create the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. When bidding closed this summer, the losing bidder contested the winner, and the DoH opened bidding again. The same loser, Optimum Technology, lodged another complaint -- this one about the terms of the bidding themselves. Which means construction of the database has yet to get underway. Though Grant cannot know for certain when it will be completed, he guesses it will be sometime in March.

Nevertheless, he's proud of the state's progress, and, we suspect, more pissed off about the delay than he's willing to tell a reporter. As he reminds us, the prescription drug crisis in Florida is "comparable to the crack epidemic." Until the database is complete and operational, that's another seven deaths per day, 49 per week, 200 per month...

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/11/1920618/prescription-drug-bill-divides.html>

Prescription drug bill divides GOP donors

11 November 2010

TALLAHASSEE - A veto override planned by Florida's Republican legislative leaders is driving a wedge between major GOP donors, with business groups and health care giants Wednesday renewing their fight over a prescription drug bill.

Barney Bishop, president of Associated Industries of Florida, said he was pleased - but also stunned -- when the legislation (HB 5603) was added to a list of measures vetoed by outgoing Gov. Charlie Crist that lawmakers want to revive in next week's special session.

Bishop, who had hailed the bill's passage last spring as a "huge victory for the business community," said he followed a simple rule in figuring the vetoed drug bill would remain dead:

Money talks.

"We're very appreciative that it looks like it's coming back," said Bishop, whose organization includes most of the state's largest corporations and major political donors. "It's the right thing to do. But we figured that with the kind of money these doctors had given, it was over and done with."

Among those supporting Crist's veto in June was Automated Healthcare Solutions, a Miramar company headed by a pair of doctors, Paul Zimmerman and Gerald Glass, who later gave more than \$1 million to political spending committees headed by the incoming Senate President Mike Haridopolos and House Speaker-designate Dean Cannon.

The company provides software that helps doctors dispense and manage patient prescriptions, a profitable sideline for many doctors. The legislation vetoed by Crist would have imposed new restrictions on doctors' "repackaging" prescriptions, lowering costs to the state and private companies, but also threatening Automated Healthcare's services.

Haridopolos and Cannon used the money funneled from the doctors primarily to help Attorney General Bill McCollum in his losing Republican primary fight with Gov.-elect Rick Scott. But the doctors quickly pivoted following the campaign - pouring \$735,000 into the Florida Republican Party and another \$145,000 to Scott's spending committee - in an attempt to make nice with the GOP nominee.

Until last week, Automated Healthcare Solutions looked well-positioned with the Capitol's new power trio - Haridopolos, Cannon and Scott. Also supporting the veto were the Republican-allied Florida Medical Association and Florida Orthopedic Society - and the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME), a Democratic power base.

Losing Democratic gubernatorial candidate Alex Sink had sided with AIF and other business groups in backing the legislation, which supporters say will save private companies \$34 million in workers' compensation costs by reducing prescription costs.

Zimmerman, the company's CEO, says in a statement on the company's website that its services are designed to "enhance revenue production by allowing physicians to retain profits."

"I think the doctors thought they had done everything to keep this bill down," said Ron Book, who represents them in other matters before the Legislature. "I still think that if the Legislature doesn't want to take up controversial bills in the special session, this bill won't come up."

Incoming Rules Chairman Gary Aubuchon, R-Cape Coral, hinted Wednesday that the lineup of nine bills and a \$9.7 million budget provision for Shands Hospital in Gainesville represented the most that lawmakers may attempt to override next week. But he acknowledged that the entire list may not be taken up - giving some hope to those who want to keep Crist's veto in place.

"It won't exceed that original list," Aubuchon told lawmakers. "But it may not include all the things on that original list."

The legislation was approved last spring 38-0 in the Senate, and by the House, 120-0. But even Bishop, of AIF, said the toughest provisions of the bill - which limits doctors' ability to distribute repackaged prescription drugs to injured workers - were added late through his organization's lobbying.

FMA and other critics said few lawmakers had a good understanding of the bill's effects.

For his part, Cannon, R-Winter Park, said the legislation was proof that lawmakers were willing to take action - without regard for contributors.

"That bill passed overwhelmingly in both chambers," Cannon said. "We think it was good policy then, so we think it's good policy now. It doesn't really matter to me who supported it, or opposed it."

NATIONAL

<http://sify.com/news/prosecutor-heroin-mill-found-near-times-square-news-others-klmiEkgahfg.html>

Heroin mill found near Times Square

12 November 2010

Authorities say a newly renovated apartment two blocks from Times Square was being used as a major heroin-packaging mill to process millions of dollars' worth of the drug for sale.

Three men and a woman were awaiting arraignment Thursday on drug-possession charges after a raid Wednesday at the building.

The New York City Special Narcotics Prosecutor's office says investigators found 28 pounds of heroin, worth about \$6.5 million, in 250,000 small envelopes, and workers busily packing the drug for sale. Some envelopes had been stamped with underground brand names such as King Kong.

The prosecutor's office says the drug ring rented the \$3,800-a-month, duplex apartment two weeks ago from an apparently unsuspecting landlord.

Top of Form

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<http://www.kansas.com/2010/11/12/1585121/ngerous-punch.html>

Kansas scrutinizes alcoholic energy drink

12 November 2010

Kansas liquor officials are taking a hard look at a strong drink that's been banned in three states.

The drink, called Four Loko, mixes the caffeine of an energy drink and the alcohol content of wine in a 23.5-ounce can that sells for about \$2 at local liquor stores.

One can contains the alcohol equivalent of a nearly full bottle of wine, combined with the caffeine of three cups of coffee.

Michigan and Washington have banned the malt beverage and similar products after reports that the mixture caused blackouts and, in one case, a heart attack, among college-age drinkers. Oklahoma is phasing the drink out from its store shelves, allowing liquor stores to sell their remaining stock but prohibiting further supplies from being brought into the state.

Freda Warfield, a spokeswoman for the Kansas Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, said Kansas officials have had no reports of incidents related to the beverage. But they are closely monitoring the situation in other states and an ongoing investigation by the Food and Drug Administration, she said.

Matt Hess, manager of R and J Discount Liquor in Wichita, said the product has been on the shelf since February.

He said he's considered pulling it, but he's waiting for word from the state to see "if they say it's OK."

Initially, the product sold poorly, but controversy has boosted sales, he said.

"The sad thing is, with all the exposure, we have people who don't even know what it is coming in and buying it," he said.

One Four Loko buyer, a young man with a shaved head and tattooed scalp who identified himself only as "Johnny," said "It's the best. Don't cancel it."

The drink will probably remain on Kansas shelves for a while.

Banning it from state-licensed liquor stores would likely require legislative action, Warfield said. The Legislature won't start meeting until January.

Critics say that Four Loko, which comes in a variety of fruity flavors and in brightly colored cans, is explicitly targeted at teens and young adults who might not be aware of the danger of mixing caffeine, a stimulant, with alcohol, a depressant.

"What you get is someone who's drunk, but wide awake," said Brian Smith, spokesman for the Washington State Liquor Control Board, which banned Four Loko and similar drinks on Wednesday. That, he said, makes them more likely to drive drunk or continue drinking to a dangerous blood-alcohol level.

He said that was what happened to a group of nine students at Central Washington University who had to be hospitalized last month after a party featuring the energy-alcohol beverages.

The students had blood alcohol levels ranging from 0.12 to 0.35. Anything more than .30 is considered potentially lethal.

"It's not college students drinking a bunch of beer and getting stupid," Smith said. "The CWU students were all underage... one of them nearly died."

The liquor board's emergency ban will last 120 days and Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire vowed to enact a permanent ban.

"Quite simply, these drinks are trouble," Gregoire said in a statement.

A representative of Phusion Projects, the company that created and makes Four Loko, said no spokesperson was available Thursday and referred inquiries to statements on the company website.

The company portrays itself as "a small business success story," started by three friends at Ohio State University. Starting with a federal loan from the Small Business Administration, they built a company selling products in at least 45 states.

The theme of their comments to regulators in Washington and elsewhere is that their product is being unfairly targeted because the bans don't apply to other caffeine-containing drinks, such as coffee liqueurs.

"If mixing caffeine and alcohol is the most pressing concern, addressing it would be best accomplished by creating laws that apply to the entire caffeinated alcoholic beverage category — not specific, individual products and not just beers or malt-based products," the company said in an open letter to state and federal regulators. "If product-specific bans remain the preferred course of action, we will protect our rights as a business to the fullest extent of the law."

Smith, of the Washington state board, said there's no validity to the company's comparisons to coffee drinks and liqueurs.

Those drinks are far more expensive, marketed to a more mature segment of the drinking public and seldom consumed to intoxication level, he said.

Under pressure from state attorneys general, beer titans Anheuser-Busch and Miller Brewing removed caffeine from similar products they had brought to market.

<http://www.keloland.com/News/NewsDetail6371.cfm?Id=107006>

Underage drinking is legal with parent present

12 November 2010

CANTON, SD - The pressures for KELOLAND kids to drink are enormous, and some parents say it's better to be realistic than sorry. A growing number have chosen to slowly introduce alcohol to their underage children, and it turns out, the law is on their side.

In South Dakota, it's perfectly legal for anyone under 21 to consume alcohol as long as a parent is around. The statute says minors may consume alcohol in the immediate presence of a parent, guardian or spouse, as long as that person is of age.

"Whether it be a glass of wine at a Christmas dinner or Thanksgiving dinner, the state feels that's an appropriate level of supervision," Lincoln County State's Attorney Tom Wollman said.

The law differentiates between kids under 18 and adults 18 to 21.

"Eighteen and below can drink at home in the immediate presence of a parent," Wollman said.

Those 18 and above can drink at a bar or restaurant with a parent, as long as the establishment's owner approves.

Wollman has seen several cases where parents try to use the law as a defense in court, saying their child was with them when they were drinking.

"Unfortunately, we've seen parents coming in after the fact where that really wasn't the case, but they're just trying to get their son or daughter out of trouble," Wollman said.

But Wollman says it's a move that's difficult to defend because once a minor leaves the presence of their parents when they've been drinking, all bets are off.

"A parent may have been in the immediate presence of the child when the child drank alcohol, but then the child

goes to the school dance; that's not a legal defense," Wollman said.

Wollman says the law basically says parents have the final word on whether to let their kids consume alcohol in a controlled environment.

"I think parents would like to think their kids are responsible enough and sometimes they are, but I stress that the statute says, 'In the immediate presence of parents,'" Wollman said.

It may be legal to allow minors to drink under supervision, but is it right? It's a discussion you won't want to miss, in Thursday's Eye on KELOLAND at 10.

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5ip7r1SIPog5ds_RyeomhhRTvdZxA?docId=CNG.56d1f55752a2aab0626aee89d327544b.9a1

Suicide rates soar among US Veterans

12 November 2010

WASHINGTON — The economic downturn and the trauma of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have pushed more US veterans to suicide, Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki said Thursday.

As Americans across the United States and around the world celebrated the contributions of men and women in uniform on Veterans Day, Shinseki outlined a sobering picture for the approximately 23 million veterans in the United States.

Only eight million of those veterans are currently registered with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Shinseki said. Many slip through the cracks due to crippling mental health problems, homelessness, alcohol and illegal drug abuse or crime.

Several studies have shown that suicides are on the rise among youths who have left the military.

"It's compounded by the stress, the trauma that goes with the current operations, where we have a much smaller military being asked to do so much and then repeat it tour after tour," Shinseki told National Public Radio (NPR).

"I know the suicide numbers are up."

In January, he indicated that 20 percent of some 30,000 suicides in the United States each year are committed by veterans. That means that an average of 18 veterans commit suicide each year.

Suicides claimed the lives of a record 309 servicemembers last year, up from 267 in 2008, according to Pentagon numbers. The number of suicides between 2005 and 2009 -- 1,100 -- exceeded that of the number of US military members killed in Afghanistan since 2001.

The Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs do not keep statistics on veteran deaths.

Shinseki pointed to a backlog of Veterans Affairs cases or disability claims that has soared to over 700,000 this year, up from 400,000 to 500,000 the year before.

He noted that the number of new cases has increased faster than his agency's capacity. Even though the Department of Veterans Affairs closed out 977,000 cases last year, it got another million new cases.

A large number of the new cases involve younger veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The Department of Veterans Affairs has changed its requirements regarding PTSD claims, so that veterans no longer have to prove they got the disorder because they served in a warzone. There has also long been a stigma in the military associated with psychological problems.

"If it's verified, that connection is now automatic, it's provided," Shinseki explained, noting this had increased the number of cases he has to address.

"We have PTSD treatment going on with veterans that go back to World War II, Korea, Vietnam. So it's a large generational issue."

Asked whether the dour economy had increased veterans' reliance on his agency, Shinseki noted that "the economic downturn has had that impact on families" over the past year and half, while he has struggled to meet

a goal to end homelessness among veterans in five years.

"We're doing fine, just not going fast enough," he added.

A July report by the army on suicide prevention found that senior leaders have failed to track reckless behavior and monitor alcohol and drug abuse among soldiers back home as the military focused on fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan over nearly a decade.

Repeated deployments with shortened dwell time have also strained the military, and the army hopes to soon give soldiers two years at home for every year deployed.

<http://swampland.blogs.time.com/2010/11/12/as-we-were-saying/>

As we were saying: Veterans mental health

12 November 2010

Tough story in the Clarksville, Tenn., *Leaf-Chronicle* this morning about a soldier with PTSD who says he went AWOL, instead of returning to Afghanistan, because of the lack of mental-health services at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. "All I wanted was to be treated," Specialist Jeff Hanks, who also served in Iraq in 2008, said outside the fort's gate Thursday as he turned himself in. "Hopefully they'll listen to me and treat me." Hanks said he went absent without leave nearly a month ago after his post-traumatic stress disorder and the collapse of his family convinced him he couldn't get the help he needed in a war zone:

Hanks said he reached out to his commanders while home on leave, but he was met with resistance and delay. He said he was told he would immediately have to go back to Afghanistan.

We [wrote](#) about this sad state of affairs at Fort Campbell in the August 16 issue of *Time*:

The Army has spent \$7 million building at Fort Campbell what it calls its first behavioral-health campus (soldiers call it "the mental-health mall") with a half-dozen new clinics filled with the latest technology for diagnosing and treating posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury. The fort's mental-health staff has grown from 31 in January 2008 to 95 today...But the trend at the base remains clear; the workload per mental-health worker has nearly doubled from 2008 to 2010, jumping from 19 to 32 visits per week.

Additional [reporting](#) for that story revealed:

The focus on Fort Campbell's mental health has been driven, in part, by a 2008 probe that tried to figure out why its 2007 suicide rate was 50 percent higher than the overall Army's. Outside Army experts found that even as Fort Campbell's mental-health visits increased fivefold from 2005 to 2007, the staff shrunk from 28 to 18. That led to longer waits between visits and individual troops being seen in clinics beset by "frequent staff turnover," forcing the soldier to "start over" with a new therapist each visit. The mental-health workload led to poor care and morale, as well as "compassion fatigue," among counselors. The first recommendation to curb suicides: "address critical behavioral-health shortages."

The Army's didn't care for the attention garnered by the young soldier. "It seems a shame to focus attention on this particular young man on Veterans Day," a post spokeswoman said in a statement, "when we have 15,000 men and women from the 101st Airborne Division bravely supporting the fight and placing themselves in harm's way in Afghanistan and Iraq."

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101111/ap_on_bi_ge/us_four_loko_ban;_ylt=AlrZ3akt0cLq6ClkkfXahYxzfNdF

Washington state bans energy drinks

11 November 2010

OLYMPIA, Wash. – Retailers have a week to clear millions of dollars worth of alcoholic energy drinks from their shelves after state regulators banned them Wednesday, citing the hospitalization of nine dangerously drunk college students last month.

The emergency ban, similar to those in Michigan, Utah and Oklahoma, takes effect Nov. 18. Washington's rule targets beer-based drinks that also feature caffeine, such as the malt-liquor energy drink Four Loko.

Some universities also have banned boozy energy drinks from campus while the federal Food and Drug

Administration reviews their safety, and U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., called Wednesday for a ban in his state.

Democratic Gov. Chris Gregoire, who requested Washington's ban, said a strong caffeine-and-alcohol combination could encourage drinking too much by masking alcohol's regular depressant effects. She also said alcohol-based energy drinks — sometimes fruit-flavored, often sold in brightly colored cans — are too appealing to young drinkers.

"It's no different than the kind of appeal that Joe Camel had to our kids when it came to cigarettes," she said Wednesday.

Alcoholic energy drinks drew national attention after an October party in Roslyn, a picturesque mountain town known as the place where part of the 1990s television series "Northern Exposure" was filmed.

Nine Central Washington University students who drank Four Loko were hospitalized with blood-alcohol levels ranging from 0.12 percent to 0.35 percent, and a female student nearly died, university President James L. Gaudino said. A blood-alcohol concentration of 0.30 percent is considered potentially lethal.

Police reported a chaotic scene, with students passed out and so drunk officers originally thought they had overdosed on drugs.

All the hospitalized students were inexperienced drinkers — freshmen ranging in age from 17 to 19. Toxicology results showed no drugs in anyone's bloodstream, other than a small amount of marijuana, university police Chief Steve Rittereiser said.

Some students admitted drinking vodka, rum and beer with Four Loko, which is made by Phusion Projects Inc., of Chicago. A Phusion spokesman did not immediately respond with comment on Washington's ban, but the company has said it takes pains not to market to underage drinkers.

Washington's emergency ban specifically covers products that combine beer, strong beer or malt liquor with caffeine, guarana, taurine or other similar substances found in regular energy drinks.

Washington's beer and wine distributors were troubled by the quick turnaround to remove Four Loko and similar products from store shelves. They had hoped the state Liquor Control Board would give the industry a month to handle the change.

Lobbyists for the Washington Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association said the ban would affect about \$3 million worth of products already in retailers' hands, much of it in convenience stores.

Any drinks that can't be sold before Nov. 18 could be returned to wholesalers. Those distributors aren't obliged to buy the products back, but probably will to maintain good standing with their retail customers, lobbyist Ron Main said.

It will then be up to the wholesalers to find a way to return the product to manufacturers or move it to other states.

"We're not going to be able to move \$3 million in inventory in a week," Main said.

Washington's ban is good for 120 days, but could be made permanent by the state Liquor Control Board or Legislature.

INTERNATIONAL

<http://www.asylum.co.uk/2010/11/12/cat-caught-smuggling-drugs-into-russian-prison/>

Cat caught smuggling drugs into Russian prison

12 November 2010

You've heard of a drugs mule, right? Well, here's something ever-so-slightly different. That's right, a drugs cat. [A cat used to smuggle drugs.](#)

A prisoner in the jail at Mendeleyevsk, Russia, came up with the scam to sneak drugs in – but cops got wind of the scheme, and were prepared to check over the feline felon once it arrived.

With 15 grams of heroin taped to its collar by an outside source, the cat tried to get back to its owner inside the jail – unfortunately, the cat's route of getting in took it past guard dogs, who promptly pounced on the poor puss.

"The patrol was expecting the cat to go one way, but it chose a different path though a 'no-go' area guarded by dogs," a representative from the local penitentiary service's press office told the Moscow News.

But though this is a horrific tale of animal cruelty, it seems the bigger problem is, of course, the drugs charges – on top of the fact that prisoners aren't meant to have pets in prison in the first place.

<http://www.irishcentral.com/story/roots/emeraldextracts/seven-out-of-every-1000-in-ireland-use-heroin-107430868.html>

Seven out of every 1,000 in Ireland use Heroin

12 November 2010

An average seven people in every 1,000 in Ireland are heroin users, a Europe-wide report had revealed.

Ireland's heroin problem is worse than in any other EU country and it also has the longest waiting list for treatment for those addicted to the drug, new research shows.

The 2010 annual report for the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction also revealed that the number of heroin users in Ireland is more than twice as high in comparison to other countries.

Waiting lists for heroin addicts in Dublin at up to two years, are the highest in Europe.

The research found that ecstasy use is low in comparison to the rest of Europe and it ranked Ireland fifth for cocaine consumption.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory?id=12126283>

Mexico violence costs \$350K daily in Natgas losses

12 November 2010

Threats and violence by drug gangs are preventing some government oil workers from reaching installations in northern Mexico and costing state-owned Petroleos Mexicanos about \$350,000 every day in lost production, a company official said Thursday.

The official said Pemex has shut down the equivalent of about 100 million cubic feet of natural gas production per day. He talked to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, because company rules do not allow him to be quoted by name.

That amounts to about \$10.5 million per month, or about 2.3 percent of Mexico's \$450 million per month average in monthly natural gas revenues.

The lost production is centered in the Burgos gas field near the east Texas border in an area where drug gangs have threatened and kidnapped Pemex workers at some the company's installations.

The official said that earlier in the year, when the security problems were most acute, gas production was down twice as much — about 200 million cubic feet per day.

The problem came to a head in May, when five workers at a gas compression plant were abducted by armed men. The father of one of the victims has said the workers were warned to stay away, and the kidnapped men have not been heard from since.

The kidnapers are believed to belong to either the Gulf or Zetas drug cartels, which are waging a bloody turf war in northern Tamaulipas state, chasing many inhabitants from their homes. It's not clear which gang nabbed the workers.

However, army troops are now helping Pemex provide increased security.

"This has allowed us to start partially recovering the production we had stopped for this reason," Pemex exploration and production division chief Carlos Morales told local media.

Dozens of families have fled the drug violence in one Tamaulipas town, Ciudad Mier, and taken refuge at a Lion's Club in the nearby city of Miguel Aleman.

Gunmen have killed so many police and local officials in some areas bordering Texas that few are willing to take the posts anymore, leading a number of women to occupy roles traditionally dominated by men. In two northern hamlets, Villa Luz and El Vergel, women were elected as community security leaders this week after men declined to run out of fear.

Both towns are near the southern edge of Ciudad Juarez, where drug violence has claimed over 4,000 lives in the last two years, giving the city one of the highest murder rates in the world.

Olga Herrera Castillo, the new head of security for Villa Luz, said Wednesday that "sometimes I am afraid, but people encourage me and I lose my fear."

Her job will largely consist of filing reports after crimes occur, because Samalayuca has only 2,500 inhabitants, one patrol vehicle and a handful of police officers — none of them permanently assigned to the hamlet.

Last month, 20-year-old Marisol Valles Garcia was sworn in as police chief of Praxedis G. Guerrero, east of Ciudad Juarez, despite not having finished her criminology degree.

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/mexico-drug-cartel-offers-to-disband-20101111-17pd9.html>

Mexico drug cartel offers to disband

11 November 2010

One of Mexico's most brutal drug cartels, a leader in trafficking synthetic narcotics into the United States, has offered to disband if the government guarantees security for citizens in the western state of Michoacan.

The Michoacan Family, one of Mexico's seven largest drug gangs and known here simply as La Familia, said in a letter sent on Wednesday to local media that it was ready to dissolve itself if security was enforced and citizens of the state are protected.

"If the government accepts this pledge publicly and carries it out, the Michoacan Family will disband," said the letter, which was also posted on flyers around the state capital Morelia, urging the authorities to take control of the state "with force and decision."

Advertisement: Story continues below

In Mexico City, however, the federal attorney general's office said it was unclear if the message was authentic, but still dismissed it, insisting the government "could not make deals with criminals."

The gang is known for its religious zeal, notably justifying the beheadings of 12 policemen in June as being the work of "divine violence," and controls drug manufacturing and distribution in and around Michoacan with an iron fist.

The US Drug Enforcement Administration said last week, upon arresting 45 people in Atlanta, Georgia for links to the cartel, that it supplies "vast quantities of cocaine and methamphetamine" to the United States.

More than 28,000 people have died nationwide in suspected drug violence in Mexico since December 2006, when the government launched an offensive against criminal gangs with the deployment of some 50,000 troops.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/11/12/mexico.senate.president/>

Mexican lawmakers, jobs, education key to fighting Drug War

12 November 2010

(CNN) -- Mexico's government must create jobs and improve education to help fight drug trafficking, the country's senate president said in an interview with CNN en Espanol.

"Together they form a true strategy for fighting crime and violence," said Sen. Manlio Fabio Beltrones Rivera, a top official in Mexico's opposition Institutional Revolutionary Party.

Currently, Mexico's war on drugs is a "fight of firepower between criminals and the state," he said.

"We have seen 30,000 people die in the past four years," Beltrones said. "And we are very close to seeing, at the end of this six-year term, an equal number of dead as in the Vietnam War."

Mexican President Felipe Calderon announced a crackdown on cartels shortly after taking office at the end of 2006. Since then, more than 28,000 people have died in drug-related violence across the country. And Calderon's government has dispatched about 50,000 troops to the nation's trouble spots.

A past governor of Sonora state, which borders Arizona, Beltrones also discussed California's recently defeated proposition to legalize marijuana.

Proposition 19, which failed to garner enough support from California voters earlier this month, left many Mexican lawmakers wondering what they would do if it had passed, he said.

California has already legalized medical marijuana. Supporters of Proposition 19 argued that the "prohibition" of marijuana -- much like that for alcohol decades ago -- has created a violent criminal black market, led today by international drug cartels. But opponents prevailed earlier this month.

Still, Beltrones said the debate over legalizing marijuana is an issue Mexican officials will have to tackle "sooner or later."

"But we could not do it without developing a strategy with the United States, which is the drug's largest consumer... Crime and drug trafficking, which are transnational problems, need international solutions," he said.

Peggy Lawson

Executive Assistant to the Director

Office of Drug Control

Executive Office of the Governor

2105 The Capitol

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

(850) 488-9557

From: [Goudy, Senta](#)
To: [Cece, Jeffrey](#)
Subject: RE: Four Loko alcohol energy drinks
Date: Wednesday, October 20, 2010 12:58:33 PM

Symbolism is important. Role of ODC needs to be visible and valued in these tough budget times.

Ours should at least do an editorial asking FDA to hurry up.

From: Cece, Jeffrey
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2010 12:57 PM
To: Goudy, Senta
Subject: RE: Four Loko alcohol energy drinks

Senta, it is feasible, but it would be largely symbolic. As the attached PDF indicates, the FDA is actively investigating already. It would seem a little late in the game.

From: Goudy, Senta
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2010 12:52 PM
To: Benard, Andy; Cece, Jeffrey; Grant, Bruce
Subject: FW: Four Loko alcohol energy drinks

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From: Ventura, Angela [mailto:aventura@unitedwaybroward.org]
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2010 12:10 PM
To: Jose Rada; Paul Daly; Adrian Lopez; Alain J. Roque; Amber Canales ; Avery Lee Thomhill; Barbara Goodrun; becodev@aol.com; Benjamin Galloso; Brooke Mootry; Captain Jeff Lindskoog; Carmen Puentes-Croye; Carmen Pullins; Carol Owsiany; Castillo, Pat; Checke, Chris; Cindy Magnole; Claudia Bailly; Dave Choate; David Spivey; David Spivey; Dawnna Patterson; Debra Wallace; Douglas Hughes; Ellen Feiler; Evan Goldman; Frank Gurucharri; Gabrielle Tunnage; gispoll@bellsouth.net; Gonzolo Cadima; heather.geronemus@gmail.com; houston720@bellsouth.net; Hugo Reiner; Hugo Reiner; Jaghoo, Shahara; Jaimin Pate; Jan Cairnes; Janet Bravo; Jeff Kadel; Jennifer Harris; Jim Hall; Joanne Richter; Jon Quinton; Jon Quinton; Jonathan Sobelman; Jose Rada; Joseph Telemaque; jselders357@bellsouth.net; Karen Beam; Karlene Tomlinson; Kathy Welch; Kevin Dany; kperry@nopetaskforce.org; Larry Gierer ; Lynn E. Guelzow; Marguerite Bryan; Maria Hernandez; Marie-Claire Timothee; Marina Aviles; Mark Gross; Marlon Hyatt; Marmilly Medina; Martha Putnam; Micah Robbins; Michael Sawney; Milva Barragan; modco@bellsouth.net; mrondon@fl.aspira.org; Nancy Vaniman; nblcc@bellsouth.net; Noreen Compton; Norma Wagner; Orangel Torres; Oscar.J.Negron@usdoj.gov; Pamela Santucci; Paola Estrada; Pastor Ronae Cambridge; Pat Kramer; Patrick Chalmers; p roberts2009@hotmail.com; rickh1555@aol.com; rssonhonda@yahoo.com; Sandra Sanchez; Senta Goudy; Sherrif Moustafa; Sue Carrigan; Susan Woodford; Tim Curtin; Toni Vasconcelos; Tony Garcia; Tresha Fletcher; Venise Jackson; Ventura, Angela; Wendy Stephan; William Spodnick
Subject: FW: Four Loko alcohol energy drinks

Good Afternoon!
Please read below...
Cordially,
Angela

From: Ellen Snelling [mailto:er.snelling@verizon.net]
Sent: Tuesday, October 19, 2010 9:58 PM
Subject: Four Loko alcohol energy drinks

<http://www2.tbo.com/content/2010/oct/19/nj-college-places-ban-on-boozy-energy-drinks/news-money/>

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Robert Black, a customer chatting with the clerk at a liquor store near the beach in Atlantic City, explained how a 23.5-ounce can of Four Loko can come in handy. "If you only got \$2 and you need to get drunk, this is what you get," he said.

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Mercer, whose college is a state-run liberal arts school in the New York City suburb of Mahwah, has quickly emerged as a major opponent of the products. He said he'll do what he can to push New Jersey lawmakers to pass a bill introduced by Republican Assemblywoman Mary Pat Angelini that would ban the drinks — a step that other states have not taken, though a handful have taken action to limit access.

The drinks have taken off in popularity this fall on college campuses, Schmidt said. And more states have been considering how to handle them.

This month, regulators in Michigan launched a review of the drinks' labels. Those that don't clearly show the percentage of alcohol, a depressant, and stimulants could be taken off shelves in the state. Other states, including Montana and Utah, have taken measures to restrict access to the drinks.

The federal Food and Drug Administration is looking into whether the drinks are safe, and U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., is pushing the Federal Trade Commission to investigate their marketing.

Ramapo's Mercer announced the campus ban, which took effect Oct. 1, after 23 intoxicated students were hospitalized over the span of a few weeks — some after drinking Four Loko. Mercer said that's more hospitalizations than the college usually sees at the start of the school year.

He believes students consume more of the drink than they do of other forms of alcohol because it's designed to go down easily. What's more, he said, high school students also were getting their hands on it.

Such drinks started appearing about five years ago. But the concept has a longer history: Soon after high-caffeine energy drinks like Red Bull started appearing in the U.S. in the late 1990s, people started mixing them with vodka and other alcoholic beverages.

But the new concoctions come in fruity flavors. Joose, made by United Brands Co., of La Mesa, Calif., comes in watermelon, among other flavors; and Four Loko, made by Phusion Projects Inc., of Chicago, is available in several varieties, including fruit punch and blue raspberry.

Neither company returned calls about the Ramapo ban, and websites for both companies say they don't intend to sell the colorful cans to anyone under 21. Two years ago, the biggest companies to produce the drinks — Anheuser-Busch InBev NV and MillerCoors LLC — stopped selling them under pressure from several states and federal regulators.

From: [Cece, Jeffrey](#)
To: [Goudy, Senta](#)
Subject: RE: Four Loko alcohol energy drinks
Date: Wednesday, October 20, 2010 12:57:12 PM
Attachments: [FDA to Evaluate Safety and Legality \(CESAR Fax\).pdf](#)

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A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

FDA to Evaluate Safety and Legality of Alcoholic Beverages Containing Caffeine

“The increasing popularity of consumption of caffeinated alcoholic beverages by college students and reports of potential health and safety issues necessitates that we look seriously at the scientific evidence as soon as possible.”

—Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, Principal Deputy Commissioner of Food and Drugs, FDA

What are caffeinated alcoholic beverages? Caffeinated alcoholic beverages are alcoholic beverages to which the manufacturer has intentionally added caffeine and/or other stimulants that are metabolized as caffeine (e.g., guarana). An increasing number of companies are producing these beverages, with young people as the apparent marketing target. The reported prevalence of combined caffeine and alcohol use among U.S. college students is high as 28%.

What are the potential health concerns with caffeinated alcoholic beverages? Studies have shown that people who drink caffeinated alcoholic beverages drink larger quantities of alcohol. Caffeine can mask the negative effects of alcohol intoxication, increasing the chance that users will engage in potentially risky behaviors, such as drinking and driving, because they don't feel that they are intoxicated. Users of caffeinated alcoholic beverages are also more likely to experience alcohol-related consequences, such as being taken advantage of or taking advantage of someone else sexually. Consuming these beverages may also be associated with adverse effects on heart rhythm, most likely in individuals with pre-existing cardiovascular conditions.

Is caffeine approved by the FDA for use in alcoholic beverages? A food additive is presumed by the FDA to be unsafe unless its particular use has been approved by federal regulation or is Generally Recognized As Safe (GRAS) under the conditions of its intended use. The FDA has approved caffeine as GRAS for use only in non-alcoholic cola-type beverages at concentrations of no greater 0.02 percent. The FDA has not approved caffeine for use at any level in alcoholic beverages.

What is the FDA doing about this? On November 13, 2009, the FDA issued a mandate to nearly 30 manufacturers* of caffeinated alcoholic beverages to produce within 30 days their rationale and supporting data concluding that their use of caffeine in an alcoholic beverage is either GRAS or prior sanctioned.** To be GRAS, the burden is on the manufacturers to show that 1) the use of caffeine is safe for use in alcoholic beverages based on publicly available scientific evidence and 2) there is a consensus among qualified experts regarding the safety of caffeine for this use. In their letter to manufacturers of caffeinated alcoholic beverages, the FDA states that, “If FDA determines that the use of caffeine in your alcoholic beverage is not GRAS or subject to a prior sanction, FDA will take appropriate action to ensure that this product is removed from the marketplace.”

*In the past year, Anheuser-Busch and Miller agreed to discontinue their caffeinated alcoholic beverages and agreed to not produce any caffeinated alcoholic beverages in the future.

**A substance is considered prior-sanctioned if its specific use in food was authorized by the FDA or the Department of Agriculture prior to September 6, 1958.

SOURCES: Adapted by CESAR from the following documents available on the FDA website at <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodIngredientsPackaging/ucm190366.htm>: “FDA to Look Into Safety of Caffeinated Alcoholic Beverages; Agency Sends Letters to Nearly 30 Manufacturers,” *FDA Press Release*, 11/13/09; *FDA, Questions & Answers on Caffeine in Alcoholic Beverages*, 2009; *CAB Letter to FDA from Attorneys General*, 9/25/09; *CAB Letter to FDA from Scientists*, 9/21/09.

•• 301-405-9770 (voice) •• 301-403-8342 (fax) •• CESAR@cesar.umd.edu •• www.cesar.umd.edu ••
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The Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention funded this project under grant BJAG 2005-1206. All points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of any State agency.

From: [Benard, Andy](#)
To: [Goudy, Senta](#)
Subject: RE: Four Loko alcohol energy drinks
Date: Wednesday, October 20, 2010 1:45:04 PM

Recommend no actions such as this for next 60 days

From: Goudy, Senta
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2010 12:52 PM
To: Benard, Andy; Cece, Jeffrey; Grant, Bruce
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From: [Ellen Snelling](#)
To: [Cece, Jeffrey](#)
Subject: RE: Gainesville Sun: Alcohol-Energy Drink Craze Fueling Concern
Date: Monday, August 23, 2010 4:58:51 PM
Attachments: [Alcohol Energy Drinks One sheet rev.ppt](#)

Hi Jeff

Thanks for this article. Attached is an educational handout we gave to the Hillsborough County school resource officers in a training last week. I purchased a can of Joose and a can of Four Loko to show the label design, ingredients etc. (I emptied them out before bringing them to the meeting- but I only had a sip of each to see what they tasted like!)

I mentioned a possible bill to ban these drinks in FL.

Ellen

From: Cece, Jeffrey [mailto:Jeffrey.Cece@eog.MyFlorida.com]
Sent: Wednesday, August 18, 2010 3:16 PM
To: Goudy, Senta; chrisfranzetti@aol.com; Ellen Snelling
Subject: Gainesville Sun: Alcohol-Energy Drink Craze Fueling Concern

[Alcohol-energy drink craze fueling concern](#)

By Kimberly C. Moore
Staff writer

Published: Wednesday, August 18, 2010 at 6:01 a.m.
Last Modified: Tuesday, August 17, 2010 at 10:22 p.m.

(page all of 4)

Dr. Dave Roberts, an emergency room physician at North Florida Regional Medical Center, has seen firsthand the effects excessive drinking can have on students - everything from vomiting to unconsciousness.

"They get so drunk, they can't function safely by themselves and need a place to recover," Roberts said.

The latest drinking craze on college campuses - and even at high school parties - is what many experts call a dangerous mix of caffeinated energy drinks and alcohol. Roberts said the drinks create a "triad of problems," by combining students, whose decision-making skills are underdeveloped, with alcohol, which impairs good decision-making, and caffeine, which simply makes them alert, but not quick to react.

"It's something that we're aware of, particularly in a college town," Roberts said. "It destroys your coordination and judgment."

Which leads some people to actually get behind the wheel of a car.

A University of Florida toxicologist reiterated a call to ban alcohol-energy drinks, saying they are unsafe.

"I don't - and my colleagues don't - believe there's any place for an alcohol-energy drink, especially because they're marketed toward younger people," said Dr. Bruce Goldberger, professor and director of toxicology at the University of Florida's College of Medicine.

Goldberger, along with four other medical professors from around the country, has sent a letter to state attorneys general to say the "consumption of caffeinated alcoholic beverages has been associated with increased risk of serious injury to oneself and to others as the result of driving while intoxicated, sexual assault and other dangerous behavior," including alcohol poisoning.

University of Florida officials say they don't talk to students specifically about these drinks, but do have a discussion with incoming students about alcohol abuse.

"The use of combining energy drinks with alcohol has been going up in the last couple of years and has taken on a life of its own in a very negative way," said Maureen Miller, coordinator for the University of Florida's Alcohol & Other Drug Prevention at GatorWell. "This is an issue that is really gaining attention nationally."

And alcohol-energy drinks are coming under fire again after police say the malt-energy beverage Four Loko might have played a part in a St. Petersburg car accident two weeks ago in which a father and his three sons were killed, allegedly by an underage drunk driver.

St. Petersburg police say on July 31, 20-year-old Demetrius Jordan told them he had been drinking Four Loko and smoking marijuana before he ran a red light and slammed into another car, killing all four of the occupants: Elroy McConnel of Orlando and his adult sons Kelly, Nathan and Elroy McConnel III.

A study conducted by Goldberg and his associates shows that the combined use of caffeine and alcohol is increasing, with the reported prevalence among U.S. college students as high as 28 percent. University of Florida police say they have not had a problem with it, but Gainesville Police Cpl. Tscharna Senn said she has seen its effects on people when she worked the downtown detail for two years.

"It has so much more alcohol than a regular drink," Senn said. "You couple that with the caffeine and I think that's the draw."

That is also the danger, Goldberger said. One 23.5-ounce can has three times the percentage of alcohol as a beer and three to four times the caffeine of a Coke.

"Being wide awake and drunk at the same time increases the risk of engaging in several forms of violent or other high-risk physical behavior that can cause injury," Goldberger's letter states. "College students who consumed alcohol mixed with energy drinks had a significantly higher prevalence of ... being taken advantage of sexually, taking advantage of someone else sexually, riding with a drunken driver and being physically injured, compared to students who drank alcohol alone."

Goldberger said young people who don't normally drink are in particular danger.

"If a young girl, say 100 pounds, drinks one, she'll have the blood alcohol level in the range to make her sick," he said.

GPD's Senn said underage drinkers who buy products like Four Loko know they are buying an

alcoholic beverage and are arrested the same as an underage drinker buying a beer.

In fact, Four Loko products clearly state at the top of the can that it is an alcoholic beverage.

But they market to a younger audience with what they acknowledge are "pop-off the shelves graphics." They say their wild Brazilian berry UVA drink "is truly a mind-blowing experience." Other flavors include Loko O.B. - orange with peach - blue raspberry, lemonade, cranberry lemonade, watermelon and fruit punch.

Chris Hunter, a founder and managing partner of Phusion Projects, which manufactures Four Loco, e-mailed a prepared statement to The Sun.

"People have safely enjoyed mixing alcohol and caffeine products for years in their homes, and in restaurants and bars," Hunter wrote. "Having coffee after a meal with wine, or consuming rum and cola, an Irish coffee or a Red Bull and vodka are all popular practices. However, only the pre-mixed, malt-based caffeinated alcoholic beverages, such as our products, appear to be targeted by some as unsafe."

Hunter said Phusion Products is saddened by the deaths in St. Petersburg and that stores that sell Phusion products to minors should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

"We have a vested interest - both personal and professional - in assuring the continued responsible consumption of our products," he said.

The Florida Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco Products conducted sting operations in stores in 2008 and 2009. Their "Operation Cocktail for Disaster" sting in 2008 found that one in four stores statewide sold alcohol-caffeinated drinks to minors.

"Our focus is to ensure our retailers are complying with underage drinking laws and not selling to someone who isn't of the correct age," said Alexis Lambert, a spokesperson for the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, which oversees the Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco Products.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has been studying the issue since last year, notifying 27 manufacturers in November that their drinks would be under scrutiny. FDA spokesman Michael Herndon said no decision has been made, with 19 companies responding for their call for information.

"The FDA's decision regarding the regulatory status of caffeine added to various alcoholic beverages will be a high priority for the agency," Herndon said.

Dr. Preeti Jois, who works in the emergency room at Shands at the University of Florida, said she has not seen any patients come in suffering from the ill-effects of the drink, but she worries that might not be the case in coming weeks as students return to school and sororities and fraternities hold their annual rushes.

"I'm hoping it won't happen for the sake of our students," she said.

Jeffrey Cece

Program Analyst

Florida Office of Drug Control

850-413-8157

NOTICE: Florida has a broad public records law. Most written communications to or from state officials are public records that will be disclosed to the public and the media upon request. E-mail communications may be subject to public disclosure.

Alcohol Energy Drinks: Masking the Risk

“These colorful cans are also designed to befuddle parents and police with labels that resemble nonalcoholic energy drinks... Joose and Four Loko also use very small print to disclose alcohol content of up to 12 percent, about twice that of beer.”

Sen. Charles Shumer, (D-NY), in an open letter urging investigation of alcohol energy drink marketing practices to FTC Chairman Jon Leibowitz, dated July 11 2010.

Alcohol energy drinks (AED) are extremely appealing to teens and college students. Why? Here are a few reasons:

- Tasty (flavors such as grape and cherry)
- Easy to buy (packaging is similar to energy drinks)
- Economical (\$2.50 for a 23.5 oz can)

It's not surprising brands like Joose and Four Loko have gained popularity on college campuses.



What are the risks?

- Alcohol energy drinks typically have an alcohol content of **10-12%**, more than **two times** than the alcohol content of beer (4-5%).
- By packaging these products to look similar to popular energy drinks like Monster and Red Bull and using Internet marketing, the companies are targeting teens and young adults under the legal drinking age.
- A person who consumes one of these 24 oz. drinks consumes the equivalent of **four to five standard drinks**, leading to a rapid intoxication rate.
- Drinking one 24 oz can is the equivalent of **binge drinking** (4 to 5 drinks within 2 hours).
- Combining alcohol and caffeine can have **side effects** such as rapid heartbeat, dizziness and blurred vision.
- A University of Florida study showed that students who consumed alcohol energy drinks at bars had higher levels of intoxication and **four times the risk of impaired driving** compared to those who didn't consume AEDs. (Addictive Behaviors, 2009)
- For more Information, contact Tampa Alcohol Coalition www.tampatac.org

Do the Math

1 24 oz. can = Two 12 oz.
beers- but with twice the
alcohol content

1 24 oz. can = 2 double drinks
= 4 Standard Drinks

1 can = Intoxication!

From: [Goudy, Senta](#)
To: [Grant, Bruce](#)
Subject: RE: Information from the Florida Office of Drug Control
Date: Tuesday, September 07, 2010 8:55:04 AM

Will do.

[Senta Goudy](#)

From: Grant, Bruce
Sent: Tuesday, September 07, 2010 8:21 AM
To: Goudy, Senta
Subject: RE: Information from the Florida Office of Drug Control

Senta – This really is a question for ABT.

Please pass along to John Powell.

Thanks.

From: Goudy, Senta
Sent: Friday, September 03, 2010 4:30 PM
To: Grant, Bruce
Subject: RE: Information from the Florida Office of Drug Control

Yes – it has to do with access and availability.

First, fewer outlets so not on every street corner. Less availability is a very strong preventive measure and we have a lot of research on it.

Although I don't have literature on this – because liquor licenses are more expensive and losing one means losing your entire business since they aren't selling gasoline, bread or milk. they tend to hold on to staff and so keep them trained. We do know that it is very rare for them to be out of compliance with UAD regulations.

In the US Four Loko is a malt beverage. Don't know how to reclassify it. In EU it is made with spirits. What we call Alcopops are made with spirits and so should be reclassified and sold in liquor stores.

Four is an [alcoholic energy drink](#) produced by Phusion Projects Inc. of [Chicago, Illinois](#), USA. The Four brand includes two variations, Four MaXed and the newer Four Loko. The company, Phusion Projects, also does business under the name Drink Four Brewing Company.^[1] Four debuted in the US market in 2006, first in [Ohio](#), followed by [Arizona/California](#)/Illinois by mid-year,^[2] then spreading to other states. It was developed by three alumni of [The Ohio State University](#): Chris Hunter, Jeff Wright and Jaisen Freeman.^[2] The drink is available in eight flavors: Grape (uva berry), Citrus, Fruit punch, Orange blend, Watermelon, Blue raspberry, Lemonade, and Cranberry lemonade.^[1] It is sold in the US as a 23.5 [oz aluminium-canned](#), caffeinated, alcoholic, malt beverage. Its alcohol content varies from state to state, from 6% [ABV](#) in [Indiana](#)^[2] up to 12% in Ohio.^[3] It also contains carbonation, sugar, and natural and [artificial flavoring](#), similar to other [alcopops](#). Its name is derived from its four other ingredients, [caffeine](#), [taurine](#), [guarana](#), and wormwood, an active

ingredient in [absinthe](#).^[4]

Four MaXed manufacturing expanded to the [The Netherlands](#) for sales distribution in the [European Union](#). The EU version, which is packaged in an 8.3 oz (250ml) glass bottle, contains [Absinthe](#) and is spirit-based instead of the US [malt](#) based version.

Senta Goudy

From: Grant, Bruce
Sent: Friday, September 03, 2010 4:10 PM
To: Goudy, Senta
Subject: Fw: Information from the Florida Office of Drug Control

Senta -- Do you know the answer?

From: Owens, Darryl
To: Grant, Bruce
Sent: Fri Sep 03 10:38:09 2010
Subject: RE: Information from the Florida Office of Drug Control
Thanks for the info, Bruce. Our editorial board has decided to go the reclassification route in our piece, restricting easy access for kids to the products.

Our question though is this: is there any evidence beyond intuition that there is greater scrutiny in liquor stores than convenience stores, meaning an underage drinker is less likely to score a Four Loko at an ABC Liquor store than the Quickie Mart?

Thanks!

Darryl

Darryl E. Owens
Editorial writer/Columnist
The Orlando Sentinel
633 North Orange Avenue
Orlando, FL 32801
www.orlandosentinel.com
407-420-5095
dowens@orlandosentinel.com

Courage is fear that has said its prayers.

From: Grant, Bruce [mailto:Bruce.Grant@eog.myflorida.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 02, 2010 10:25 AM
To: Owens, Darryl
Cc: Carol.burkett@ocfl.net; Goudy, Senta
Subject: Information from the Florida Office of Drug Control

Darryl – Good talking to you yesterday.

Here is the information you requested.

Please let me know if you need anything else.

Regards,

Bruce Grant
Director, Florida Office of Drug Control

From: Goudy, Senta
Sent: Thursday, September 02, 2010 9:30 AM
To: Grant, Bruce
Subject: for Darryl Owen - Sentinel writer

Orange County Coalition contact information:
Carol Burkett
Executive Director
Orange County Drug Free Coalition
407-836-7319
Carol.burkett@ocfl.net

Attachment: Study by UF professor on impact of price

Alcohol Policy Information System
<http://www.alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov/>

This site is managed by the National Institute for Health and contains reviews of current policies and research on effectiveness of a broad range of policies and practices in states.

Join Together
<http://www.jointogether.org/>

This is a website dedicated to sharing news, research and information about drug and alcohol policy.

Reducing Underage Drinking: A collective responsibility
<http://www.jointogether.org/resources/reducing-underage-drinking.html>

This book can be read online. It has a chapter on the impact of price on increased use. It is based upon, and references, current research.

From: [Chris Franzetti](#)
To: [Goudy, Senta](#); er.snelling@verizon.net
Subject: RE: Loko ~ Keys Newspaper
Date: Monday, November 15, 2010 9:01:33 AM

FCAP agreed to explore it more. FADAA has been approached by the Ounce of Prevention Fund to work on it, too. The last I heard was that there is talk of either a total ban or at least regulation. FADAA is waiting to hear back from the Ounce on a date for further conversation. I can keep you posted on that.

Thanks, Senta.

Chris Franzetti

Policy Coordinator
Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association
2868-1 Mahan Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32308
850-878-2196
www.fadaa.org

From: Goudy, Senta [<mailto:Senta.Goudy@eog.myflorida.com>]
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2010 8:43 AM
To: Chris Franzetti
Subject: FW: Loko ~ Keys Newspaper

Chris – since we've had a death here in LEon is your coalition interested in taking leadership on this issue?

Chris/Ellen – is FAPC working on this?

I have some calls to make today and would appreciate any work that you guys know might be happening.

Thanks

From: Prevspec@aol.com [<mailto:Prevspec@aol.com>]
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2010 6:16 AM
To: Goudy, Senta
Subject: Loko ~ Keys Newspaper

Four Loko alcoholic energy drinks are seen Nov. 10 in the cooler of a convenience store in Seattle.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK — The maker of a caffeinated alcoholic drink that has been banned in four states has agreed to stop shipments to New York state.

Gov. David Paterson and the State Liquor Authority announced the agreement Sunday with Chicago-based Phusion Projects, which makes the drink Four Loko, and with the state's largest beer distributors to stop selling caffeinated alcoholic beverages.

"New Yorkers deserve to know that the beverages they buy are safe for consumption," Paterson said.

The company agreed to stop shipping the drinks by Friday. Distributors have until Dec. 10 to finish out their inventory.

The popular drinks have been banned in Washington, Michigan, Utah and Oklahoma.

Four Loko comes in several varieties, including fruit punch and blue raspberry. A 23.5-ounce can sells for about \$2.50 and has an alcohol content of 12 percent, comparable to four beers, according to the company's website.

College students have been hospitalized after drinking the beverages, including in New Jersey, where one school banned them on campus.

Phusion also agreed to fund alcohol awareness programs as part of the agreement. In a statement, co-founder Jaisen Freeman said the company believes that mixing alcohol and caffeine is safe, but the company wanted "to be known for cooperation and collaboration, not controversy."

From: [Chris Franzetti](#)
To: [Goudy, Senta](#)
Subject: RE: Loko ~ Keys Newspaper
Date: Monday, November 15, 2010 8:52:16 AM

I need to hear about the death...I didn't know about it...but I will run it by our group...and I also mentioned Four Loko on the Liz Hollifield Teen 411 radio show yesterday..so, please get me more info..thanks for letting me know....Yikes/

Chris Franzetti

Policy Coordinator
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From: [Goudy, Senta](mailto:Goudy.Senta)
To: Prevspec@aol.com
Subject: RE: Loko ~ Keys Newspaper
Date: Monday, November 15, 2010 8:43:58 AM

Thanks

From: Prevspec@aol.com [mailto:Prevspec@aol.com]
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From: [Chris Franzetti](#)
To: [Goudy, Senta](#)
Subject: RE: Loko ~ Keys Newspaper
Date: Monday, November 15, 2010 9:30:51 AM

I have to keep that "confidential" at this point, is that ok? We're waiting for a followup meeting..

And, before I bring the Four Loko death to the coalition, do you have any more info on the Leon County death?

Chris

Chris Franzetti
Policy Coordinator
Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association
2868-1 Mahan Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32308
850-878-2196
www.fadaa.org

From: Goudy, Senta [mailto:Senta.Goudy@eog.myflorida.com]
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2010 9:29 AM
To: Chris Franzetti
Subject: RE: Loko ~ Keys Newspaper

You too – keep me in the loop re: Ounce of Prevention. Who was it?

From: Chris Franzetti [mailto:CFranzetti@fadaa.org]
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2010 8:52 AM
To: Goudy, Senta
Subject: RE: Loko ~ Keys Newspaper

I need to hear about the death...I didn't know about it...but I will run it by our group...and I also mentioned Four Loko on the Liz Hollifield Teen 411 radio show yesterday..so, please get me more info..thanks for letting me know....Yikes/

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From: [Goudy, Senta](#)
To: [Shibley, Claude](#)
Subject: RE: Question RE: News Articles, Wednesday, November 17, 2010
Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2010 12:26:09 PM

Yes to both questions

From: Shibley, Claude
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2010 12:15 PM
To: Goudy, Senta
Subject: Question RE: News Articles, Wednesday, November 17, 2010

Hi Senta. So if I hit reply it shows Florida Prevention in the "to" block. If I hit send then it goes to all of the addressees below?
Second. Are you taking Peggy's entire articles report and then sending it to Florida Prevention?

vr, Claude

Claude W. Shibley

Florida Office of Drug Control
O: 850.414 8820

<http://www.ftgov.com/drugcontrol/pdmp/index.html>

From: Florida Prevention
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2010 9:43 AM
To: (dams@nova.edu); amity_chandler@ccps.k12.fl.us; Angie Ellison; Anne Frazier; anti-drug@cox.net; aventura@unitedwaybroward.org; b_town_00@hotmail.com; bcallahan@copecenter.org; Brooke Baker; bysapc@bellsouth.net; campbell.gail@gmail.com; Carol Burkett; Carrie Baird (carrie@ovfv.org); cepps@roundtableslc.org; chrisfranzetti@aol.com; chrissy_bynum@ccps.k12.fl.us; Cindy Coney (cindyconey@aol.com); Clarice Powell; Clay; cparris@pascoasap.com; debbie@seminolepreventioncoalition.org; Debi MacIntyre (debi@safecimatecoalition.org); deborah@ovfv.org; dlees@highlandsheriff.org; Doug Leonardo (Douglas.leonardo@baycare.org); Ellen Piekalkiewicz (Ellen_Piekalkiewicz@dcf.state.fl.us); elwoodford@yahoo.com; Gail Dixon; geometrics@aol.com; gerry.brent@mcchildrensalliance.org; Goldstein, Ron; gwen_love@cdfsfl.org; heidi@pactprevention.org; Jacob, Leonard Robert; Jan Cairnes (jcairnes@hanleycenter.org); Janet Reilly; jcarter_fheasap@yahoo.com; jdoherty@operpar.org; Jim Hall UpFrontin (UpFrontin@aol.com); jjswell@aol.com; jmbardes@yahoo.com; Joan Helms (jah@nettally.com); Joel Kaufman (JKaufman@StartingPlace.org); Jon Quinon (jonq.teenalliance@gmail.com); Karen Perry (KPerry@nopetaskforce.org); Kathleen Roberts (kmr05g@fsu.edu); Kay Doughty (KDoughty@OperPar.org); Kelly Johnson; kingdavidinc@bellsouth.net; kthomas@roundtableslc.org; lhilko@operpar.org; Lisa Jones; lisa.mcelhaney@gmail.com; Mae Waters (mwaters@mail.fsu.edu); Maureen Simmons (Maureen.Simmons@C4BF.org); mcdonaldg1@windstream.net; meena.harris@myfloridalegal.com; Mike Jordon (cwjordan44@aol.com); nwfipc@bellsouth.net; pcastillo@unitedwaybroward.org; Penny Detscher (penny.detscher@fldoe.org); prevention@embarqmail.com; prevspec@aol.com; PSapp@informedfamilies.org; Putnam; putnamcountyanti@bellsouth.net; Rebecca R. Todd (rtodd@cfbhn.org); Regina Birrenkott (RBirrenk@mendezfoundation.org); Rick Howell (rlh1995@mail.fsu.edu); riley.kim@MAIL.DC.STATE.FL.US; rjablons@tampabay.rr.com; Shibley, Claude; skramer.mcac@gmail.com; Sonya Bufe; stephanie.geoghagan@ccbhc.org; Substance Free Citrus; susan@safeandhealthyduval.org; suwanneecolalition@mac.com; Tiffane_Raulerson@doh.state.fl.us; togetheragain@earthlink.net; Vicki Kress (vkress@smabehavioral.org); youthadvocacy@gmail.com
Subject: FW: News Articles, Wednesday, November 17, 2010

FLORIDA

<http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2010/nov/15/editorial-drug-abuse-down-among-students-but-a/>

Drug abuse down among students

16 November 2010

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/16/1929589/caffeinated-alcohol-risk-or-reward.html>

Caffeinated alcohol: Risk or reward?

17 November 2010

NATIONAL

<http://healthland.time.com/2010/11/16/will-the-fda-ban-sales-of-four-loko/>

Will the FDA ban sales of Four Loko?

16 November 2010

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/loko-removes-caffeine-energy-drink/story?id=12167659&tkw=&tqshow=GMA>

Four Loko removes caffeine from energy drink

17 November 2010

<http://www.delawareonline.com/article/20101117/OPINION11/11170304/1004/OPINION/Parental-involvement-is-key-to-drug-prevention>

Parents involvement is key to drug prevention

17 November 2010

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/more-states-doing-employee-drug-testing--firing-108650029.html>

More states doing employee drug testing

17 November 2010

<http://www.staho.com/heroin-addiction-rose-90-percent-since-2007-according-to-samhsa/207320/>

Heroin addiction rose 90% since 2007 according to SAMHSA

17 November 2010

INTERNATIONAL

http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1371450_sister_of_tragic_megan_gillan_make_bullying_a_crime

Sister of tragic Megan Gillian: "Make bullying a crime"

17 November 2010

FLORIDA

<http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2010/nov/15/editorial-drug-abuse-down-among-students-but-a/>

Drug abuse down among students

16 November 2010

An annual survey of drug use among Florida middle and high school students offers some encouraging news. While marijuana use is up slightly and alcohol use remains above national figures, overall drug abuse among students is down.

The recently released Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey of nearly 73,000 middle school and high school students was done by the Florida Office of Drug Control.

"I see this as great news for Florida," said Bruce Grant, director of the agency. "It shows that prevention does work and that if you focus communities, you focus neighborhoods and you focus the state on these issues, you can make a difference. But, you can't overcome everything."

The annual survey has been conducted since 2000, and while the trends for drug abuse are generally down, there needs to be concern that early intervention and education remain strong and that only programs that work be adequately funded.

In recent years, there has been reduced funding at the state level for some education and prevention programs, such as in tobacco use prevention. If funding for quality anti-drug programs is not sufficient, positive trends could quickly reverse.

The survey found that the use of alcohol or other drugs has declined among students from 60 percent to 56 percent in the past decade.

During the past three years, however, marijuana use has increased among students from 15 percent to 19 percent.

Among those releasing the survey results was Gil Kerlikowske, former Port St. Lucie and Fort Pierce police chief, director of the White House Office of Drug Control Policy.

Increased marijuana use in Florida is similar to increased use nationwide, he said, calling the trend "very concerning."

Still, the biggest concern in Florida is with alcohol abuse. Overall, 28.8 percent of students said they use alcohol. While that is down from 34.3 percent during the decade, it remains excessively high. Binge drinking, which has declined from 18.8 percent to 14.1 percent, is also worth concern and action.

One positive note in regard to alcohol abuse is that students are waiting longer to try alcohol.

Prevention programs that work must be replicated and adequately funded. Some programs work better than others.

In recent years, concerns have been raised, for example, about the effectiveness of the popular Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program.

Whatever programs a community or school district adopts, though, the goal must be to encourage young people to avoid drugs and to do so in a positive and continuing way.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/16/1929589/caffeinated-alcohol-risk-or-reward.html>

Caffeinated alcohol: risk or reward?

17 November 2010

What will college kids miss most about high-octane alcoholic energy drinks like Four Loko -- aka "blackout in a can" -- which the Food and Drug Administration is expected to ban?

"I'm gonna miss the shakes, the headaches, the blackouts, the colorful vomit," someone with the Twitter name eriinneuwirth tweeted Tuesday, after word of the FDA's decision spread.

"RIP Four Loko."

After a yearlong study, the FDA has concluded that caffeine is an unsafe food additive to alcoholic drinks. At least six deaths in Florida have been linked to Four Loko, the top-selling brand, including University of Miami rugby player Kelly McConnell, who police say was hit by a drunken driver.

FDA spokeswoman Siobhan DeLancey would not confirm any upcoming action but said the agency recognizes "this very important public health issue."

The brightly colored cans could be off store shelves in a week. If there's any left.

"I've already heard students talking about stocking up," said University of Miami student Nicolette Roque, who wrote a front-page story about the drinks for the UM Hurricane newspaper on Sept. 22. "They're wanting to hoard. They think it's less threatening to their health than a couple of beers."

So what's the attraction?

A fast, cheap drunk -- with the illusion of extreme alertness, according to Four Loko fans.

The concoction comes in fruity flavors like punch, lemon-lime, cranberry, orange, grape and blue raspberry. A 23.5-ounce can sells for about \$2.50 at convenience stores and gas stations and, with a 12 percent alcohol content, packs the punch of four beers.

One can has about the same amount of caffeine as a cup of coffee, and contains energy-drink ingredients like taurine, guarana and wormwood -- a key ingredient in absinthe.

UM junior Yorence Ramiz, 20, said that since the cans look like energy drinks, "many of the employees don't even think there is alcohol in them, making it easier for teenagers to get it."

Several studies have suggested that people who drink products like Four Loko engage in riskier behavior than alcohol alone. Caffeine masks the effects of alcohol, making drinkers think they can continue to imbibe past the point of drunkenness.

Four states have already banned the drinks.

Dr. Mary Claire O'Brien, a professor of emergency medicine at Wake Forest University, warned the FDA last year that the alcohol-caffeine combination is dangerous.

"There's a particular interaction that goes on in the brain when they are consumed simultaneously," she said. "The addition of the caffeine impairs the ability of the drinker to tell when they're drunk. What is the level at which it becomes dangerous? We don't know that, and until we can figure it out, the answer is that no level is safe."

This fall, UM administrators passed out fliers on campus titled "The Lowdown on Four Loko: By The Numbers," to educate students about risks.

Pat Whitely, UM's vice president of student affairs, said she has heard student leaders responding positively.

Phusion Projects, which makes Four Loko, defends its product on the company website.

"While we don't agree with the notion that mixing caffeine and alcohol is inherently unsafe, we do agree with the goal of keeping adults of legal age who choose to drink responsibly as safe and as informed as possible," company officials wrote.

They continued: "If product-specific bans remain the preferred course of action, we will protect our rights as a business to the fullest extent of the law."

Although Four Loko flies off his shelves on the weekends in Coral Gables, Gulf Liquors manager Noel Delvalle said he supports a ban of caffeinated alcoholic drinks.

“The problem is not the product, it's that the kids drink it too fast so they get high or drunk,” said Delvalle, who sells 10 cases of Four Loko a week at \$2.39 a can. “The kids don't care about the flavor. They care about the alcoholic content.”

Ramiz, the UM junior, said that “you usually start to feel tipsy after one can. After the second one, you should be good for the night.

“If you dare to pop a third can, be ready to pray to the porcelain god.”

NATIONAL

<http://healthland.time.com/2010/11/16/will-the-fda-ban-sales-of-four-loko/>

Will the FDA ban sales of Four Loko?

16 November 2010

On the heels of several statewide [bans](#) on alcoholic energy drinks like Four Loko and Joose, the Food and Drug Administration is expected to weigh in this week on the safety of drinks that mix caffeine and alcohol.

This past weekend, a collective of New York State's largest beer distributors, along with Four Loko-maker Phusion Projects, [agreed](#) to stop supplying the drinks to local stores by Dec 10. So far, four other states have banned the drinks outright, following several incidents of serious drunkenness, illness and death. (**More on Time.com: [4 Reasons Binge Drinking Is a Public Health Problem](#)**)

Four Loko, the top-selling alcoholic energy drink, was [implicated](#) in the recent deaths of two Florida teenagers — one mixed the drink with diet pills and the other shot himself after drinking several cans of Four Loko. The drink was also recently found at the [scene](#) of a kidnapping and torture case in New York City, and has been blamed for the hospitalization or illness of students who consumed it at college parties at Central Washington University, Skidmore College and Ramapo College in New Jersey, among others.

Four Loko contains about 12% alcohol (the equivalent of two beers) and about as much caffeine as a cup of coffee. The combination [tricks](#) drinkers into thinking they are not as drunk they are, because the caffeine keeps them alert. For many drinkers — especially teenagers and college students, among whom the drink is popular — this mixing of alcohol and caffeine can turn deadly. (**More on Time.com: ['Blackout in a Can': Alcoholic Energy Drinks Keep Wreaking Havoc](#)**)

“There's a particular interaction that goes on in the brain when they are consumed simultaneously,” Dr. Mary Claire O'Brien, a professor of emergency medicine at Wake Forest University [told](#) the New York *Times*. “The addition of the caffeine impairs the ability of the drinker to tell when they're drunk. What is the level at which it becomes dangerous? We don't know that, and until we can figure it out, the answer is that no level is safe.”

The FDA has been reviewing the safety of alcoholic energy drinks, which come in about 40 different varieties, for the past year. The agency is expected to come to a decision as soon as Wednesday, Nov. 17. The *Times* reports:

The agency declined to say what it would do, but several food safety lawyers who once worked for it said a likely option was to use warning letters to inform manufacturers that the drinks were adulterated and, therefore, not safe.

...

Such letters would probably give the companies a deadline to reformulate the drinks voluntarily or take them off the market.

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/loko-removes-caffeine-energy-drink/story?id=12167659&tqkw=&tqshow=GMA>

Four Loko removes caffeine from energy drink

17 November 2010

The makers of a controversial [caffeinated alcoholic energy drink](#) are removing the caffeine from the product following widespread outcry over safety concerns.

Dozens of students have been hospitalized after drinking [Four Loko](#), police said.

Four states have now banned the product, and New York Sen. Charles Schumer's office is reporting that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is set to rule as early as today that the drink is unsafe and may be banned.

The makers of the drink, Chicago-based Phusion Projects, maintain their product is safe, but say they're removing the caffeine “after trying unsuccessfully to navigate a difficult and politically-charged regulatory environment at both the state and federal levels,” in a statement posted on their [website](#).

It's a bittersweet victory for Joe and Vicki Keiran, who say their 20-year-old son, Jason, died after becoming wired and drunk

after drinking at least three cans of the energy drink Four Loko. The amount he consumed was the equivalent of 18 light beers and 6 cups of coffee.

Each fruit punch-flavored 23.5-ounce can has about 2.82 ounces of alcohol and about 156 milligrams of caffeine.

The family's attorney, Don Van Dingenen, says the Florida State sophomore picked up a friend's gun after partying with his roommates for 30 hours straight on Sept. 17.

"They say he started to act crazy. He pointed the gun at his head and everyone else. He said 'I realize I'm freaking you guys out take the gun away from me,'" Van Dingenen said.

The Keirans believe the drink caused their son to become so manic and erratic that he accidentally shot himself. They say they are suing the makers of Four Loko to send a message that this and other similar products need to be banned.

The medical examiner's office has not ruled on whether Jason Keiran's death was an accidental shooting or suicide.

However, friends who witnessed the tragedy say it was an accident and his parents say he would never have taken his own life on purpose.

"I just miss him more and more every day I wish he would e-mail me I wish he would call me -- I wish he was coming home for Thanksgiving," Vicki Keiran said.

The Keirans say they talked with their son's friends after his death, and the drink kept coming up in conversation. Then, they started hearing stories about young people across the country who had behaved erratically after ingesting the product.

Police say dozens of students have been hospitalized including nine from Central Washington University who became violently ill at a party.

Four Loko "should have a skull and crossbones on it and sitting up there beside rat poison on the shelf," said Joe Keiran.

The makers of Four Loko had no comment on the Keirans' lawsuit, but they condemned underage drinking, noting that their product was intended for adults only.

<http://www.delawareonline.com/article/20101117/OPINION11/11170304/1004/OPINION/Parental-involvement-is-key-to-drug-prevention>

Parental involvement is key to drug prevention

17 November 2010

The softening of young people's perception of the harms from illegal drug use continues with the starkest impact on the nation's minority teens.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy data show significant increases in drug use among young African-American teen girls and Hispanic teen boys between 2008 and 2009.

Drug use among black/non-Hispanic females ages 12 to 17 increased from 7.3 percent in 2008 to 10.4 percent in 2009, and Hispanic males of the same age group from 9.2 percent in 2008 to 12.8 percent in 2009; increases of 43 percent and 39 percent, respectively.

The government's prescription for the problem is continued aggressive outreach with vital prevention and treatment resources from community, school and religious leaders, in partnership with parents, who truly bear the mother lode of responsibility.

And to do so each one will need to keep up to date on the latest trends. For example, many students combine perfectly legal ingredients to make illegal drugs. Cans of whipped cream camouflage for dangerous inhalants, including nitrous oxide.

In Delaware, officials cite a rise in methamphetamine, Ecstasy and "date rape" sedatives at the beach resorts provided by outsiders and made available at nightclubs and teen parties during the summer.

Such knowledge becomes useless, though, without a mutually respectful relationship between parents and their soon-to-be young adult children.

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/more-states-doing-employee-drug-testing-firing-108650029.html>

More states doing employee drug testing

17 November 2010

CHICAGO, Nov. 17, 2010 /PRNewswire/ -- The increase in prescription painkillers is prompting more states to conduct employee drug testing. Now 15 states have pro-drug testing laws that allow employers to test and terminate workers based on results. Yet, some employees who are testing positive for prescription meds went on them due to work-related injuries.

Recently, The New York Times featured Americans who suffered job loss due to positive drug tests (http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/25/us/25drugs.html?_r=2&pagewanted=1&src=twr). Now pro-drug testing states are

expanding testing to go beyond cocaine, marijuana and natural opiates – codeine and morphine – and into synthetic opiates such as OxyContin and Vicodin. Pro-drug testing laws give companies a benefit – a discount on their workers' compensation premium – for screening employees. Advocates say that incentive supports a safer workplace; opponents say the real issue -- dangerous drug dependency – isn't being addressed or treated.

Now Americans who are jobless as a result of positive drug testing are asking why their companies didn't take a more caring approach. One company has developed a program that takes *care* into consideration. Rising Medical Solutions' (www.risingms.com) "Ask-A-Nurse" program adds a medical professional's guidance back into the claims process, resulting in faster, healthier return-to-work cases and safer workplaces.

Companies refer cases to "Ask-A-Nurse" for several reasons:

- A patient's care becomes static or worsens.
- A patient doesn't understand the diagnosis or prescribed treatment.
- A patient's drug use is potentially hazardous.
- A patient's claim isn't getting resolved in a reasonable timeframe.

Rising receives these types of cases and a nurse evaluates treatment guidelines, care provided and drugs prescribed. Often, the patient has been using opiates or short-acting narcotics for too long. Rising's Physician Pharmacy Reviewer gathers the drug use data and provides a summary to the treating physician to discuss a healthier treatment plan, timeline and drug weaning program. This is just one way the "Ask-A-Nurse" program impacts costs.

"Runaway cases impact America's whole healthcare cost structure," says Jamey Masingill, Vice President of Claims, FirstComp Insurance Company. "Rising keeps an eye on the injured party's long-term picture, returning to work stable and healthy."

Rising's Medical Review Unit Director, Anne Kirby cites "runaway" cases as destructive to all parties. "When cases go unmonitored there's a higher propensity for rebound. Too often meds go unsupervised and an injured worker returns to work on heavy doses of narcotics, jeopardizing their own life and others."

As Americans struggle to hold onto their jobs and healthcare coverage, medical oversight on workers' compensation cases is imperative. Moreover, with healthcare reform, monitoring prescription use will become more necessary as additional people enter the system. So while losing a job is a difficult pill to swallow, it is perhaps even more difficult knowing that preventative tools are available that could have helped an employee avoid such a devastating loss.

About Rising Medical Solutions Inc.

Rising Medical Solutions is a national medical-financial solutions firm that provides medical bill review, hospital bill review and medical cost containment services to the group health, auto, workers' compensation, and liability markets. *Inc.* magazine and the Private Company Index (PCI) rank the Chicago-based company as one of the fastest growing private enterprises in America.

<http://www.staho.com/heroin-addiction-rose-90-percent-since-2007-according-to-samhsa/207320/>

Heroin addiction rose 90% since 2007 according to SAMHSA

17 November 2010

Beverly Hills, California – A recent study by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health released by the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) showed the overall number of individuals struggling with heroin addiction rose by nearly 90 percent since 2007, from 213,000 to 399,000 people.

The study also revealed that within the same time frame, the number of first-time users increased 70 percent – from 106,000 to 180,000 individuals – with the average age of 25 but also with kids as young as 12 trying the drug.

The Waismann Method of Opiate Detoxification is a pioneering medical opiate detoxification procedure, and on November 16 it reported a substantial increase in the number of teenagers and young adults seeking treatment for their heroin addiction. According to Clare W. Kavin, addiction specialist with the Waismann Method, Oxycontin is still the number one opiate among patients, but increasingly more impressionable teens and young adults experience heroin addiction.

Kavin added that the number of young people with a heroin addiction has already reached alarming dimensions, and it is extremely important to educate both parents and young adults about the health risks and potentially fatal dangers of the drug before heroin addiction develops into a life-long social-psychological dependency issue. According to the same SAMHSA survey, one in eight teenagers under the age of 18 find heroin to be "fairly" or even "very" accessible. In such situations, the Waismann Method encourages teens and young adults to acknowledge the dangers of drug abuse and take charge of their heroin addiction by seeking proper care.

The Waismann Method of Opiate Detoxification provides a safe and humane treatment for opiate dependency, performed in a hospital intensive care unit. It carefully administers medications to reverse the psychological dependence on opiates, while also addressing the symptoms of withdrawal. The patient experiences minimal conscious withdrawal during the procedure, and will be able to return home within days.

INTERNATIONAL

http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1371450_sister_of_tragic_megan_gillan_make_bullying_a_crime

Sister of traffic Megan Gillian: "Make bullying a crime"

17 November 2010

The sister of a schoolgirl who took a fatal overdose because she was being bullied has called for the government to make bullying a crime.

Megan Gillan was 15 and a pupil at Macclesfield High School when she was found dead in her bedroom by her parents at Flying Fields Drive in January last year. An inquest recorded it as an accidental death.

Megan's parents, Mark and Margaret Gillan, called for social networking sites to be monitored when the inquest into Megan's death heard she took painkillers to kill herself after classmates waged a hate campaign against her on Bebo.

Megan's oldest sister Hayley Heffernan, 31, became an ambassador for bullying charity Beatbullying which wants a bill to protect children and teachers at school or online. Hayley, a travel agent, is due to hand over a petition with 700,000 signatures to deputy prime minister Nick Clegg today.

It is part of an internet protest – the first of its kind – to ask the government to make bullying a criminal offence.

Hayley said: "There needs to be a change in the law – both online and in schools

Schools have to have a bullying policy but they should be made to use it so bullies pay for their actions. Schools choose not to act because it looks bad. Megan's high school didn't handle it properly."

Beatbullying's The Big March is the world's first virtual protest for children's rights and started on Monday to mark Anti-Bullying Week.

The 750,000 'virtual demonstrators' includes Archbishop Desmond Tutu, teachers, more than 100 parliamentarians and thousands of children.

A Cheshire East Council spokesman said: "Megan's death shocked and saddened the whole school. She was a bubbly and intelligent young person with a bright future.

"Social networking sites cannot be accessed from school computers.

"Macclesfield High School has a robust anti-bullying policy which is annually reviewed.

Following Megan's death the headteacher and governing body examined the policy and were satisfied."

n Youth centre Just Drop-In and anti-bullying champion Jade Prest teamed up to run three Macclesfield events, including a road trip to Macclesfield College where Jade studied.

A window display at 14 Duke Street where people can get advice was also produced.

Peggy Lawson

Executive Assistant to the Director

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Executive Office of the Governor

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Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

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From: [Shipley, Claude](#)
To: [Goudy, Senta](#)
Subject: RE: coincidental to our discussion?
Date: Thursday, August 12, 2010 1:50:00 PM

I assume you intend to clear with Director and then start language and consensus building?

From: Goudy, Senta
Sent: Thursday, August 12, 2010 1:35 PM
To: Shipley, Claude
Subject: RE: coincidental to our discussion?

I would like to.

Senta Goudy

From: Shipley, Claude
Sent: Thursday, August 12, 2010 1:17 PM
To: Goudy, Senta
Subject: RE: coincidental to our discussion?

Based upon our discussion it has a good chance; Spice is not an issue when including in the bill from last year.

Are you exploring this energy drink as legislation?

From: Goudy, Senta
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To: Shipley, Claude
Subject: RE: coincidental to our discussion?

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From: Shipley, Claude
Sent: Thursday, August 12, 2010 9:58 AM
To: Goudy, Senta
Subject: coincidental to our discussion?

http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2010-08-11/news/os-four-dead-stpete-four-loko-20100810_1_energy-drinks-alcoholic-energy-phusion-projects

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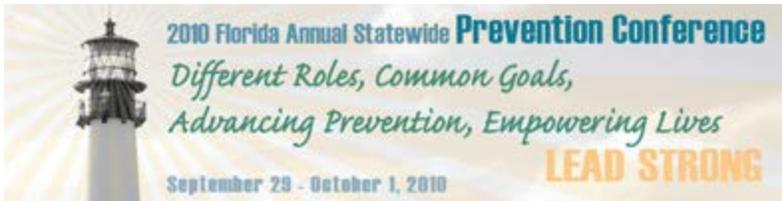
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F: 850-922-2894

Claude.Shipley@MyFlorida.com

<http://www.flgov.com/drugcontrol/pdmp/index.html>

"I am not important, but what I do is important"



From: [Goudy, Senta](#)
To: [Shipley, Claude](#)
Subject: RE: coincidental to our discussion?
Date: Thursday, August 12, 2010 1:59:56 PM

Yes. Need to follow up with FADAA just to be sure first.

[Senta Goudy](#)

From: Shipley, Claude
Sent: Thursday, August 12, 2010 1:50 PM
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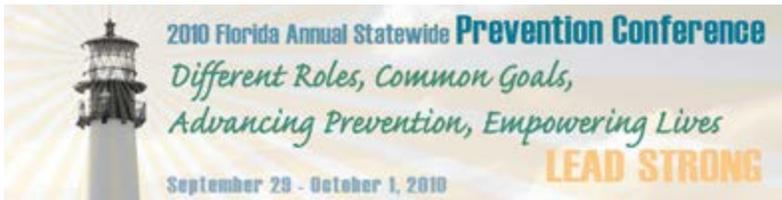
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<http://www.flgov.com/drugcontrol/pdmp/index.html>

"I am not important, but what I do is important"



From: [Goudy, Senta](#)
To: [Grant, Bruce](#)
Subject: Re: Caffeine and Alcohol Drink Is Potent Mix for Young
Date: Wednesday, October 27, 2010 12:20:40 PM

I like that. Can talk with abt.

From: Grant, Bruce
Sent: Wednesday, October 27, 2010 11:42 AM
To: Goudy, Senta
Cc: Cece, Jeffrey; Benard, Andy
Subject: FW: Caffeine and Alcohol Drink Is Potent Mix for Young

Senta – Maybe our best route is to get these drinks properly labeled and placed in the appropriate place in stores.

Can you sell something with this high alcohol content in a convenience store?

From: McGhee, Darrick [mailto:Darrick.McGhee@dbpr.state.fl.us]
Sent: Wednesday, October 27, 2010 11:35 AM
Subject: Caffeine and Alcohol Drink Is Potent Mix for Young



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Caffeine and Alcohol Drink Is Potent Mix for Young

ABBY GOODNOUGH

Published: Wednesday, October 27, 2010 at 6:30 a.m.



Paul Sakuma/Associated Press

Four Loko is among the energy drinks combining caffeine and alcohol that have been banned at Ramapo College.

Mixing alcohol and caffeine is hardly a new concept, but a rash of cases involving students and others who landed at hospitals after drinking beverages that combine the two in a single large can has alarmed college and health officials around the country.

The drinks are dangerous, doctors say, because the caffeine masks the effects of the alcohol, keeping consumers from realizing just how intoxicated they are.

A brand called Four Loko — a fruit-flavored malt beverage that has an alcohol content of 12 percent and as much caffeine as a cup of coffee — has come under particular scrutiny after students who drank it this fall at Ramapo College in New Jersey and Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Wash., ended up in emergency rooms, some with high levels of alcohol poisoning.

“This is one of the most dangerous new alcohol concoctions I have ever seen,” said Dr. Michael Reihart, an emergency room doctor at Lancaster General Hospital in Lancaster, Pa., who said he had treated more than a dozen teenagers and adults over the last three months who had been brought there after drinking Four Loko. “It’s a recipe for disaster because your body’s natural defense is to get sleepy and not want to drink, but in this case you’re tricking the body with the caffeine.”

At the urging of 18 attorneys general, the Food and Drug Administration, which has never approved adding caffeine to alcohol, is reviewing whether the drinks are safe. And in July, Senator Charles E. Schumer of New York asked the Federal Trade Commission to investigate whether the drinks, with colorful packaging and flavors like watermelon, blue raspberry and lemon-lime, are “explicitly designed to attract under-age drinkers.”

Lawmakers in several states, including New York, have sought to ban the drinks, though no legislation has passed yet.

Peter Mercer, the president of Ramapo College in Mahwah, N.J., went so far as to ban energy drinks that combine caffeine and alcohol this month after six students were taken to the hospital after drinking Four Loko. One, he said, “admitted to drinking three cans of Four Loko and several shots of tequila in just over an hour.”

That student had a blood alcohol level of .40 afterward, Dr. Mercer said.

“I do not see any socially redeeming purpose being served by these beverages,” he said. “At the end of the day, they’re aimed at a young, inexperienced market for the purpose of enabling them to become rapidly intoxicated.”

Chris Hunter, a co-founder and managing partner of Phusion Projects, the five-year-old Chicago company that owns Four Loko, said Tuesday that the drink, introduced in August 2008, was being unfairly singled out. The company takes steps to prevent its products from getting into the hands of minors, he said.

“Alcohol misuse and abuse and under-age drinking are issues the industry faces and all of us would like to address,” Mr. Hunter said. “The singling out or banning of one product or category is not going to solve that. Consumer education is what’s going to do it.”

In a separate statement published on its Web site, Phusion Projects questioned why a police investigation into the Central Washington University incident had focused on Four Loko when, according to the police report, a number of other alcoholic beverages, including beer, vodka and rum, were also found at the off-campus party where students got sick.

Rob McKenna, the attorney general in Washington, said that while many students at the party had mixed alcohols, some of those who were hospitalized had drunk only Four Loko.

“You have a product where people don’t appreciate how much alcohol they’re consuming,” Mr. McKenna said.

Students at several universities around the country said Tuesday that Four Loko and similar drinks were catching on among their peers because they were cheap and potent yet did not taste like alcohol.

“You can get drunk for \$5 all night,” said Christine Binko, a junior at Boston University who said she had noticed Four Loko cans littering streets near campus on weekends. “But I definitely think it brings out the aggression in people.”

Ms. Binko and most others interviewed expressed wariness about the drinks.

At Xavier University in Cincinnati, Adam Stowe, a sophomore, said that Four Loko was showing up much more at parties, but that most people only drank one to start their night with a powerful drink and then switched to beer. “I just tasted it once and said, ‘That’s gross,’ ” he said.

Also under scrutiny is Joose, a caffeinated alcoholic beverage made by United Brands, a San Diego company. It comes in the same 23.5-ounce can as Four Loko but has a lower alcohol content, 9.9 percent, and, according to Michael Michail, the company president, less caffeine. Mr. Michail said a can of Joose contained 54 milligrams of caffeine; Mr. Hunter said a can of Four Loko contained 156 milligrams.

“It is ludicrous for someone to come out and say we are targeting under-age drinkers,” Mr. Michail said. “We understand what the laws of the land are, and we stick with it.”

Both Mr. Michail and Mr. Hunter said their beverages came in 23.5-ounce cans because when they started out, that was the standard for malt liquor drinks. Mr. Michail said he was considering a smaller can; Mr. Hunter said Four Loko drinkers could already choose between the version with 12 percent alcohol and another with 6 percent alcohol, though the former is far more popular.

Both Four Loko and Joose are sold in 47 states; Mr. Hunter said his company had added 10 states in the last three months alone.

“We have seven spots on our labels that identify it’s an alcoholic product,” he said. “We go above and beyond industry standards.”

Critics, though, say that the brightly colored cans Four Loko comes in look like iced tea, soda or energy drink containers, and that it is easy to mistake the product for nonalcoholic drinks.

“I’ve talked to parents who were shocked because the can was in their refrigerator and they didn’t realize it was an alcoholic beverage,” Dr. Reihart said. “It looks like every other energy

drink out there.”

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From: [Jennifer N King](#) on behalf of [DCF Press Office](#)
Subject: DCF News Clips - Thursday, January 27, 2011
Date: Thursday, January 27, 2011 6:28:54 AM

Florida: Listening to children

Middleburg: Middleburg family picked for Extreme Makeover new home

Florida: Community forum tonight at City Hall

Orlando: As Four Loko controversy continues, lawsuits pile up

Titusville: DCF Launches Probe Into Death Of Child Found In Cooler

Panama City: Conflicting stories emerge in molestation trial

Palatka: Police: Hot iron used on disabled teen

Delray Beach: Homeless count in Palm Beach County expected to rise

Titusville: DCF was investigating 7-month-old Titusville boy's home

Daytona Beach News-Journal

Listening to children

01/27/2011

Florida's recently appointed secretary of the Department of Children and Families, David Wilkins, has some big shoes to fill. He is replacing George Sheldon who, along with his predecessor Bob Butterworth, made significant progress in reforming the state's foster care system. Under the previous two secretaries, Florida greatly reduced the number of children in foster care and made us one of the nation's leaders in the number of adopted kids. Both Butterworth and Sheldon were guided by the direct voice of experience, the youth in state care. We urge Secretary Wilkins to continue listening to youth, to keep up the momentum in reforming foster care and to pay special attention to the well-being of kids while they're waiting for a permanent home.

The Legislature will have the opportunity to give kids in state care a chance at living more normal lives. The new secretary's leadership will be vital.

Spudeas is executive director of Florida's Children First, which advocates for the rights of at-risk children and youth.

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Florida Times-Union

Middleburg family picked for Extreme Makeover new home

01/27/2011

By Dan Scanlan

MIDDLEBURG - Joshua Garrett watched as girlfriend Ashley Brewer stepped off the "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" bus Wednesday with designer Michael Moloney and walked to her tiny home on North Chicory Avenue in Clay County.

As cameras rolled, Ashley and sisters Taylor and Gina batted around a volleyball with Moloney as the ABC-TV reality show's other designers went into the mildewed double-wide with Carrie Prewitt, who took the girls in after their parents died.

Come Wednesday, Prewitt and her "daughters" of two years will come back to Middleburg from a free Virgin Island vacation to find their leaking home off South County Road 215 replaced with something grand.

"To think this is going to be gone and we are going to have a new home is awesome," Prewitt said of her home for 20 years.

"We are really shocked and it doesn't feel real at all," added Ashley, 18.

Garrett said he'll be there to yell "Move that bus" with everyone else.

"My girlfriend was just saying how she has never had a home of her own," Garrett said. "Now they will all have their own."

"Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" has rebuilt 188 homes of families facing a major health or housing problem. The show's producers solicited nominations for a deserving Jacksonville-area family in November, and dozens of friends and neighbors named Prewitt, a volleyball coach at Middleburg High School for 25 years.

Family tragedies

Prewitt first met Ashley when she was a freshman at the school, and all three girls came to a summer volleyball camp. She became a mentor and friend as they dealt with the problems of a broken home.

"They just tugged my heart from the day I met them," Prewitt said.

When their mother died of an overdose, Ashley stayed with Prewitt while her sisters were cared for by a grandmother. When their father died the same way, the sisters asked the single soccer coach if she would take them in. Prewitt said she was praying over that when they were removed from the grandmother and put in foster care.

"I just called them [Department of Children and Families] and said get them over to my house as soon as you can because they don't deserve to be in foster care," Prewitt said, emotion in her voice. "If they get into foster care, they were going to be separated. They had been through so much already that I couldn't see that happening."

The young women said their new mother took them in "right away, no question" to make a new family. But their little house has leaks, no heat in Taylor's room, insects and one big issue - it isn't level.

"I can't shut my cupboard doors," Prewitt said. "When the washer goes, the whole house shakes. I have this little angel in my bedroom window, and every time the washer goes on spin cycle, my angel starts fluttering."

Surprise visit

The girls learned first that their house had been chosen Wednesday morning, then joined lead designer Ty Pennington to surprise Prewitt during volleyball practice.

"Ty walked in and I just went down to my knees. I was so surprised and overwhelmed that I couldn't stand it," Prewitt said. "I was brought to tears. It is such a humbling experience to think that they think we are worthy."

What do they want in their new home?

"Every room that I have lived in has never actually been for me; it's already been there," Ashley said. "A new room for me is what I would want the most."

"Just a place to have fun, be together and invite some friends over," said Taylor, 14, while Gina, 12, said she just wants "a room made for me."

Ark Remodeling and Construction of Gainesville and J.A. Long Design Builders of Orange Park will do the build, with an estimated 3,000 workers starting after today's demolition.

"It is just a great story of a mom taking care of three girls," said Long's CEO, Randy Long. "It is rare that you really get to be part of such a great story, and the Clay County community does know about this family and they are a great family."

Show officials said the mortgage on the new home has already been paid, while Prewitt will get financial advice after she moves in.

The show's last visit to Northeast Florida was Hastings almost six years ago.

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Gulf Breeze News

Community forum tonight at City Hall

01/27/2011

BRIEFS

The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Volunteer Florida

are hosting a community forum today (Thursday, Jan. 27) at 6 p.m. at Gulf Breeze City Hall to get answers from residents and businesses to the following questions:
What are the most important factors in creating strong, healthy communities in Santa Rosa County?

Orlando Sentinel

As Four Loko controversy continues, lawsuits pile up

01/27/2011

By Jeff Weiner, Orlando Sentinel

January 27

Ever since four Orlando men were killed in a car crash last summer — struck by a driver who admitted drinking the caffeinated alcoholic drink Four Loko — the beverage has been in the news again and again.

Lawsuits have popped up against the parent company of the controversial energy drink. Its use is being cited in a growing number of child-abuse and domestic-violence cases. Several states have banned the caffeinated version of the beverage, and there's a push for more to join suit.

But Florida has not banned the drink, and it continues to be a big seller.

In Central Florida, at least one of the liquor stores closest to the University of Central Florida campus has Four Loko — the caffeinated formula that the company has stopped making — stacked to the ceiling along its glass-paned front wall. When asked, the clerk explained that it has been flying off the shelves. He said an equal amount was stacked in the back.

The FDA has warned Four Loko's parent company, Phusion Projects — and other manufacturers of similar products — that it considers caffeine in alcoholic beverages an "unsafe food additive," effectively banning it from Four Loko and similar beverages.

Florida's Department of Children and Families recently announced that it is investigating misuse of the beverage.

"We've seen about a dozen cases in recent months that in some way involved this particular beverage," DCF spokeswoman Carrie Hoepfner said. "Investigators report seeing the beverage as a precursor in domestic-violence cases, cases related to supervision, DUIs and even parents consuming the beverage with teens."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has devoted a section on its website to alcoholic energy drinks.

"Drinkers who consume alcohol mixed with energy drinks are three times more likely to binge drink ... than drinkers who do not report mixing alcohol with energy drinks," the CDC site says. The CDC also warns that mixing alcohol with caffeinated products is "a popular practice among youth."

Phusion, which in November stopped making the caffeinated version of the drink, did not respond to calls seeking comment.

1 crash, 2 lawsuits

An August crash in Seminole County has spawned two lawsuits against Phusion Projects. The Florida Highway Patrol reported at the time that Danielle Joseph was driving about 95 mph when she lost control of her 2000 Acura Integra, striking a trailer being towed by a pickup on State Road 417.

Two passengers in the vehicle have claimed Joseph had been drinking Four Loko the night of the crash.

The crash cost 20-year-old Janice Rivera, the first to sue, her right hand. The FHP reported at the time that another passenger, Briana McCarroll, was transported to Orlando Regional Medical Center in serious condition.

According to her attorney, McCarroll suffered numerous injuries. The most gruesome he described: As the vehicle slid along the roadway, McCarroll's scalp was pulled back from her skull, leaving her permanently disfigured. She is suing Phusion for negligence and strict liability.

"She's got loss of hair that will never grow back," attorney John Elliott Leighton said. McCarroll also is suing Joseph and the convenience store where she said Joseph purchased Four Loko.

But why sue the beverage makers as well? Echoing complaints that have been central to the controversy, Leighton said the beverage is a dangerous mix of caffeine and alcohol, packaged for sale to young people.

Because of the caffeine, Leighton said, drinkers "don't feel drunk, and they have this false sense of sobriety."

Leighton said his client was getting ready to for her first year in college, planning to attend Florida State University, when the accident happened. Though Joseph, 20 at the time, had been drinking, Leighton said his client couldn't tell she was intoxicated.

"She thought that the driver was fine," Leighton said.

Common complaints

Four Loko is not the only product to face controversy for mixing alcohol and caffeine — other beverages, including Joose, were also identified by the FDA — but it's also not the first. The MillerCoors LLC-produced drink Sparks dropped its caffeine after a lawsuit by the Center for Science in the Public Interest in 2008.

That suit made essentially the same claims made by Leighton and others who have sued Phusion: that drinkers "are more likely to binge drink, ride with an intoxicated driver, become injured, or be taken advantage of sexually than drinkers of non-caffeinated alcoholic drinks," according to the CSPI website.

"Sparks is a drink designed to mask feelings of drunkenness and to encourage people to keep drinking past the point at which they otherwise

would have stopped," CSPI's director of alcohol policies, George A. Hacker, said at the time.

Though the current Four Loko controversy has been popping up in headlines nationwide, Central Florida in particular has been the scene of several incidents:

- On Aug. 1, Orange County resident Roy McConnell and his three sons were all killed in St. Petersburg when Demetrius Jordan, now 21, plowed into their car. Prosecutors say Jordan had been drinking Four Loko and smoking pot before the crash.

- Winter Park High School student Kason Bailey, 16, was hit and killed while crossing Aloma Avenue on Oct. 8. An autopsy later determined that his blood alcohol level was nearly three times the legal limit for drivers. A friend later told WFTV-Channel 9 that the teen had been drinking Four Loko the night he was killed.

- In November, Joseph Keiran of Winter Park filed suit against Phusion after his 20-year-old son spent a day drinking Four Loko before putting a .22-caliber pistol to his head and killing himself in Tallahassee in September.

"We want them out of business," said Don Van Dingenen, the Winter Park attorney representing Keiran. "We want the product off the shelves. We want to bring as much publicity to this so somebody else doesn't have to bury their child."

Although the caffeinated version of Four Loko already has disappeared from many local shelves, replaced by a noncaffeinated version, it hasn't gone down without a fight.

A simple search for the phrase "save Four Loko" on Facebook turns up dozens of pages and groups, with membership varying from a handful to as many as almost 4,000.

Jeff Weiner can be reached at 407-420-5171, jeweiner@orlandosentinel.com or @OSNightCops on Twitter.

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Orlando-WESH (NBC)

DCF Launches Probe Into Death Of Child Found In Cooler

01/27/2011

TITUSVILLE, Fla. -- The Florida Department of Children and Families has launched an investigation on the death of a local baby found dead in a cooler in Titusville last week.

Brian Anderson said his family is devastated by the death of his cousin's 7-month-old son, Javeon Brushan.

"It just hurts really bad," Anderson said.

Police said the child's babysitter, Carolyn Miller, claimed she fell asleep while she was watching him, then woke up and found the child dead. Instead of calling for help, police said Miller said she took the boy's body to her boyfriend's house and hid him in a cooler.

Neighbors, however, said the blame shouldn't stop with Miller.

"The mother should be more responsible for the loss of her kid," said neighbor Rasta Mason.

DCF spokesperson Carrie Hoepfner said they are wondering if the agency could have done more to help the child.

There are two prior reports of child abuse associated with the child," said Hoepfner.

DCF said agents had contact with the boy's mother, 21-year-old Janelle Richardson, in the past.

Last July, when Javeon was only 3 weeks old, Titusville police said Richardson and a friend were suspected of shoplifting. Officers pulled the women over and found Javeon, not in a car seat but the passenger's arms.

In October, police reports showed that Richardson threatened the baby's father with a knife and bit him several times on the arm during a domestic fight.

"That alone isn't enough to remove a child from the situation. What we know that child was not harmed," said Hoepfner.

DCF said it is now taking a harder look at those decisions.

"We need to know what we did right in those cases and what we could do better," Hoepfner said.

DCF said it was only able to piece together the child abuse reports involving the child, because his mother reportedly gave police different names for the boy.

Investigators said they are still waiting for toxicology results to reveal exactly how the baby died.

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Panama City News Herald

Conflicting stories emerge in molestation trial

01/27/2011

PANAMA CITY — The children said he molested her, and his family said they don't believe the children. The family said the children were put up to accusing him by their mothers because he owed them money.

So went the first day of the trial against 31-year-old Nicholas Macklin of

Panama City, who is accused of molesting three young girls.

The News Herald doesn't identify victims in sexual misconduct cases.

If convicted of lewd and lascivious molestation of a person younger than 12 and sexual battery charges stemming from the alleged crimes against one of the girls, Macklin could spend the rest of his life in prison. If he's acquitted, he can expect to face trial again for his alleged crimes against the other two.

Macklin is accused of molesting the victim in this case on several occasions between 2005 and 2007.

"On one occasion, [the victim] was not alone in the room," Assistant State Attorney Susan Rodger told the jury during her opening argument Wednesday morning. One of the other alleged victims in this case testified later that morning to seeing Macklin molest a now 12-year-old girl while they were with him in his bedroom.

During her opening argument, Lorraine Bytell, Macklin's attorney, said they shouldn't ignore the inconsistencies in the girl's stories just because they're children, but instead they should "glean why the children are saying these things." Macklin has been falsely accused by the girls at the urging of their mothers because Macklin owed them money, Bytell argued.

"He's a father, a brother, a son, a grandson, a friend and an uncle," Bytell said. "The one label we can't place on Nicholas Macklin is guilty."

As she cross examined the state's witnesses, Bytell highlighted the differences between the story the girls told in court and their previous statements, in which the girls' descriptions of the molestation were different.

But the woman who interviewed the victim after she made the allegations said the stories don't have to be identical as long as they're materially similar.

"Can there be inconsistencies? Yes, because nobody has perfect recall," said Cynthia Vollmer, who testified to interviewing 730 children during her career. Vollmer interviewed the victim for the Department of Children and Families Child Protection Team.

Vollmer also said she looks for signs of coaching during CPT interviews and found none. She also said most child molestation cases come down to the word of the victim versus the word of the accused.

"It's very seldom that you actually have a witness to a crime like this," Vollmer said.

That witness testified Wednesday. She also claims Macklin victimized her.

During her investigation for DCF, Julianne Dalton said she interviewed Macklin after the girls made their allegations and he denied them. He said their mothers were trying to get back at him because they felt he owed them money. Dalton also said that denial is the typical response of people accused of child molestation.

Several members of Macklin's immediate family also testified for the defense. An acquaintance said she heard one of the victim's mothers say they were going to get back at Macklin.

The defense will continue to call witnesses when the trial resumes today.

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Daytona Beach News-Journal

Police: Hot iron used on disabled teen

01/27/2011

Four workers at a Palatka group home and a former employee have been charged with burning a disabled Palm Coast teenager with a clothes iron, a Palatka Police Department spokesman said Wednesday.

Palatka police were called Jan. 3 to an O'Carroll Homes facility on 14th Street, where the teen is a resident, to investigate how the girl ended up with burns on her legs and ankles, according to reports. A state Department of Children & Families official said five residents were in the home at the time.

There are at least three O'Carroll Homes locations in Palatka, all owned by Linda O'Carroll, according to published reports. In 2007 at a different location, a worker was charged with abuse of a disabled adult.

On Jan. 3, investigators ensured the girl was transported to a Putnam County emergency room for treatment and observation before interviewing employees.

"(My daughter) has the mind of a 2- or 3-year-old. She has a 20-word vocabulary. She cannot speak for herself," said the girl's mother, Jeanette Roscoe. "When it comes to disabled children, you don't hear about this. She can tell me she hurts, but she can't say much else."

Jamon Davis, 26, who is charged with failure to protect a child and failure to report child abuse, told investigators the girl had "behavior problems" and was "acting out." He reported that Jolissia Battles held the girl down while Kavarus Bellamy, 21, "plug(ged) an iron into an outlet" and threatened the girl, who he said "is afraid of the iron," according to the report.

Further investigation -- conducted by the police department, DCF, the Child Protective Team, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Board of Quality Medical Assurance and Medicaid -- revealed that Battles, 20, "sprayed an unidentified chemical in the face of the child," and that former employee Devin Wesley, 21, held the girl down, according to Palatka police spokesman James Griffith.

Battles is charged with child abuse and failure to protect a child. Wesley

is charged with child abuse, false imprisonment and tampering with a witness, according to Putnam County Jail records.

Another worker, Yolanda Miller, 31, was also charged with failure to protect a child and failure to report child abuse.

A warrant has been issued for Bellamy, charging her with aggravated child abuse, child abuse, assault and four counts of tampering, Griffith said. Police haven't found her and she has not turned herself into the jail.

Roscoe said her daughter has lived at the Palatka facility for 11 years.

"There were a couple of minor incidents in the past and the (Department of Children & Families) got involved and those employees were fired," she said, noting she has since taken her daughter out of the O'Carroll Homes.

Roscoe said it's not the first time her daughter has suffered an injury while at the home.

"I recall when I had her home for Christmas, it looked like she had a burn on her right hip," she said. "When I asked about it, they said it was because she fell asleep with her jeans on."

O'Carroll Homes employees hung up when a News-Journal reporter called and identified herself.

There have been other problems at O'Carroll Homes, according to the State Attorney's Office.

Shirley Ann Poole, 56, who worked at a different O'Carroll Homes facility in Palatka, is on felony probation until April for abuse of a disabled adult, according to the Florida Department of Corrections.

Affidavits from the Attorney General's Office state Poole struck "a vulnerable adult due to mental retardation and cerebral palsy" in July 2007. Investigators described the victim as "essentially non-verbal."

Battles was booked into the Putnam County Jail and released on \$4,512 bail Monday. Miller was also booked and released Monday on \$3,508 bail.

Davis was booked and released Tuesday on \$3,508 bail. Wesley was booked Tuesday and released on \$6,012 bail.

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South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Homeless count in Palm Beach County expected to rise

01/27/2011

Being homeless is like being in hell. Sleeping outside in the rain, wanting somewhere to turn to but there's nowhere to go. The shelters can be dangerous, the streets can be dangerous and sometimes it feels like there's

no way out.

It takes only a job loss to get you there.

That's was the explanation Wednesday from the homeless people lined up for lunch at The Caring Kitchen in Delray Beach. Some were participating in the county's 24-hour count of the homeless population.

It started at noon and will help Palm Beach County receive federal and state grants to help combat the problem of homelessness. Locally, the biggest problem is not having enough shelters.

The last count of homeless people in the county, in 2009, was 2,147, but officials speculate it will be larger this year because of those who have run out of unemployment benefits and out of luck. The count, done using a demographic questionnaire, is conducted across the nation every two years.

"We are seeing a new population of homeless individuals who've never had to ask for help before," said Claudia Tuck, county director of human services.

She said the count could take weeks to compile, because many of the homeless people go from site to site, taking the voluntary questionnaire to receive the \$5 gift card to local shops.

About 70 percent of the homeless population has substance-abuse problems and many of them aren't ready to accept help, Tuck said. Others are mentally ill, domestic-abuse victims and people who have lost their jobs.

Homeless and low-income people said they were grateful for their Wednesday lunch of turkey hash, vegetables and fruit. Caring Kitchen Director April Hazamy said she has noticed more people coming in for free meals.

"We are giving them food," Hazamy said, "but we can't give them shelter, and that's a necessity."

There are shelters available for people addicted to drugs, who have HIV, are victims of domestic abuse or who have children. But people who do not fit into those categories can slip through the cracks, Hazamy said. That's when they may pick up an addiction on the street to cling to some form of comfort.

Jack Jones, 50, said there are many like him who find escape in a bottle. He became homeless three years ago after losing his landscaping job. A convicted drug dealer, Jones found it hard to find another job and had no luck at re-entry job fairs. He ended up sleeping under a tree in a friend's yard.

"It's rough," he said. "Nobody wants to deal with you when you're homeless. You're just another victim."

Russell Adams, 55, used to make \$20 an hour plus overtime as a mechanic in Miami before a knee injury in March 2009 left him unable to work and his company let him go later that year. At first he sold his boats, then his SUV to pay the rent. Then he lost his apartment. For now, he's staying with a family member.

"I used to drive by [Caring Kitchen] and think 'Why are they out there? Why

don't they try to find a job?" Adams said. "Now I know. It depends on the circumstances."

People with questions on Palm Beach County's homeless services can call the Palm Beach/Treasure Coast 211 helpline.

Jerome Burdi can be reached at jburdi@Sunsentinel.com or 561-243-6531.

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Central Florida News 13

DCF was investigating 7-month-old Titusville boy's home

Ja'Veon Brushan By Kelli Cook, Reporter

Last Updated: Wednesday, January 26, 2011 5:53 PM

TITUSVILLE -- News 13 has learned the Department of Children and Families had been investigating the home where a 7-month-old baby was staying.

The body of Ja'Veon Brushan was found dead inside a cooler Monday.

Apparently Brushan had a couple of aliases, even though he was just an infant.

When the death investigation first started, his name wasn't recognized.

New details show there were definitely some early signs that this child's life might have been in danger.

Police said the child died while in care of babysitter Carolyn "Renee" Miller.

Miller, 40, is in jail, accused of child neglect and improperly disposing of the child's body.

She told police the child died while she was asleep.

DCF now says there were investigations into the child's mother.

There is one report in July involving the child's mother in a shoplifting case.

The other case in October involved potential violence in the home between two adults.

The regional director of DCF has ordered a full review of all investigations of the babysitter as well as the mother.

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/2011/01/27/listening-to-children.html>

<http://jacksonville.com/news/florida/2011-01-26/story/middleburg-family-picked-extreme-makeover-new-home>

http://www.gulfbreezenews.com/news/2011-01-27/Community/Community_forum_tonight_at_City_Hall.html

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/breakingnews/os-four-loko-scalped-woman-attorney-20110127.0.1073683.story>

<http://www.wesh.com/news/26631951/detail.html>

<http://www.newsherald.com/news/conflicting-90405-emerge-molestation.html>

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/news/local/flagler/2011/01/27/police-hot-iron-used-on-disabled-teen.html>

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/palm-beach/fl-pbc-homeless-count-20110126.0.1307350.story>

<http://www.cfnews13.com/article/news/2011/january/201216/DCF-was-investigating-7-month-old-Titusville-boy%E2%80%99s-home>

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The Legislature will have the opportunity to give kids in state care a chance at living more normal lives. The new secretary's leadership will be vital.

Spudeas is executive director of Florida's Children First, which advocates for the rights of at-risk children and youth.

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Florida Times-Union

Middleburg family picked for Extreme Makeover new home

01/27/2011

By Dan Scanlan

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"To think this is going to be gone and we are going to have a new home is awesome," Prewitt said of her home for 20 years.

"We are really shocked and it doesn't feel real at all," added Ashley, 18.

Garrett said he'll be there to yell "Move that bus" with everyone else.

"My girlfriend was just saying how she has never had a home of her own," Garrett said. "Now they will all have their own."

"Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" has rebuilt 188 homes of families facing a major health or housing problem. The show's producers solicited nominations for a deserving Jacksonville-area family in November, and dozens of friends and neighbors named Prewitt, a volleyball coach at Middleburg High School for 25 years.

Family tragedies

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"They just tugged my heart from the day I met them," Prewitt said.

When their mother died of an overdose, Ashley stayed with Prewitt while her sisters were cared for by a grandmother. When their father died the same way, the sisters asked the single soccer coach if she would take them in. Prewitt said she was praying over that when they were removed from the grandmother and put in foster care.

"I just called them [Department of Children and Families] and said get them over to my house as soon as you can because they don't deserve to be in foster care," Prewitt said, emotion in her voice. "If they get into foster care, they were going to be separated. They had been through so much already that I couldn't see that happening."

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Surprise visit

The girls learned first that their house had been chosen Wednesday morning, then joined lead designer Ty Pennington to surprise Prewitt during volleyball practice.

"Ty walked in and I just went down to my knees. I was so surprised and overwhelmed that I couldn't stand it," Prewitt said. "I was brought to tears. It is such a humbling experience to think that they think we are worthy."

What do they want in their new home?

"Every room that I have lived in has never actually been for me; it's already been there," Ashley said. "A new room for me is what I would want the most."

"Just a place to have fun, be together and invite some friends over," said Taylor, 14, while Gina, 12, said she just wants "a room made for me."

Ark Remodeling and Construction of Gainesville and J.A. Long Design Builders of Orange Park will do the build, with an estimated 3,000 workers starting after today's demolition.

"It is just a great story of a mom taking care of three girls," said Long's CEO, Randy Long. "It is rare that you really get to be part of such a great story, and the Clay County community does know about this family and they are a great family."

Show officials said the mortgage on the new home has already been paid, while Prewitt will get financial advice after she moves in.

The show's last visit to Northeast Florida was Hastings almost six years ago.

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Gulf Breeze News

Community forum tonight at City Hall

01/27/2011

BRIEFS

The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Volunteer Florida

are hosting a community forum today (Thursday, Jan. 27) at 6 p.m. at Gulf Breeze City Hall to get answers from residents and businesses to the following questions:
What are the most important factors in creating strong, healthy communities in Santa Rosa County?

Orlando Sentinel

As Four Loko controversy continues, lawsuits pile up

01/27/2011

By Jeff Weiner, Orlando Sentinel

January 27

Ever since four Orlando men were killed in a car crash last summer — struck by a driver who admitted drinking the caffeinated alcoholic drink Four Loko — the beverage has been in the news again and again.

Lawsuits have popped up against the parent company of the controversial energy drink. Its use is being cited in a growing number of child-abuse and domestic-violence cases. Several states have banned the caffeinated version of the beverage, and there's a push for more to join suit.

But Florida has not banned the drink, and it continues to be a big seller.

In Central Florida, at least one of the liquor stores closest to the University of Central Florida campus has Four Loko — the caffeinated formula that the company has stopped making — stacked to the ceiling along its glass-paned front wall. When asked, the clerk explained that it has been flying off the shelves. He said an equal amount was stacked in the back.

The FDA has warned Four Loko's parent company, Phusion Projects — and other manufacturers of similar products — that it considers caffeine in alcoholic beverages an "unsafe food additive," effectively banning it from Four Loko and similar beverages.

Florida's Department of Children and Families recently announced that it is investigating misuse of the beverage.

"We've seen about a dozen cases in recent months that in some way involved this particular beverage," DCF spokeswoman Carrie Hoepfner said. "Investigators report seeing the beverage as a precursor in domestic-violence cases, cases related to supervision, DUIs and even parents consuming the beverage with teens."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has devoted a section on its website to alcoholic energy drinks.

"Drinkers who consume alcohol mixed with energy drinks are three times more likely to binge drink ... than drinkers who do not report mixing alcohol with energy drinks," the CDC site says. The CDC also warns that mixing alcohol with caffeinated products is "a popular practice among youth."

Phusion, which in November stopped making the caffeinated version of the drink, did not respond to calls seeking comment.

1 crash, 2 lawsuits

An August crash in Seminole County has spawned two lawsuits against Phusion Projects. The Florida Highway Patrol reported at the time that Danielle Joseph was driving about 95 mph when she lost control of her 2000 Acura Integra, striking a trailer being towed by a pickup on State Road 417.

Two passengers in the vehicle have claimed Joseph had been drinking Four Loko the night of the crash.

The crash cost 20-year-old Janice Rivera, the first to sue, her right hand. The FHP reported at the time that another passenger, Briana McCarroll, was transported to Orlando Regional Medical Center in serious condition.

According to her attorney, McCarroll suffered numerous injuries. The most gruesome he described: As the vehicle slid along the roadway, McCarroll's scalp was pulled back from her skull, leaving her permanently disfigured. She is suing Phusion for negligence and strict liability.

"She's got loss of hair that will never grow back," attorney John Elliott Leighton said. McCarroll also is suing Joseph and the convenience store where she said Joseph purchased Four Loko.

But why sue the beverage makers as well? Echoing complaints that have been central to the controversy, Leighton said the beverage is a dangerous mix of caffeine and alcohol, packaged for sale to young people.

Because of the caffeine, Leighton said, drinkers "don't feel drunk, and they have this false sense of sobriety."

Leighton said his client was getting ready to for her first year in college, planning to attend Florida State University, when the accident happened. Though Joseph, 20 at the time, had been drinking, Leighton said his client couldn't tell she was intoxicated.

"She thought that the driver was fine," Leighton said.

Common complaints

Four Loko is not the only product to face controversy for mixing alcohol and caffeine — other beverages, including Joose, were also identified by the FDA — but it's also not the first. The MillerCoors LLC-produced drink Sparks dropped its caffeine after a lawsuit by the Center for Science in the Public Interest in 2008.

That suit made essentially the same claims made by Leighton and others who have sued Phusion: that drinkers "are more likely to binge drink, ride with an intoxicated driver, become injured, or be taken advantage of sexually than drinkers of non-caffeinated alcoholic drinks," according to the CSPI website.

"Sparks is a drink designed to mask feelings of drunkenness and to encourage people to keep drinking past the point at which they otherwise

would have stopped," CSPI's director of alcohol policies, George A. Hacker, said at the time.

Though the current Four Loko controversy has been popping up in headlines nationwide, Central Florida in particular has been the scene of several incidents:

- On Aug. 1, Orange County resident Roy McConnell and his three sons were all killed in St. Petersburg when Demetrius Jordan, now 21, plowed into their car. Prosecutors say Jordan had been drinking Four Loko and smoking pot before the crash.

- Winter Park High School student Kason Bailey, 16, was hit and killed while crossing Aloma Avenue on Oct. 8. An autopsy later determined that his blood alcohol level was nearly three times the legal limit for drivers. A friend later told WFTV-Channel 9 that the teen had been drinking Four Loko the night he was killed.

- In November, Joseph Keiran of Winter Park filed suit against Phusion after his 20-year-old son spent a day drinking Four Loko before putting a .22-caliber pistol to his head and killing himself in Tallahassee in September.

"We want them out of business," said Don Van Dingenen, the Winter Park attorney representing Keiran. "We want the product off the shelves. We want to bring as much publicity to this so somebody else doesn't have to bury their child."

Although the caffeinated version of Four Loko already has disappeared from many local shelves, replaced by a noncaffeinated version, it hasn't gone down without a fight.

A simple search for the phrase "save Four Loko" on Facebook turns up dozens of pages and groups, with membership varying from a handful to as many as almost 4,000.

Jeff Weiner can be reached at 407-420-5171, jeweiner@orlandosentinel.com or @OSNightCops on Twitter.

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Orlando-WESH (NBC)

DCF Launches Probe Into Death Of Child Found In Cooler

01/27/2011

TITUSVILLE, Fla. -- The Florida Department of Children and Families has launched an investigation on the death of a local baby found dead in a cooler in Titusville last week.

Brian Anderson said his family is devastated by the death of his cousin's 7-month-old son, Javeon Brushan.

"It just hurts really bad," Anderson said.

Police said the child's babysitter, Carolyn Miller, claimed she fell asleep while she was watching him, then woke up and found the child dead. Instead of calling for help, police said Miller said she took the boy's body to her boyfriend's house and hid him in a cooler.

Neighbors, however, said the blame shouldn't stop with Miller.

"The mother should be more responsible for the loss of her kid," said neighbor Rasta Mason.

DCF spokesperson Carrie Hoepfner said they are wondering if the agency could have done more to help the child.

There are two prior reports of child abuse associated with the child," said Hoepfner.

DCF said agents had contact with the boy's mother, 21-year-old Janelle Richardson, in the past.

Last July, when Javeon was only 3 weeks old, Titusville police said Richardson and a friend were suspected of shoplifting. Officers pulled the women over and found Javeon, not in a car seat but the passenger's arms.

In October, police reports showed that Richardson threatened the baby's father with a knife and bit him several times on the arm during a domestic fight.

"That alone isn't enough to remove a child from the situation. What we know that child was not harmed," said Hoepfner.

DCF said it is now taking a harder look at those decisions.

"We need to know what we did right in those cases and what we could do better," Hoepfner said.

DCF said it was only able to piece together the child abuse reports involving the child, because his mother reportedly gave police different names for the boy.

Investigators said they are still waiting for toxicology results to reveal exactly how the baby died.

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Panama City News Herald

Conflicting stories emerge in molestation trial

01/27/2011

PANAMA CITY — The children said he molested her, and his family said they don't believe the children. The family said the children were put up to accusing him by their mothers because he owed them money.

So went the first day of the trial against 31-year-old Nicholas Macklin of

Panama City, who is accused of molesting three young girls.

The News Herald doesn't identify victims in sexual misconduct cases.

If convicted of lewd and lascivious molestation of a person younger than 12 and sexual battery charges stemming from the alleged crimes against one of the girls, Macklin could spend the rest of his life in prison. If he's acquitted, he can expect to face trial again for his alleged crimes against the other two.

Macklin is accused of molesting the victim in this case on several occasions between 2005 and 2007.

"On one occasion, [the victim] was not alone in the room," Assistant State Attorney Susan Rodger told the jury during her opening argument Wednesday morning. One of the other alleged victims in this case testified later that morning to seeing Macklin molest a now 12-year-old girl while they were with him in his bedroom.

During her opening argument, Lorraine Bytell, Macklin's attorney, said they shouldn't ignore the inconsistencies in the girl's stories just because they're children, but instead they should "glean why the children are saying these things." Macklin has been falsely accused by the girls at the urging of their mothers because Macklin owed them money, Bytell argued.

"He's a father, a brother, a son, a grandson, a friend and an uncle," Bytell said. "The one label we can't place on Nicholas Macklin is guilty."

As she cross examined the state's witnesses, Bytell highlighted the differences between the story the girls told in court and their previous statements, in which the girls' descriptions of the molestation were different.

But the woman who interviewed the victim after she made the allegations said the stories don't have to be identical as long as they're materially similar.

"Can there be inconsistencies? Yes, because nobody has perfect recall," said Cynthia Vollmer, who testified to interviewing 730 children during her career. Vollmer interviewed the victim for the Department of Children and Families Child Protection Team.

Vollmer also said she looks for signs of coaching during CPT interviews and found none. She also said most child molestation cases come down to the word of the victim versus the word of the accused.

"It's very seldom that you actually have a witness to a crime like this," Vollmer said.

That witness testified Wednesday. She also claims Macklin victimized her.

During her investigation for DCF, Julianne Dalton said she interviewed Macklin after the girls made their allegations and he denied them. He said their mothers were trying to get back at him because they felt he owed them money. Dalton also said that denial is the typical response of people accused of child molestation.

Several members of Macklin's immediate family also testified for the defense. An acquaintance said she heard one of the victim's mothers say they were going to get back at Macklin.

The defense will continue to call witnesses when the trial resumes today.

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Daytona Beach News-Journal

Police: Hot iron used on disabled teen

01/27/2011

Four workers at a Palatka group home and a former employee have been charged with burning a disabled Palm Coast teenager with a clothes iron, a Palatka Police Department spokesman said Wednesday.

Palatka police were called Jan. 3 to an O'Carroll Homes facility on 14th Street, where the teen is a resident, to investigate how the girl ended up with burns on her legs and ankles, according to reports. A state Department of Children & Families official said five residents were in the home at the time.

There are at least three O'Carroll Homes locations in Palatka, all owned by Linda O'Carroll, according to published reports. In 2007 at a different location, a worker was charged with abuse of a disabled adult.

On Jan. 3, investigators ensured the girl was transported to a Putnam County emergency room for treatment and observation before interviewing employees.

"(My daughter) has the mind of a 2- or 3-year-old. She has a 20-word vocabulary. She cannot speak for herself," said the girl's mother, Jeanette Roscoe. "When it comes to disabled children, you don't hear about this. She can tell me she hurts, but she can't say much else."

Jamon Davis, 26, who is charged with failure to protect a child and failure to report child abuse, told investigators the girl had "behavior problems" and was "acting out." He reported that Jolissia Battles held the girl down while Kavarus Bellamy, 21, "plug(ged) an iron into an outlet" and threatened the girl, who he said "is afraid of the iron," according to the report.

Further investigation -- conducted by the police department, DCF, the Child Protective Team, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Board of Quality Medical Assurance and Medicaid -- revealed that Battles, 20, "sprayed an unidentified chemical in the face of the child," and that former employee Devin Wesley, 21, held the girl down, according to Palatka police spokesman James Griffith.

Battles is charged with child abuse and failure to protect a child. Wesley

is charged with child abuse, false imprisonment and tampering with a witness, according to Putnam County Jail records.

Another worker, Yolanda Miller, 31, was also charged with failure to protect a child and failure to report child abuse.

A warrant has been issued for Bellamy, charging her with aggravated child abuse, child abuse, assault and four counts of tampering, Griffith said. Police haven't found her and she has not turned herself into the jail.

Roscoe said her daughter has lived at the Palatka facility for 11 years.

"There were a couple of minor incidents in the past and the (Department of Children & Families) got involved and those employees were fired," she said, noting she has since taken her daughter out of the O'Carroll Homes.

Roscoe said it's not the first time her daughter has suffered an injury while at the home.

"I recall when I had her home for Christmas, it looked like she had a burn on her right hip," she said. "When I asked about it, they said it was because she fell asleep with her jeans on."

O'Carroll Homes employees hung up when a News-Journal reporter called and identified herself.

There have been other problems at O'Carroll Homes, according to the State Attorney's Office.

Shirley Ann Poole, 56, who worked at a different O'Carroll Homes facility in Palatka, is on felony probation until April for abuse of a disabled adult, according to the Florida Department of Corrections.

Affidavits from the Attorney General's Office state Poole struck "a vulnerable adult due to mental retardation and cerebral palsy" in July 2007. Investigators described the victim as "essentially non-verbal."

Battles was booked into the Putnam County Jail and released on \$4,512 bail Monday. Miller was also booked and released Monday on \$3,508 bail.

Davis was booked and released Tuesday on \$3,508 bail. Wesley was booked Tuesday and released on \$6,012 bail.

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South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Homeless count in Palm Beach County expected to rise

01/27/2011

Being homeless is like being in hell. Sleeping outside in the rain, wanting somewhere to turn to but there's nowhere to go. The shelters can be dangerous, the streets can be dangerous and sometimes it feels like there's

no way out.

It takes only a job loss to get you there.

That's was the explanation Wednesday from the homeless people lined up for lunch at The Caring Kitchen in Delray Beach. Some were participating in the county's 24-hour count of the homeless population.

It started at noon and will help Palm Beach County receive federal and state grants to help combat the problem of homelessness. Locally, the biggest problem is not having enough shelters.

The last count of homeless people in the county, in 2009, was 2,147, but officials speculate it will be larger this year because of those who have run out of unemployment benefits and out of luck. The count, done using a demographic questionnaire, is conducted across the nation every two years.

"We are seeing a new population of homeless individuals who've never had to ask for help before," said Claudia Tuck, county director of human services.

She said the count could take weeks to compile, because many of the homeless people go from site to site, taking the voluntary questionnaire to receive the \$5 gift card to local shops.

About 70 percent of the homeless population has substance-abuse problems and many of them aren't ready to accept help, Tuck said. Others are mentally ill, domestic-abuse victims and people who have lost their jobs.

Homeless and low-income people said they were grateful for their Wednesday lunch of turkey hash, vegetables and fruit. Caring Kitchen Director April Hazamy said she has noticed more people coming in for free meals.

"We are giving them food," Hazamy said, "but we can't give them shelter, and that's a necessity."

There are shelters available for people addicted to drugs, who have HIV, are victims of domestic abuse or who have children. But people who do not fit into those categories can slip through the cracks, Hazamy said. That's when they may pick up an addiction on the street to cling to some form of comfort.

Jack Jones, 50, said there are many like him who find escape in a bottle. He became homeless three years ago after losing his landscaping job. A convicted drug dealer, Jones found it hard to find another job and had no luck at re-entry job fairs. He ended up sleeping under a tree in a friend's yard.

"It's rough," he said. "Nobody wants to deal with you when you're homeless. You're just another victim."

Russell Adams, 55, used to make \$20 an hour plus overtime as a mechanic in Miami before a knee injury in March 2009 left him unable to work and his company let him go later that year. At first he sold his boats, then his SUV to pay the rent. Then he lost his apartment. For now, he's staying with a family member.

"I used to drive by [Caring Kitchen] and think 'Why are they out there? Why

don't they try to find a job?" Adams said. "Now I know. It depends on the circumstances."

People with questions on Palm Beach County's homeless services can call the Palm Beach/Treasure Coast 211 helpline.

Jerome Burdi can be reached at jburdi@Sunsentinel.com or 561-243-6531.

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Central Florida News 13

DCF was investigating 7-month-old Titusville boy's home

Ja'Veon Brushan By Kelli Cook, Reporter

Last Updated: Wednesday, January 26, 2011 5:53 PM

TITUSVILLE -- News 13 has learned the Department of Children and Families had been investigating the home where a 7-month-old baby was staying.

The body of Ja'Veon Brushan was found dead inside a cooler Monday.

Apparently Brushan had a couple of aliases, even though he was just an infant.

When the death investigation first started, his name wasn't recognized.

New details show there were definitely some early signs that this child's life might have been in danger.

Police said the child died while in care of babysitter Carolyn "Renee" Miller.

Miller, 40, is in jail, accused of child neglect and improperly disposing of the child's body.

She told police the child died while she was asleep.

DCF now says there were investigations into the child's mother.

There is one report in July involving the child's mother in a shoplifting case.

The other case in October involved potential violence in the home between two adults.

The regional director of DCF has ordered a full review of all investigations of the babysitter as well as the mother.

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/2011/01/27/listening-to-children.html>

<http://jacksonville.com/news/florida/2011-01-26/story/middleburg-family-picked-extreme-makeover-new-home>

http://www.gulfbreezenews.com/news/2011-01-27/Community/Community_forum_tonight_at_City_Hall.html

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/breakingnews/os-four-loko-scalped-woman-attorney-20110127.0.1073683.story>

<http://www.wesh.com/news/26631951/detail.html>

<http://www.newsherald.com/news/conflicting-90405-emerge-molestation.html>

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/news/local/flagler/2011/01/27/police-hot-iron-used-on-disabled-teen.html>

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/palm-beach/fl-pbc-homeless-count-20110126.0.1307350.story>

<http://www.cfnews13.com/article/news/2011/january/201216/DCF-was-investigating-7-month-old-Titusville-boy%E2%80%99s-home>

From: [Jennifer N King](#) on behalf of [DCF Press Office](#)
Subject: DCF News Clips - Thursday, January 27, 2011
Date: Thursday, January 27, 2011 6:28:54 AM

Florida: Listening to children

Middleburg: Middleburg family picked for Extreme Makeover new home

Florida: Community forum tonight at City Hall

Orlando: As Four Loko controversy continues, lawsuits pile up

Titusville: DCF Launches Probe Into Death Of Child Found In Cooler

Panama City: Conflicting stories emerge in molestation trial

Palatka: Police: Hot iron used on disabled teen

Delray Beach: Homeless count in Palm Beach County expected to rise

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Daytona Beach News-Journal

Listening to children

01/27/2011

Florida's recently appointed secretary of the Department of Children and Families, David Wilkins, has some big shoes to fill. He is replacing George Sheldon who, along with his predecessor Bob Butterworth, made significant progress in reforming the state's foster care system. Under the previous two secretaries, Florida greatly reduced the number of children in foster care and made us one of the nation's leaders in the number of adopted kids. Both Butterworth and Sheldon were guided by the direct voice of experience, the youth in state care. We urge Secretary Wilkins to continue listening to youth, to keep up the momentum in reforming foster care and to pay special attention to the well-being of kids while they're waiting for a permanent home.

The Legislature will have the opportunity to give kids in state care a chance at living more normal lives. The new secretary's leadership will be vital.

Spudeas is executive director of Florida's Children First, which advocates for the rights of at-risk children and youth.

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Florida Times-Union

Middleburg family picked for Extreme Makeover new home

01/27/2011

By Dan Scanlan

MIDDLEBURG - Joshua Garrett watched as girlfriend Ashley Brewer stepped off the "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" bus Wednesday with designer Michael Moloney and walked to her tiny home on North Chicory Avenue in Clay County.

As cameras rolled, Ashley and sisters Taylor and Gina batted around a volleyball with Moloney as the ABC-TV reality show's other designers went into the mildewed double-wide with Carrie Prewitt, who took the girls in after their parents died.

Come Wednesday, Prewitt and her "daughters" of two years will come back to Middleburg from a free Virgin Island vacation to find their leaking home off South County Road 215 replaced with something grand.

"To think this is going to be gone and we are going to have a new home is awesome," Prewitt said of her home for 20 years.

"We are really shocked and it doesn't feel real at all," added Ashley, 18.

Garrett said he'll be there to yell "Move that bus" with everyone else.

"My girlfriend was just saying how she has never had a home of her own," Garrett said. "Now they will all have their own."

"Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" has rebuilt 188 homes of families facing a major health or housing problem. The show's producers solicited nominations for a deserving Jacksonville-area family in November, and dozens of friends and neighbors named Prewitt, a volleyball coach at Middleburg High School for 25 years.

Family tragedies

Prewitt first met Ashley when she was a freshman at the school, and all three girls came to a summer volleyball camp. She became a mentor and friend as they dealt with the problems of a broken home.

"They just tugged my heart from the day I met them," Prewitt said.

When their mother died of an overdose, Ashley stayed with Prewitt while her sisters were cared for by a grandmother. When their father died the same way, the sisters asked the single soccer coach if she would take them in. Prewitt said she was praying over that when they were removed from the grandmother and put in foster care.

"I just called them [Department of Children and Families] and said get them over to my house as soon as you can because they don't deserve to be in foster care," Prewitt said, emotion in her voice. "If they get into foster care, they were going to be separated. They had been through so much already that I couldn't see that happening."

The young women said their new mother took them in "right away, no question" to make a new family. But their little house has leaks, no heat in Taylor's room, insects and one big issue - it isn't level.

"I can't shut my cupboard doors," Prewitt said. "When the washer goes, the whole house shakes. I have this little angel in my bedroom window, and every time the washer goes on spin cycle, my angel starts fluttering."

Surprise visit

The girls learned first that their house had been chosen Wednesday morning, then joined lead designer Ty Pennington to surprise Prewitt during volleyball practice.

"Ty walked in and I just went down to my knees. I was so surprised and overwhelmed that I couldn't stand it," Prewitt said. "I was brought to tears. It is such a humbling experience to think that they think we are worthy."

What do they want in their new home?

"Every room that I have lived in has never actually been for me; it's already been there," Ashley said. "A new room for me is what I would want the most."

"Just a place to have fun, be together and invite some friends over," said Taylor, 14, while Gina, 12, said she just wants "a room made for me."

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"It is just a great story of a mom taking care of three girls," said Long's CEO, Randy Long. "It is rare that you really get to be part of such a great story, and the Clay County community does know about this family and they are a great family."

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01/27/2011

By Jeff Weiner, Orlando Sentinel

January 27

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But Florida has not banned the drink, and it continues to be a big seller.

In Central Florida, at least one of the liquor stores closest to the University of Central Florida campus has Four Loko — the caffeinated formula that the company has stopped making — stacked to the ceiling along its glass-paned front wall. When asked, the clerk explained that it has been flying off the shelves. He said an equal amount was stacked in the back.

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Phusion, which in November stopped making the caffeinated version of the drink, did not respond to calls seeking comment.

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"She's got loss of hair that will never grow back," attorney John Elliott Leighton said. McCarroll also is suing Joseph and the convenience store where she said Joseph purchased Four Loko.

But why sue the beverage makers as well? Echoing complaints that have been central to the controversy, Leighton said the beverage is a dangerous mix of caffeine and alcohol, packaged for sale to young people.

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Leighton said his client was getting ready to for her first year in college, planning to attend Florida State University, when the accident happened. Though Joseph, 20 at the time, had been drinking, Leighton said his client couldn't tell she was intoxicated.

"She thought that the driver was fine," Leighton said.

Common complaints

Four Loko is not the only product to face controversy for mixing alcohol and caffeine — other beverages, including Joose, were also identified by the FDA — but it's also not the first. The MillerCoors LLC-produced drink Sparks dropped its caffeine after a lawsuit by the Center for Science in the Public Interest in 2008.

That suit made essentially the same claims made by Leighton and others who have sued Phusion: that drinkers "are more likely to binge drink, ride with an intoxicated driver, become injured, or be taken advantage of sexually than drinkers of non-caffeinated alcoholic drinks," according to the CSPI website.

"Sparks is a drink designed to mask feelings of drunkenness and to encourage people to keep drinking past the point at which they otherwise

would have stopped," CSPI's director of alcohol policies, George A. Hacker, said at the time.

Though the current Four Loko controversy has been popping up in headlines nationwide, Central Florida in particular has been the scene of several incidents:

- On Aug. 1, Orange County resident Roy McConnell and his three sons were all killed in St. Petersburg when Demetrius Jordan, now 21, plowed into their car. Prosecutors say Jordan had been drinking Four Loko and smoking pot before the crash.

- Winter Park High School student Kason Bailey, 16, was hit and killed while crossing Aloma Avenue on Oct. 8. An autopsy later determined that his blood alcohol level was nearly three times the legal limit for drivers. A friend later told WFTV-Channel 9 that the teen had been drinking Four Loko the night he was killed.

- In November, Joseph Keiran of Winter Park filed suit against Phusion after his 20-year-old son spent a day drinking Four Loko before putting a .22-caliber pistol to his head and killing himself in Tallahassee in September.

"We want them out of business," said Don Van Dingenen, the Winter Park attorney representing Keiran. "We want the product off the shelves. We want to bring as much publicity to this so somebody else doesn't have to bury their child."

Although the caffeinated version of Four Loko already has disappeared from many local shelves, replaced by a noncaffeinated version, it hasn't gone down without a fight.

A simple search for the phrase "save Four Loko" on Facebook turns up dozens of pages and groups, with membership varying from a handful to as many as almost 4,000.

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Imported: Jan 27 2011 12:04AM Indexed: Jan 27 2011 12:06AM

Orlando-WESH (NBC)

DCF Launches Probe Into Death Of Child Found In Cooler

01/27/2011

TITUSVILLE, Fla. -- The Florida Department of Children and Families has launched an investigation on the death of a local baby found dead in a cooler in Titusville last week.

Brian Anderson said his family is devastated by the death of his cousin's 7-month-old son, Javeon Brushan.

"It just hurts really bad," Anderson said.

Police said the child's babysitter, Carolyn Miller, claimed she fell asleep while she was watching him, then woke up and found the child dead. Instead of calling for help, police said Miller said she took the boy's body to her boyfriend's house and hid him in a cooler.

Neighbors, however, said the blame shouldn't stop with Miller.

"The mother should be more responsible for the loss of her kid," said neighbor Rasta Mason.

DCF spokesperson Carrie Hoepfner said they are wondering if the agency could have done more to help the child.

There are two prior reports of child abuse associated with the child," said Hoepfner.

DCF said agents had contact with the boy's mother, 21-year-old Janelle Richardson, in the past.

Last July, when Javeon was only 3 weeks old, Titusville police said Richardson and a friend were suspected of shoplifting. Officers pulled the women over and found Javeon, not in a car seat but the passenger's arms.

In October, police reports showed that Richardson threatened the baby's father with a knife and bit him several times on the arm during a domestic fight.

"That alone isn't enough to remove a child from the situation. What we know that child was not harmed," said Hoepfner.

DCF said it is now taking a harder look at those decisions.

"We need to know what we did right in those cases and what we could do better," Hoepfner said.

DCF said it was only able to piece together the child abuse reports involving the child, because his mother reportedly gave police different names for the boy.

Investigators said they are still waiting for toxicology results to reveal exactly how the baby died.

Imported: Jan 27 2011 4:14AM Indexed: Jan 27 2011 4:14AM

Panama City News Herald

Conflicting stories emerge in molestation trial

01/27/2011

PANAMA CITY — The children said he molested her, and his family said they don't believe the children. The family said the children were put up to accusing him by their mothers because he owed them money.

So went the first day of the trial against 31-year-old Nicholas Macklin of

Panama City, who is accused of molesting three young girls.

The News Herald doesn't identify victims in sexual misconduct cases.

If convicted of lewd and lascivious molestation of a person younger than 12 and sexual battery charges stemming from the alleged crimes against one of the girls, Macklin could spend the rest of his life in prison. If he's acquitted, he can expect to face trial again for his alleged crimes against the other two.

Macklin is accused of molesting the victim in this case on several occasions between 2005 and 2007.

"On one occasion, [the victim] was not alone in the room," Assistant State Attorney Susan Rodger told the jury during her opening argument Wednesday morning. One of the other alleged victims in this case testified later that morning to seeing Macklin molest a now 12-year-old girl while they were with him in his bedroom.

During her opening argument, Lorraine Bytell, Macklin's attorney, said they shouldn't ignore the inconsistencies in the girl's stories just because they're children, but instead they should "glean why the children are saying these things." Macklin has been falsely accused by the girls at the urging of their mothers because Macklin owed them money, Bytell argued.

"He's a father, a brother, a son, a grandson, a friend and an uncle," Bytell said. "The one label we can't place on Nicholas Macklin is guilty."

As she cross examined the state's witnesses, Bytell highlighted the differences between the story the girls told in court and their previous statements, in which the girls' descriptions of the molestation were different.

But the woman who interviewed the victim after she made the allegations said the stories don't have to be identical as long as they're materially similar.

"Can there be inconsistencies? Yes, because nobody has perfect recall," said Cynthia Vollmer, who testified to interviewing 730 children during her career. Vollmer interviewed the victim for the Department of Children and Families Child Protection Team.

Vollmer also said she looks for signs of coaching during CPT interviews and found none. She also said most child molestation cases come down to the word of the victim versus the word of the accused.

"It's very seldom that you actually have a witness to a crime like this," Vollmer said.

That witness testified Wednesday. She also claims Macklin victimized her.

During her investigation for DCF, Julianne Dalton said she interviewed Macklin after the girls made their allegations and he denied them. He said their mothers were trying to get back at him because they felt he owed them money. Dalton also said that denial is the typical response of people accused of child molestation.

Several members of Macklin's immediate family also testified for the defense. An acquaintance said she heard one of the victim's mothers say they were going to get back at Macklin.

The defense will continue to call witnesses when the trial resumes today.

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Imported: Jan 27 2011 12:04AM Indexed: Jan 27 2011 12:06AM

Daytona Beach News-Journal

Police: Hot iron used on disabled teen

01/27/2011

Four workers at a Palatka group home and a former employee have been charged with burning a disabled Palm Coast teenager with a clothes iron, a Palatka Police Department spokesman said Wednesday.

Palatka police were called Jan. 3 to an O'Carroll Homes facility on 14th Street, where the teen is a resident, to investigate how the girl ended up with burns on her legs and ankles, according to reports. A state Department of Children & Families official said five residents were in the home at the time.

There are at least three O'Carroll Homes locations in Palatka, all owned by Linda O'Carroll, according to published reports. In 2007 at a different location, a worker was charged with abuse of a disabled adult.

On Jan. 3, investigators ensured the girl was transported to a Putnam County emergency room for treatment and observation before interviewing employees.

"(My daughter) has the mind of a 2- or 3-year-old. She has a 20-word vocabulary. She cannot speak for herself," said the girl's mother, Jeanette Roscoe. "When it comes to disabled children, you don't hear about this. She can tell me she hurts, but she can't say much else."

Jamon Davis, 26, who is charged with failure to protect a child and failure to report child abuse, told investigators the girl had "behavior problems" and was "acting out." He reported that Jolissia Battles held the girl down while Kavarus Bellamy, 21, "plug(ged) an iron into an outlet" and threatened the girl, who he said "is afraid of the iron," according to the report.

Further investigation -- conducted by the police department, DCF, the Child Protective Team, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Board of Quality Medical Assurance and Medicaid -- revealed that Battles, 20, "sprayed an unidentified chemical in the face of the child," and that former employee Devin Wesley, 21, held the girl down, according to Palatka police spokesman James Griffith.

Battles is charged with child abuse and failure to protect a child. Wesley

is charged with child abuse, false imprisonment and tampering with a witness, according to Putnam County Jail records.

Another worker, Yolanda Miller, 31, was also charged with failure to protect a child and failure to report child abuse.

A warrant has been issued for Bellamy, charging her with aggravated child abuse, child abuse, assault and four counts of tampering, Griffith said. Police haven't found her and she has not turned herself into the jail.

Roscoe said her daughter has lived at the Palatka facility for 11 years.

"There were a couple of minor incidents in the past and the (Department of Children & Families) got involved and those employees were fired," she said, noting she has since taken her daughter out of the O'Carroll Homes.

Roscoe said it's not the first time her daughter has suffered an injury while at the home.

"I recall when I had her home for Christmas, it looked like she had a burn on her right hip," she said. "When I asked about it, they said it was because she fell asleep with her jeans on."

O'Carroll Homes employees hung up when a News-Journal reporter called and identified herself.

There have been other problems at O'Carroll Homes, according to the State Attorney's Office.

Shirley Ann Poole, 56, who worked at a different O'Carroll Homes facility in Palatka, is on felony probation until April for abuse of a disabled adult, according to the Florida Department of Corrections.

Affidavits from the Attorney General's Office state Poole struck "a vulnerable adult due to mental retardation and cerebral palsy" in July 2007. Investigators described the victim as "essentially non-verbal."

Battles was booked into the Putnam County Jail and released on \$4,512 bail Monday. Miller was also booked and released Monday on \$3,508 bail.

Davis was booked and released Tuesday on \$3,508 bail. Wesley was booked Tuesday and released on \$6,012 bail.

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South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Homeless count in Palm Beach County expected to rise

01/27/2011

Being homeless is like being in hell. Sleeping outside in the rain, wanting somewhere to turn to but there's nowhere to go. The shelters can be dangerous, the streets can be dangerous and sometimes it feels like there's

no way out.

It takes only a job loss to get you there.

That's was the explanation Wednesday from the homeless people lined up for lunch at The Caring Kitchen in Delray Beach. Some were participating in the county's 24-hour count of the homeless population.

It started at noon and will help Palm Beach County receive federal and state grants to help combat the problem of homelessness. Locally, the biggest problem is not having enough shelters.

The last count of homeless people in the county, in 2009, was 2,147, but officials speculate it will be larger this year because of those who have run out of unemployment benefits and out of luck. The count, done using a demographic questionnaire, is conducted across the nation every two years.

"We are seeing a new population of homeless individuals who've never had to ask for help before," said Claudia Tuck, county director of human services.

She said the count could take weeks to compile, because many of the homeless people go from site to site, taking the voluntary questionnaire to receive the \$5 gift card to local shops.

About 70 percent of the homeless population has substance-abuse problems and many of them aren't ready to accept help, Tuck said. Others are mentally ill, domestic-abuse victims and people who have lost their jobs.

Homeless and low-income people said they were grateful for their Wednesday lunch of turkey hash, vegetables and fruit. Caring Kitchen Director April Hazamy said she has noticed more people coming in for free meals.

"We are giving them food," Hazamy said, "but we can't give them shelter, and that's a necessity."

There are shelters available for people addicted to drugs, who have HIV, are victims of domestic abuse or who have children. But people who do not fit into those categories can slip through the cracks, Hazamy said. That's when they may pick up an addiction on the street to cling to some form of comfort.

Jack Jones, 50, said there are many like him who find escape in a bottle. He became homeless three years ago after losing his landscaping job. A convicted drug dealer, Jones found it hard to find another job and had no luck at re-entry job fairs. He ended up sleeping under a tree in a friend's yard.

"It's rough," he said. "Nobody wants to deal with you when you're homeless. You're just another victim."

Russell Adams, 55, used to make \$20 an hour plus overtime as a mechanic in Miami before a knee injury in March 2009 left him unable to work and his company let him go later that year. At first he sold his boats, then his SUV to pay the rent. Then he lost his apartment. For now, he's staying with a family member.

"I used to drive by [Caring Kitchen] and think 'Why are they out there? Why

don't they try to find a job?" Adams said. "Now I know. It depends on the circumstances."

People with questions on Palm Beach County's homeless services can call the Palm Beach/Treasure Coast 211 helpline.

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Imported: Jan 27 2011 12:15AM Indexed: Jan 27 2011 12:17AM

Central Florida News 13

DCF was investigating 7-month-old Titusville boy's home

Ja'Veon Brushan By Kelli Cook, Reporter

Last Updated: Wednesday, January 26, 2011 5:53 PM

TITUSVILLE -- News 13 has learned the Department of Children and Families had been investigating the home where a 7-month-old baby was staying.

The body of Ja'Veon Brushan was found dead inside a cooler Monday.

Apparently Brushan had a couple of aliases, even though he was just an infant.

When the death investigation first started, his name wasn't recognized.

New details show there were definitely some early signs that this child's life might have been in danger.

Police said the child died while in care of babysitter Carolyn "Renee" Miller.

Miller, 40, is in jail, accused of child neglect and improperly disposing of the child's body.

She told police the child died while she was asleep.

DCF now says there were investigations into the child's mother.

There is one report in July involving the child's mother in a shoplifting case.

The other case in October involved potential violence in the home between two adults.

The regional director of DCF has ordered a full review of all investigations of the babysitter as well as the mother.

<http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/2011/01/27/listening-to-children.html>

<http://jacksonville.com/news/florida/2011-01-26/story/middleburg-family-picked-extreme-makeover-new-home>

http://www.gulfbreezenews.com/news/2011-01-27/Community/Community_forum_tonight_at_City_Hall.html

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/breakingnews/os-four-loko-scalped-woman-attorney-20110127.0.1073683.story>

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<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/palm-beach/fl-pbc-homeless-count-20110126.0.1307350.story>

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From: [Goudy, Senta](#)
To: [Florida Prevention](#)
Subject: FW: News Articles, Thursday, November 18, 2010
Date: Thursday, November 18, 2010 11:51:14 AM

From: Lawson, Peggy
Sent: Thursday, November 18, 2010 11:49 AM
To: _Drug Control
Subject: News Articles, Thursday, November 18, 2010

FLORIDA

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1330724/Parents-sue-makers-Four-Loko-drink-son-shot-30-hour-binge.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>

Parents sue makers of Four Loko drink

18 November 2010

<http://www.nbc-2.com/Global/story.asp?S=13526352>

Prescription drug overdoses hit Collier County

17 November 2010

<http://cbs4.com/local/dfyit.bayfront.park.2.2014708.html>

Mock Funeral at park shows dangers of drinking

18 November 2010

<http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/columns/legislature-will-close-loopholes-for-pill-mills/1134883>

Legislature will close loopholes for 'Pill Mills'

17 November 2010

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/article1134965.ece>

Gulfport man tries to kill himself as bank forecloses on his home

18 November 2010

NATIONAL

<http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local-beat/Plan-To-Open-Drug-Clinic-At-High-School-108801169.html>

High School plans to open Drug Clinic

18 November 2010

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Top 10 warning signs for Teen suicide

18 November 2010

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Preventing excessive alcohol consumption

18 November 2010

INTERNATIONAL

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China-Russia tackle drugs

18 November 2010

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5 million pounds of Heroin seized at UK border

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Ton of Cocaine seized from Brazil ship

18 November 2010

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Database to tackle drug abuse in Swansea

18 November 2010

FLORIDA

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1330724/Parents-sue-makers-Four-Loko-drink-son-shot-30-hour-binge.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>

Parents sue makers of Four Loko drink

18 November 2010

The makers of an alcoholic cocktail dubbed 'blackout in a can' have been sued over the death of a student amid mounting calls for it to be banned nationwide.

Joe and Vicki Keiran say their son Jason was pushed over the edge after drinking Four Loko, which contains the equivalent of 18 beers and six coffees in just one can.

Wired and behaving erratically, the 20-year-old fatally shot himself in the head with a friend's gun after partying for 30 hours straight.

The coroner in Tallahassee, Florida, has not yet ruled whether Jason's death was an accident or suicide.

But friends who were at the party with the Florida State University sophomore said he would never have taken his life on purpose.

His mother said: 'I just miss him more and more everyday. I wish he would e-mail me, I wish he would call me...I wish he was coming home for Thanksgiving.'

Father Mr Keiran added that their son's death was every parent's worst fear, saying: 'We lived for our kids so they could get on their way in life.'

Four Loko is also known as 'cocaine in a can' and is 12 per cent proof, the equivalent to a bottle of wine.

With a malt liquor base, it also contains caffeine, taurine, guarana, carbonated water, sugar and flavourings. It is available at supermarkets and grocery stores around the U.S. for as little as \$2.50 per 23.5 ounce can.

Calls have been mounting for the drink to be banned across America following a series of disturbing incidents.

Officials at Ramapo College in Mahwah, New Jersey, banned it after 16 students needed hospital treatment for alcohol poisoning following a Four Loko binge.

Nine undergraduates from Central Washington University had to be taken to hospital after police found them passed out having drunk the beverage.

Lawmakers in Washington later banned its sale anywhere in the state. Three other states followed and next month beer distributors in New York will stop selling it.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is currently investigating Four Loko and similar energy drinks and is expected to rule that caffeine is an unsafe food additive to alcoholic drinks, a move that would effectively ban them from sale.

Energy drink: The makers of Four Loko, a 12 percent alcohol drink that sells for as little as \$2.50, disagree with findings that alcohol and caffeine are an unhealthy mix

New York Senator Charles Schumer, who is leading the calls for a ban, said Four Loko was 'almost a death wish disguised as an energy drink'.

Four Loko's makers Phusion Projects declined to comment and said they had not received the lawsuit.

They have said in a letter to government regulators that they 'don't agree with the notion that mixing caffeine and alcohol is inherently unsafe'.

The letter continued: 'We welcome the opportunity to have a discussion with you about working together to create uniform, industry-wide standards,' the firm stated. In a climbdown they have also announced they will remove caffeine and two other ingredients from their drinks.

<http://www.nbc-2.com/Global/story.asp?S=13526352>

Prescription drug overdoses hit Collier County

17 November 2010

COLLIER COUNTY: A problem that could happen anywhere in Southwest Florida, struck a small community in large numbers. Prescription drugs have claimed the lives of eight people and local leaders are now hoping a powerful image will sink in.

The only road in and out of town wants you to "Keep Copeland Clean." Wednesday night, the south Collier community of about 200 people gave new meaning to that slogan.

"Tabitha Daniels, Levi Anthony Weeks, Dana Robert Masey, Charles 'Chuck' Oliver Huggins, Zachary Wells," said Pastor John Gilmore as he read the names of people who have from overdose. "Charles Lawrence Fogle, Bobbie Dianne Mitchell, Cheryl Lynn Rain."

Their names are now on crosses leading into town.

"We wanted everybody to see! We wanted everybody to see!" said Pastor Gilmore.

Carol Sylvest's great niece, Cheryl, died last month. And that, she says, put her over the top.

"This should not happen," she said. "Is it our fault as a community? Yes!"

She blames everybody. So she and her congregation at Copeland Baptist put the crosses up and they're still short one of the eight.

Pastor Gilmore says they meet every Monday for prayer.

"Addicts, unfortunately, would steal pennies out of the eyes of a dead man, but they didn't start out that way," said Pastor Gilmore.

Reynolds Cavins drives by the crosses everyday and knows all seven names on the fence. He said that he too was once tied up in drugs.

"It's a spiritual warfare," he said.

He explained that he leaned on faith and avoided the same fate.

"We have a drug problem here in this community. And, we're willing to fight against that and do something about it," said Cavins.

The community will host a meeting at Copeland Baptist in two weeks and will plead county leaders for help.

<http://cbs4.com/local/dfyit.bayfront.park.2.2014708.html>

Mock Funeral at park shows dangers of drinking

18 November 2010

More than four hundred tombstones have been erected at Miami's Bayfront Park by Miami-Dade and Broward students as message to their friends about the dangers of underage drinking.

More than two hundred students, who are a part of Drug-Free Youth In Town (DFYIT) plan to stage a mock funeral procession, complete with Grim Reaper and ghostly students, Thursday afternoon at the park to make their point.

According to DFYIT, alcohol is the most commonly abused substance in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, more than marijuana and tobacco combined. The point to a 2008 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey which found, on average, 17-percent of middle school students and nearly 40-percent high school students surveyed said they had drank alcohol in the last 30 days.

Youth who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to develop a dependence to alcohol than those who wait until age 21, according to a 1997

National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey, 1997.

DFYIT says research shows that if you can keep children drug and alcohol free for the seven years of middle and high school then the odds are they will never have a problem with abuse. Recruiting kids to be peer leaders is a key part of their strategy.

There are currently 60 DFYIT clubs in Miami-Dade County and 23 Broward County middle and senior high schools. DFYIT provides kids with "social competency training, drug awareness counseling, conflict resolution skills, positive adult relationships, and pro-social involvement in their school and community."

<http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/columns/legislature-will-close-loopholes-for-pill-mills/1134883>

Legislature will close loopholes for "Pill Mills"

17 November 2010

Prescription drug abuse and the continuing threat caused by pill mills continue to be a top priority of mine.

With an average of six to seven people dying every day due to a causal connection with prescription drugs, it became obvious that something needed to be done to shut off the flow of drugs at the source.

Florida was once the destination of choice for out-of-state drug seekers. However, new laws my Senate office worked on are tightening the vise on pill mills and those who operate them. My hope is that one day soon, illegal pill mills will be put out of business in Florida, leaving behind only legitimate pain management clinics who serve those who truly are in need of medical care.

A new law, which took effect Oct. 1, makes it very difficult for unregistered pain clinics to operate. However, at least one unscrupulous individual has found a loophole in existing law.

As publicized in the St. Petersburg Times, a felon run out of Hillsborough County for running an unlicensed pain clinic recently moved to Pasco County and has opened up a cash-only urgent care clinic, the Wesley Chapel Medical Group. Because the operator does not accept third-party payments (i.e. Medicaid, private insurance) current law does not require the clinic to be registered. My staff and I plan to work on closing that loophole.

It is doubtful this business practice is limited to one community. I have no doubt my colleagues across Florida would not want people running unlicensed clinics in their respective communities.

During the 2011 session of the Florida Legislature, my Senate office has set its sights on making the acquisition of prescription drugs by abusers and dealers even more difficult. I will continue to strengthen the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

(PDMP), which was authorized in 2009 through legislation my Senate office worked on. The monitoring program is expected to go online in early 2011 and will provide pharmacists and doctors with a tool to identify doctor shoppers and others who may be abusing prescription medications. Pharmacists are tasked with using the program and reporting trends they may see (i.e. those who doctor shop or present fraudulent prescriptions). I will be sponsoring provisions that will help elevate the effort to national standards, which in turn will help the monitoring program's fundraising arm to apply for grants for which it now is not qualified.

Working in concert with the Florida Office of Drug Control, I will be sponsoring additional legislation that strengthens public safety in many ways. Conforming state drug schedules to federal drug schedules will assist law enforcement as new drugs (synthetic marijuana for example) become readily available to the public. The Statewide Drug Policy Advisory Council will be given a greater role in recommending to the Florida Legislature drug schedule changes as this group is uniquely qualified to identify the prevalence of emergent drugs. Additionally, this legislation will make doctor shopping more difficult. Overall, the goal of my 2011 public safety legislation will be to save lives by decreasing prescription drug abuse and diversion.

I applaud local media for keeping the spotlight on pill mills as well as making the public aware of the need for the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.

Florida has come a long way in the last couple of years but we still have far to go. My staff and I look forward to the 2011 legislative session and the opportunities it holds for the chance to make Florida even safer.

Short of putting up signs at the border stating "Drug Abusers Stay Out," my Senate office believes that we will be successful in making Florida safer for our families and tourists, but not pill mill operators and the people who patronize them.

Sen. Mike Fasano represents District 11 which includes portions of Pasco and Hernando counties.

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/article1134965.ece>

Gulfport man tries to kill himself as bank forecloses on home

18 November 2010

GULFPORT — The foreclosure process started more than two years ago. Papers were served. Hearings held. Judges ruled. Back and forth it went, inexorably. Like millions across the nation, Boyd Rubright, 71, was slowly losing his home.

The writ of possession — the final document that strips someone of a foreclosed home — was signed Nov. 2. The occupant received 24 hours' notice. Then, ready or not, he had to go.

Monday was the day.

The bank representative was the first to arrive at 5840 Gulfport Blvd. S. It's the white house with the green trim and the empty birdbath.

The house looked vacant, but the representative thought he saw someone inside. A deputy arrived, and knocked on the front door. He announced himself from the outside, loudly.

No one answered.

The bank sent someone to drill through the lock. It was 9:02 a.m. when the drilling stopped. The busted lock hit the floor inside.

That's when they heard the gunshot.

•••

The deputy moved everyone away from the house and called for backup. Then he and a Gulfport officer went inside, weapons drawn.

They found Rubright slumped in an armchair in a small room. Police said he placed the barrel of a .357-caliber revolver in his mouth and pulled the trigger.

The officers couldn't find a pulse; paramedics were called.

His oldest daughter learned about the shooting when she talked to a *St. Petersburg Times* reporter Wednesday night.

"When the foreclosure started a couple of years ago, he told us that he was not giving up his house for anything," said Margaret Fitzgibbons, 44. "They would have to take him out or he'd kill himself.

"That's why I wasn't surprised."

•••

It's hard to find anyone who really knew Rubright. Everyone knew a piece of the man. But not the whole.

He was married and divorced three times. His last marriage ended in 2007. He has three daughters and a son from the first two. The son and a daughter want nothing to do with him.

The other two daughters tried to reconnect with their father. Fitzgibbons, who lives in New York, wanted her three children to know their grandfather.

It hasn't been easy. Depressed. Difficult. Disconnected. That's how the oldest daughter described her estranged father. They didn't meet until she was 14.

Rubright spent two decades working at Ted Peters Famous Smoked Fish. He left three years ago. He either quit, was fired, or retired, depending on whom you ask.

His health was failing, but he kept checking himself out of the hospital. He lived on Social Security and couldn't afford the house payments anymore.

As foreclosure loomed, Fitzgibbons said she and her half sister asked Rubright to come back to New York to live with them.

He refused. He had been in that house for two decades.

He threatened to take his own life. His daughters didn't know what to do.

"He didn't want to leave his home," she said. "He said if he left his home he couldn't keep his guns and smoke his pot."

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Mental health issues. Substance abuse. Stress. Hopelessness. Withdrawing from loved ones and friends. Mood swings. Rage. All classic warning signs of suicide.

Suicides hit a 12-year high in Florida in 2008, when 2,723 people took their own lives, according to the state. Pinellas County also had a record that year, with 177 suicides.

Is Florida's sour economy and unending housing crisis to blame? The cause of suicide is always greater than a single problem. But the economy has definitely become a factor.

"Dangerous times are times of transition," said Senta Goudy, director of the Florida Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention. "It's the loss of a spouse, the loss of a home, the loss of a job. Those are the times when a person is most at risk.

"They don't have the support network they need. They don't have a place to talk to somebody when they lose hope."

Pinellas sheriff's deputies evict people in landlord-tenant disputes and foreclosures about 300 times a month in the county.

It's rare for someone to still be living there by that point.

Sgt. Richard North oversees the court processing unit, which always seems to be delivering bad news: witness subpoenas, foreclosures, evictions, domestic violence injunctions.

While rare, Rubright isn't the first person to try to take his own life in the moment they must face leaving their home.

North has seen it a handful of times in the last 10 years.

It almost happened last month. A 42-year-old Clearwater man who was being evicted in a family dispute tried to hang himself. The deputy forced his way inside and pulled the man down from the belt tied around his neck.

"He saved his life," North said.

The man told the deputy he didn't have anywhere to go.

•••

Paramedics arrived at 5840 Gulfport Blvd. S just minutes after the gunshot. When they checked Rubright, they were able to find a pulse.

They rushed him to Bayfront Medical Center, where he has been in critical condition since Monday. Police believe the bullet may have missed his skull and instead went through his throat.

His prognosis is unknown. Rubright has not regained consciousness. But one of his few friends, 69-year-old Karla Kegerise, visited him Wednesday.

"I went down to pray with him and he looked good," she said.

His two daughters desperately want to fly down to visit him. But they can't afford it. Susan Rubright, 40, lost her job as an administrative assistant on Nov. 1. She has three children.

"They need us at the hospital," she said, crying on the phone from her home in New York. "We're his only next of kin, and they can't make any decisions without us.

"But we can't afford it at all. I can't even pay my rent."

NATIONAL

<http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local-beat/Plan-To-Open-Drug-Clinic-At-High-School-108801169.html>

High School plans to open Drug Clinic

18 November 2010

The calls started pouring in as soon as [William Floyd](#) schools superintendent [Paul Casciano](#) arrived at work.

Parents and taxpayers wondered why the district had proposed opening a drug clinic *inside* William Floyd high school.

"Something needed to be done," said Casciano of the school district's ongoing battle against student drug use.

Since the 2007-08 school year, the number of disciplinary cases involving students either possessing drugs in school or coming to class high had doubled, school

officials confirmed.

LOOK LOOK

LOOK

After consulting drug rehab experts, educators decided to explore the uncharted territory of moving a clinic into the school.

If approved by state officials, it would become the only in-school program of its kind in New York.

"We wanted to make it easier for kids to get help," said Casciano, citing the lack of programs like this in the school's [Mastic Beach](#) community.

Under the proposed plan, the drug clinic would be for counseling only. No drugs like methadone would be dispensed.

Only district students could join the program. Addicts from the surrounding community would not be allowed to take part.

"Let's meet the kids where they are at and remove as many barriers to treatment as we can," said [Caroline Sullivan](#), managing director of the Daytop rehabilitation program.

Daytop has filed an application with New York state to run the William Floyd program.

There would be no cost to local taxpayers, according to both Sullivan and Casciano. A patient's personal health insurance would cover the costs.

Daytop currently runs programs across New York state; but, students come to the Daytop facilities, not vice versa.

"The fact that they're being proactive and not putting their heads in the sand - it's amazing," said William Floyd parent-teacher organization vice-president [Lorraine Mentz](#).

"The situation right now is scary; very scary."

It's unclear how long it could take for state officials to review the application for the in-school clinic. And the William Floyd school board would also need to approve it.

Before that, it might have to answer the concerns of doubters in the public.

"For those who think the school is not the place, then where is," countered Sullivan. "Our kids are dying out there; so, why not go to them."

<http://www.indyposted.com/127549/teen-suicide-warning-signs/>

Top 10 warning signs for Teen suicide

18 November 2010

Every year teens across the world commit suicide, due to a wide variety of factors – from emotional or neurological issues to environmental and peer problems. If you are concerned about the mental health of your teenager, here are the top 10 warning signs for teen suicide. Please, if your teen exhibits these symptoms, seek help right away. For more information about a growing movement to fight suicide, read [To Write Love on Her Arms: Twloha Fights Depression With Community](#) here on IndyPosted.

10. Sudden Disinterest

Your teen may be troubled if he or she suddenly loses interest in extracurricular activities he/she once enjoyed. Another symptom occurs when he/she becomes disinterested or nonchalant about once cherished hobbies.

9. Poor Job Performance

If employed, a suicidal teen may stop caring about work duties – even the most basic such as arriving on time for work and working in a cleanly manner. He/she may neglect responsibilities once taken seriously.

8. Behavioral Issues

Abrupt changes in behavior and by association, seemingly in personality, can be a suicide warning sign. For example, an energetic teen becomes sluggish, or a well-behaved teen becomes unruly.

7. Physical Changes

If your teen undergoes physical changes such as sleep disruption, loss of appetite, or complains of aches and fatigue that may be due to emotional state, he/she could be at risk of suicide. Furthermore, another sign is neglecting appearance or personal hygiene.

6. Withdrawal

When a teen pulls away from family and friends, it's a suicide warning sign. Similarly, he/she may pull away from once trusted advisors, such as a school counselor or beloved teacher, too.

5. Poor School Performance

If a teen is suicidal, often his/her school work suffers. Grades may fall, and he/she may exhibit difficulty concentrating or focusing during class and while attempting to complete homework.

4. Risk Taking

When a teen suddenly becomes careless or disregards personal safety and/or property, he/she may be suicidal. This includes suddenly indulging in drug and alcohol abuse.

3. Suicidal Talk

While sometimes a teen who talks about suicide is merely seeking attention, no talk of suicide should go without mental health treatment. A suicidal teen may mention a suicide plan, and may even go so far as to write suicide notes.

2. Disregarding Possessions

When a teen gives away or throws away possessions, he/she may be contemplating suicide. This is especially true when the dispersal of possessions is methodical and almost ritualistic, as if delegating who'd receive possessions in a will.

1. Verbal Cues

Verbal cues, whether subtle or outright suicidal in nature, are the #1 warning sign on our list. Such cues may be saying something like "if something happens to me..." or "I won't cause you any problems anymore." Generally these are signs of impending suicidal plans or, at the very least, suicidal contemplation

<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/alcohol/index.html>

Preventing excessive alcohol consumption

18 November 2010

Excessive alcohol consumption is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States and is a risk factor for many health and societal problems. Among adults, it can take the form of heavy drinking, binge drinking, or both.

- Heavy drinking is defined as more than two drinks per day on average for men or more than one drink per day on average for women.
- Binge drinking is defined as five or more drinks during a single occasion for men or four or more drinks during a single occasion for women.

Underage drinking can also be considered a form of excessive drinking because it is both illegal and often involves consumption in quantities and settings that can lead to serious immediate and long-term consequences.

- Approximately 5% of the total population drinks heavily and 15% of the population engages in binge drinking ([CDC](#)).
- People aged 12 to 20 years drink 11% of all alcohol consumed in the United States. More than 90% of this alcohol is consumed in the form of binge drinks ([OJJDP](#)).

INTERNATIONAL

<http://the-diplomat.com/china-power/2010/11/18/china-russia-tackle-drugs/>

China, Russia tackle drugs

18 November 2010

Following is a guest entry by Diplomat columnist Richard Weitz looking at co-operation between China and Russia on their counter-drug trafficking efforts.

I recently had the chance to speak with Victor P. Ivanov, director of the Russian Federal Drug Control Service, while he was in Washington for the most recent meeting of the Counter Narcotics Working Group of the US-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission. Ivanov had some interesting things to say about recent co-operation between Russia and China on tackling drug trafficking, a problem Hu Jintao in June equated to the 'three evil forces' of terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism that have traditionally preoccupied the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation.

The Commission promotes bilateral governmental cooperation on law enforcement, drug treatment and prevention, intelligence sharing and money laundering linked to drug trafficking activities. The working group is co-chaired by Ivanov and Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Gil Kerlikowske. But Russia has also worked with China and Central Asian governments within the SCO to combat Asian drugs trafficking.

SCO member governments include China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as four formally designated observer countries—India, Iran, Mongolia, and Pakistan. In the annual SCO leadership summit in June, Hu joined the leaders of Russia and other Central Asian governments in making clear Beijing's alarm about the Afghan narcotics problem.

One reason that Russia has become increasingly supportive of NATO's mission in Afghanistan is due to concerns regarding the export of Afghan narcotics into Russia and other countries. Some 90 percent of the world's opium supply originates in Afghanistan, and although the flow of illicit Afghan drugs to Russia and European countries is well known, much of Afghanistan's narcotics exports flow eastward to various Asian countries, including Iran and China.

During his main speech to the SCO, Hu called for enhanced intelligence sharing, stronger border controls, increased joint law enforcement efforts, and other cooperative measures to combat drug trafficking and other transnational crimes within Eurasia.

In response to the question, 'How do you assess the cooperation between Russia and Central Asian countries with China in combating narcotics?' Ivanov told me:

'We've reached an agreement with China—with Meng Jianzhu, the Minister of Public Security—to meet annually at the highest level. In addition, at the deputy level we hold meetings on cross-border cooperation because, many synthetic drugs and psychoactive substances go from China to Russia.

'Here our cooperation is quite specific. In addition, we've intensified our work on information sharing and collaboration in interdicting narcotics trafficking from Afghanistan into the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. As you know, separatist movements exist there. There were serious disturbances a year ago, during which many people perished.'

All this means that Russia and China will likely deepen their cooperation regarding Afghan narcotics in the coming years as NATO forces withdraw their combat forces from Central Asia.

<http://www.topnews.in/5-million-pounds-heroin-seized-uk-border-2291170>

5 Million pounds of Heroin seized at UK border

18 November 2010

UK custom department has done a wonderful job by seizing 12 packages of [powerful](#) heroine in a sack. According to the custom officers of UK Border Agency at the harbor of Felixstowe, this narcotic product was coming from Asia to UK for the sale in the market.

A wing of underworld agency operates this export and import smuggled narcotic elements for earning huge [financial](#) profits. In the initial investigation, officers came to know that there was a large consignment which contained 600 sacks of chili dust.

However, after detecting a large size sack which was loaded with 12 packets of heroine which had the excellent market value. Custom officers think that it will be around 5 million pounds in [cash](#). It is a large consignment.

Investigative officers are worried about the constant entry of such unwanted elements into UK market. This narcotic element will be sold in the market for higher price.

The higher authority has already issued order to police department not to show leniency in punishing culprits who have been caught red handed. Heroine is considered to be Grade-A narcotic product which can terminate lives randomly.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Ton-of-cocaine-seized--from-Brazil-ship/Article1-627856.aspx>

Ton of Cocaine seized from Brazil Ship

18 November 2010

Italian police seized a ton of pure cocaine worth up to USD 340 million today in a container unloaded off a merchant ship coming from Brazil, in a joint inquiry with

British police. "This is the biggest cocaine seizure in Italy in the last 15 years," Salvatore Cagnazzo, the commander in charge of

the investigation, told AFP.

The cocaine, with an estimated value of between 200 million and 250 million euros, was found hidden inside four tractors unloaded from the Italian ship in the port of Gioia Tauro in southern Italy.

"Our suspicions were raised when we discovered that the Brazilians were travelling with irregular documents," Cagnazzo said.

No arrests have been made, he added.

"We tracked down the machinery with the help of SOCA," he said, referring to Britain's Serious Organised Crime Agency. "When we put it through the scanners we discovered the drugs stashed in the metal tubes."

The cocaine was destined not only for the Italian market but also for central and northern Europe, police said.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-11786433>

Database to tackle drug addiction in Swansea

18 November 2010

A database with information about drug addicts and other substance abusers has been launched in Swansea.

Police, social services and other agencies say the system that allows them to share information for the first time will help cut crime.

They say they will be able to step in more quickly and effectively to prevent or manage addiction, saving lives.

The system, called Paris-Smat, links up agencies in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend.

Swansea council cabinet member for social services Nick Tregoning said:

"Experience tells us that having the right information at the right time can make all the difference in prevention, treatment and protection from harm.

"It can even help save lives.

"For the first time agencies in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend will be able to share information at the push of a button and work together more effectively than ever to protect families and children as well as tackle the problems people with an addiction are dealing with."

Sue Stone of the ABMU Health Board's community drug and alcohol team, said: "The main benefit of Paris-Smat is that if a client presents to a service in crisis all the information that is required to assist that client is there on the system."

Peggy Lawson

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Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

(850) 488-9557

From: [Florida Prevention](#)
To: [Florida Prevention](#)
Subject: FW: News Articles, Thursday, November 18, 2010
Date: Thursday, November 18, 2010 11:51:45 AM

FLORIDA

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1330724/Parents-sue-makers-Four-Loko-drink-son-shot-30-hour-binge.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>

Parents sue makers of Four Loko drink

18 November 2010

<http://www.nbc-2.com/Global/story.asp?S=13526352>

Prescription drug overdoses hit Collier County

17 November 2010

<http://cbs4.com/local/dfyit.bayfront.park.2.2014708.html>

Mock Funeral at park shows dangers of drinking

18 November 2010

<http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/columns/legislature-will-close-loopholes-for-pill-mills/1134883>

Legislature will close loopholes for 'Pill Mills'

17 November 2010

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/article1134965.ece>

Gulfport man tries to kill himself as bank forecloses on his home

18 November 2010

NATIONAL

<http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local-beat/Plan-To-Open-Drug-Clinic-At->

[High-School-108801169.html](http://www.indyposted.com/127549/teen-suicide-warning-signs/)

High School plans to open Drug Clinic

18 November 2010

<http://www.indyposted.com/127549/teen-suicide-warning-signs/>

Top 10 warning signs for Teen suicide

18 November 2010

<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/alcohol/index.html>

Preventing excessive alcohol consumption

18 November 2010

INTERNATIONAL

<http://the-diplomat.com/china-power/2010/11/18/china-russia-tackle-drugs/>

China-Russia tackle drugs

18 November 2010

<http://www.topnews.in/5-million-pounds-heroin-seized-uk-border-2291170>

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<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Ton-of-cocaine-seized--from-Brazil-ship/Article1-627856.aspx>

Ton of Cocaine seized from Brazil ship

18 November 2010

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-11786433>

Database to tackle drug abuse in Swansea

18 November 2010

FLORIDA

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1330724/Parents-sue-makers-Four-Loko-drink-son-shot-30-hour-binge.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>

Parents sue makers of Four Loko drink

18 November 2010

The makers of an alcoholic cocktail dubbed 'blackout in a can' have been sued over the death of a student amid mounting calls for it to be banned nationwide.

Joe and Vicki Keiran say their son Jason was pushed over the edge after drinking Four Loko, which contains the equivalent of 18 beers and six coffees in just one can.

Wired and behaving erratically, the 20-year-old fatally shot himself in the head with a friend's gun after partying for 30 hours straight.

The coroner in Tallahassee, Florida, has not yet ruled whether Jason's death was an accident or suicide.

But friends who were at the party with the Florida State University sophomore said he would never have taken his life on purpose.

His mother said: 'I just miss him more and more everyday. I wish he would e-mail me, I wish he would call me...I wish he was coming home for Thanksgiving.'

Father Mr Keiran added that their son's death was every parent's worst fear, saying: 'We lived for our kids so they could get on their way in life.'

Four Loko is also known as 'cocaine in a can' and is 12 per cent proof, the equivalent to a bottle of wine.

With a malt liquor base, it also contains caffeine, taurine, guarana, carbonated water, sugar and flavourings. It is available at supermarkets and grocery stores around the U.S. for as little as \$2.50 per 23.5 ounce can.

Calls have been mounting for the drink to be banned across America following a series of disturbing incidents.

Officials at Ramapo College in Mahwah, New Jersey, banned it after 16 students needed hospital treatment for alcohol poisoning following a Four Loko binge.

Nine undergraduates from Central Washington University had to be taken to hospital after police found them passed out having drunk the beverage.

Lawmakers in Washington later banned its sale anywhere in the state. Three other states followed and next month beer distributors in New York will stop selling it.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is currently investigating Four Loko and similar energy drinks and is expected to rule that caffeine is an unsafe food additive to alcoholic drinks, a move that would effectively ban them from sale.

Energy drink: The makers of Four Loko, a 12 percent alcohol drink that sells for as little as \$2.50, disagree with findings that alcohol and caffeine are an unhealthy mix

New York Senator Charles Schumer, who is leading the calls for a ban, said Four Loko was 'almost a death wish disguised as an energy drink'.

Four Loko's makers Phusion Projects declined to comment and said they had not received the lawsuit.

They have said in a letter to government regulators that they 'don't agree with the notion that mixing caffeine and alcohol is inherently unsafe'.

The letter continued: 'We welcome the opportunity to have a discussion with you about working together to create uniform, industry-wide standards,' the firm stated. In a climbdown they have also announced they will remove caffeine and two other ingredients from their drinks.

<http://www.nbc-2.com/Global/story.asp?S=13526352>

Prescription drug overdoses hit Collier County

17 November 2010

COLLIER COUNTY: A problem that could happen anywhere in Southwest Florida, struck a small community in large numbers. Prescription drugs have claimed the lives of eight people and local leaders are now hoping a powerful image will sink in.

The only road in and out of town wants you to "Keep Copeland Clean." Wednesday night, the south Collier community of about 200 people gave new meaning to that slogan.

"Tabitha Daniels, Levi Anthony Weeks, Dana Robert Masey, Charles 'Chuck' Oliver Huggins, Zachary Wells," said Pastor John Gilmore as he read the names of people who have from overdose. "Charles Lawrence Fogle, Bobbie Dianne Mitchell, Cheryl Lynn Rain."

Their names are now on crosses leading into town.

"We wanted everybody to see! We wanted everybody to see!" said Pastor Gilmore.

Carol Sylvest's great niece, Cheryl, died last month. And that, she says, put her over the top.

"This should not happen," she said. "Is it our fault as a community? Yes!"

She blames everybody. So she and her congregation at Copeland Baptist put the

crosses up and they're still short one of the eight.

Pastor Gilmore says they meet every Monday for prayer.

"Addicts, unfortunately, would steal pennies out of the eyes of a dead man, but they didn't start out that way," said Pastor Gilmore.

Reynolds Cavins drives by the crosses everyday and knows all seven names on the fence. He said that he too was once tied up in drugs.

"It's a spiritual warfare," he said.

He explained that he leaned on faith and avoided the same fate.

"We have a drug problem here in this community. And, we're willing to fight against that and do something about it," said Cavins.

The community will host a meeting at Copeland Baptist in two weeks and will plead county leaders for help.

<http://cbs4.com/local/dfyit.bayfront.park.2.2014708.html>

Mock Funeral at park shows dangers of drinking

18 November 2010

More than four hundred tombstones have been erected at Miami's Bayfront Park by Miami-Dade and Broward students as message to their friends about the dangers of underage drinking.

More than two hundred students, who are a part of Drug-Free Youth In Town (DFYIT) plan to stage a mock funeral procession, complete with Grim Reaper and ghostly students, Thursday afternoon at the park to make their point.

According to DFYIT, alcohol is the most commonly abused substance in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, more than marijuana and tobacco combined. The point to a 2008 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey which found, on average, 17-percent of middle school students and nearly 40-percent high school students surveyed said they had drank alcohol in the last 30 days.

Youth who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to develop a dependence to alcohol than those who wait until age 21, according to a 1997 National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey, 1997.

DFYIT says research shows that if you can keep children drug and alcohol free for the seven years of middle and high school then the odds are they will never have a problem with abuse. Recruiting kids to be peer leaders is a key part of their strategy.

There are currently 60 DFYIT clubs in Miami-Dade County and 23 Broward County middle and senior high schools. DFYIT provides kids with "social competency training, drug awareness counseling, conflict resolution skills, positive adult relationships, and pro-social involvement in their school and community."

<http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/columns/legislature-will-close-loopholes-for-pill-mills/1134883>

Legislature will close loopholes for "Pill Mills"

17 November 2010

Prescription drug abuse and the continuing threat caused by pill mills continue to be a top priority of mine.

With an average of six to seven people dying every day due to a causal connection with prescription drugs, it became obvious that something needed to be done to shut off the flow of drugs at the source.

Florida was once the destination of choice for out-of-state drug seekers. However, new laws my Senate office worked on are tightening the vise on pill mills and those who operate them. My hope is that one day soon, illegal pill mills will be put out of business in Florida, leaving behind only legitimate pain management clinics who serve those who truly are in need of medical care.

A new law, which took effect Oct. 1, makes it very difficult for unregistered pain clinics to operate. However, at least one unscrupulous individual has found a loophole in existing law.

As publicized in the St. Petersburg Times, a felon run out of Hillsborough County for running an unlicensed pain clinic recently moved to Pasco County and has opened up a cash-only urgent care clinic, the Wesley Chapel Medical Group. Because the operator does not accept third-party payments (i.e. Medicaid, private insurance) current law does not require the clinic to be registered. My staff and I plan to work on closing that loophole.

It is doubtful this business practice is limited to one community. I have no doubt my colleagues across Florida would not want people running unlicensed clinics in their respective communities.

During the 2011 session of the Florida Legislature, my Senate office has set its sights on making the acquisition of prescription drugs by abusers and dealers even more difficult. I will continue to strengthen the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), which was authorized in 2009 through legislation my Senate office worked on. The monitoring program is expected to go online in early 2011 and will provide pharmacists and doctors with a tool to identify doctor shoppers and others who may be abusing prescription medications. Pharmacists are tasked with using the program and reporting trends they may see (i.e. those who doctor shop or present fraudulent prescriptions). I will be sponsoring provisions that will help elevate the effort to

national standards, which in turn will help the monitoring program's fundraising arm to apply for grants for which it now is not qualified.

Working in concert with the Florida Office of Drug Control, I will be sponsoring additional legislation that strengthens public safety in many ways. Conforming state drug schedules to federal drug schedules will assist law enforcement as new drugs (synthetic marijuana for example) become readily available to the public. The Statewide Drug Policy Advisory Council will be given a greater role in recommending to the Florida Legislature drug schedule changes as this group is uniquely qualified to identify the prevalence of emergent drugs. Additionally, this legislation will make doctor shopping more difficult. Overall, the goal of my 2011 public safety legislation will be to save lives by decreasing prescription drug abuse and diversion.

I applaud local media for keeping the spotlight on pill mills as well as making the public aware of the need for the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.

Florida has come a long way in the last couple of years but we still have far to go. My staff and I look forward to the 2011 legislative session and the opportunities it holds for the chance to make Florida even safer.

Short of putting up signs at the border stating "Drug Abusers Stay Out," my Senate office believes that we will be successful in making Florida safer for our families and tourists, but not pill mill operators and the people who patronize them.

Sen. Mike Fasano represents District 11 which includes portions of Pasco and Hernando counties.

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/article1134965.ece>

Gulfport man tries to kill himself as bank forecloses on home

18 November 2010

GULFPORT — The foreclosure process started more than two years ago. Papers were served. Hearings held. Judges ruled. Back and forth it went, inexorably. Like millions across the nation, Boyd Rubright, 71, was slowly losing his home.

The writ of possession — the final document that strips someone of a foreclosed home — was signed Nov. 2. The occupant received 24 hours' notice. Then, ready or not, he had to go.

Monday was the day.

The bank representative was the first to arrive at 5840 Gulfport Blvd. S. It's the white house with the green trim and the empty birdbath.

The house looked vacant, but the representative thought he saw someone inside. A deputy arrived, and knocked on the front door. He announced himself from the outside, loudly.

No one answered.

The bank sent someone to drill through the lock. It was 9:02 a.m. when the drilling stopped. The busted lock hit the floor inside.

That's when they heard the gunshot.

•••

The deputy moved everyone away from the house and called for backup. Then he and a Gulfport officer went inside, weapons drawn.

They found Rubright slumped in an armchair in a small room. Police said he placed the barrel of a .357-caliber revolver in his mouth and pulled the trigger.

The officers couldn't find a pulse; paramedics were called.

His oldest daughter learned about the shooting when she talked to a *St. Petersburg Times* reporter Wednesday night.

"When the foreclosure started a couple of years ago, he told us that he was not giving up his house for anything," said Margaret Fitzgibbons, 44. "They would have to take him out or he'd kill himself.

"That's why I wasn't surprised."

•••

It's hard to find anyone who really knew Rubright. Everyone knew a piece of the man. But not the whole.

He was married and divorced three times. His last marriage ended in 2007. He has three daughters and a son from the first two. The son and a daughter want nothing to do with him.

The other two daughters tried to reconnect with their father. Fitzgibbons, who lives in New York, wanted her three children to know their grandfather.

It hasn't been easy. Depressed. Difficult. Disconnected. That's how the oldest daughter described her estranged father. They didn't meet until she was 14.

Rubright spent two decades working at Ted Peters Famous Smoked Fish. He left three years ago. He either quit, was fired, or retired, depending on whom you ask.

His health was failing, but he kept checking himself out of the hospital. He lived on Social Security and couldn't afford the house payments anymore.

As foreclosure loomed, Fitzgibbons said she and her half sister asked Rubright to come back to New York to live with them.

He refused. He had been in that house for two decades.

He threatened to take his own life. His daughters didn't know what to do.

"He didn't want to leave his home," she said. "He said if he left his home he couldn't keep his guns and smoke his pot."

•••

Mental health issues. Substance abuse. Stress. Hopelessness. Withdrawing from loved ones and friends. Mood swings. Rage. All classic warning signs of suicide.

Suicides hit a 12-year high in Florida in 2008, when 2,723 people took their own lives, according to the state. Pinellas County also had a record that year, with 177 suicides.

Is Florida's sour economy and unending housing crisis to blame? The cause of suicide is always greater than a single problem. But the economy has definitely become a factor.

"Dangerous times are times of transition," said Senta Goudy, director of the Florida Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention. "It's the loss of a spouse, the loss of a home, the loss of a job. Those are the times when a person is most at risk.

"They don't have the support network they need. They don't have a place to talk to somebody when they lose hope."

Pinellas sheriff's deputies evict people in landlord-tenant disputes and foreclosures about 300 times a month in the county.

It's rare for someone to still be living there by that point.

Sgt. Richard North oversees the court processing unit, which always seems to be delivering bad news: witness subpoenas, foreclosures, evictions, domestic violence injunctions.

While rare, Rubright isn't the first person to try to take his own life in the moment they must face leaving their home.

North has seen it a handful of times in the last 10 years.

It almost happened last month. A 42-year-old Clearwater man who was being evicted in a family dispute tried to hang himself. The deputy forced his way inside and pulled the man down from the belt tied around his neck.

"He saved his life," North said.

The man told the deputy he didn't have anywhere to go.

•••

Paramedics arrived at 5840 Gulfport Blvd. S just minutes after the gunshot. When they checked Rubright, they were able to find a pulse.

They rushed him to Bayfront Medical Center, where he has been in critical condition since Monday. Police believe the bullet may have missed his skull and instead went through his throat.

His prognosis is unknown. Rubright has not regained consciousness. But one of his few friends, 69-year-old Karla Kegerise, visited him Wednesday.

"I went down to pray with him and he looked good," she said.

His two daughters desperately want to fly down to visit him. But they can't afford it. Susan Rubright, 40, lost her job as an administrative assistant on Nov. 1. She has three children.

"They need us at the hospital," she said, crying on the phone from her home in New York. "We're his only next of kin, and they can't make any decisions without us.

"But we can't afford it at all. I can't even pay my rent."

NATIONAL

<http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local-beat/Plan-To-Open-Drug-Clinic-At-High-School-108801169.html>

High School plans to open Drug Clinic

18 November 2010

The calls started pouring in as soon as [William Floyd](#) schools superintendent [Paul Casciano](#) arrived at work.

Parents and taxpayers wondered why the district had proposed opening a drug clinic *inside* William Floyd high school.

"Something needed to be done," said Casciano of the school district's ongoing battle against student drug use.

Since the 2007-08 school year, the number of disciplinary cases involving students either possessing drugs in school or coming to class high had doubled, school officials confirmed.

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LOOK

After consulting drug rehab experts, educators decided to explore the uncharted territory of moving a clinic into the school.

If approved by state officials, it would become the only in-school program of its kind in New York.

"We wanted to make it easier for kids to get help," said Casciano, citing the lack of programs like this in the school's [Mastic Beach](#) community.

Under the proposed plan, the drug clinic would be for counseling only. No drugs like methadone would be dispensed.

Only district students could join the program. Addicts from the surrounding community would not be allowed to take part.

"Let's meet the kids where they are at and remove as many barriers to treatment as we can," said [Caroline Sullivan](#), managing director of the Daytop rehabilitation program.

Daytop has filed an application with New York state to run the William Floyd program.

There would be no cost to local taxpayers, according to both Sullivan and Casciano. A patient's personal health insurance would cover the costs.

Daytop currently runs programs across New York state; but, students come to the Daytop facilities, not vice versa.

"The fact that they're being proactive and not putting their heads in the sand - it's amazing," said William Floyd parent-teacher organization vice-president [Lorraine Mentz](#).

"The situation right now is scary; very scary."

It's unclear how long it could take for state officials to review the application for the in-school clinic. And the William Floyd school board would also need to approve it.

Before that, it might have to answer the concerns of doubters in the public.

"For those who think the school is not the place, then where is," countered Sullivan. "Our kids are dying out there; so, why not go to them."

<http://www.indyposted.com/127549/teen-suicide-warning-signs/>

Top 10 warning signs for Teen suicide

18 November 2010

Every year teens across the world commit suicide, due to a wide variety of factors – from emotional or neurological issues to environmental and peer problems. If you are

concerned about the mental health of your teenager, here are the top 10 warning signs for teen suicide. Please, if your teen exhibits these symptoms, seek help right away. For more information about a growing movement to fight suicide, read [To Write Love on Her Arms: Twloha Fights Depression With Community](#) here on IndyPosted.

10. Sudden Disinterest

Your teen may be troubled if he or she suddenly loses interest in extracurricular activities he/she once enjoyed. Another symptom occurs when he/she becomes disinterested or nonchalant about once cherished hobbies.

9. Poor Job Performance

If employed, a suicidal teen may stop caring about work duties – even the most basic such as arriving on time for work and working in a clean manner. He/she may neglect responsibilities once taken seriously.

8. Behavioral Issues

Abrupt changes in behavior and by association, seemingly in personality, can be a suicide warning sign. For example, an energetic teen becomes sluggish, or a well-behaved teen becomes unruly.

7. Physical Changes

If your teen undergoes physical changes such as sleep disruption, loss of appetite, or complains of aches and fatigue that may be due to emotional state, he/she could be at risk of suicide. Furthermore, another sign is neglecting appearance or personal hygiene.

6. Withdrawal

When a teen pulls away from family and friends, it's a suicide warning sign. Similarly, he/she may pull away from once trusted advisors, such as a school counselor or beloved teacher, too.

5. Poor School Performance

If a teen is suicidal, often his/her school work suffers. Grades may fall, and he/she may exhibit difficulty concentrating or focusing during class and while attempting to complete homework.

4. Risk Taking

When a teen suddenly becomes careless or disregards personal safety and/or property, he/she may be suicidal. This includes suddenly indulging in drug and alcohol abuse.

3. Suicidal Talk

While sometimes a teen who talks about suicide is merely seeking attention, no talk of suicide should go without mental health treatment. A suicidal teen may mention a suicide plan, and may even go so far as to write suicide notes.

2. Disregarding Possessions

When a teen gives away or throws away possessions, he/she may be contemplating suicide. This is especially true when the dispersal of possessions is methodical and almost ritualistic, as if delegating who'd receive possessions in a will.

1. Verbal Cues

Verbal cues, whether subtle or outright suicidal in nature, are the #1 warning sign on our list. Such cues may be saying something like "if something happens to me..." or "I won't cause you any problems anymore." Generally these are signs of impending suicidal plans or, at the very least, suicidal contemplation

<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/alcohol/index.html>

Preventing excessive alcohol consumption

18 November 2010

Excessive alcohol consumption is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States and is a risk factor for many health and societal problems. Among adults, it can take the form of heavy drinking, binge drinking, or both.

- Heavy drinking is defined as more than two drinks per day on average for men or more than one drink per day on average for women.
- Binge drinking is defined as five or more drinks during a single occasion for men or four or more drinks during a single occasion for women.

Underage drinking can also be considered a form of excessive drinking because it is both illegal and often involves consumption in quantities and settings that can lead to serious immediate and long-term consequences.

- Approximately 5% of the total population drinks heavily and 15% of the population engages in binge drinking (CDC).
- People aged 12 to 20 years drink 11% of all alcohol consumed in the United States. More than 90% of this alcohol is consumed in the form of binge drinks (OJJDP).

INTERNATIONAL

<http://the-diplomat.com/china-power/2010/11/18/china-russia-tackle-drugs/>

China, Russia tackle drugs

18 November 2010

Following is a guest entry by Diplomat columnist Richard Weitz looking at co-operation between China and Russia on their counter-drug trafficking efforts.

I recently had the chance to speak with Victor P. Ivanov, director of the Russian Federal Drug Control Service, while he was in Washington for the most recent meeting of the Counter Narcotics Working Group of the US-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission. Ivanov had some interesting things to say about recent co-operation between Russia and China on tackling drug trafficking, a problem Hu Jintao in June equated to the 'three evil forces' of terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism that have traditionally preoccupied the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation.

The Commission promotes bilateral governmental cooperation on law enforcement, drug treatment and prevention, intelligence sharing and money laundering linked to drug trafficking activities. The working group is co-chaired by Ivanov and Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Gil Kerlikowske. But Russia has also worked with China and Central Asian governments within the SCO to combat Asian drugs trafficking.

SCO member governments include China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as four formally designated observer countries—India, Iran, Mongolia, and Pakistan. In the annual SCO leadership summit in June, Hu joined the leaders of Russia and other Central Asian governments in making clear Beijing's alarm about the Afghan narcotics problem.

One reason that Russia has become increasingly supportive of NATO's mission in Afghanistan is due to concerns regarding the export of Afghan narcotics into Russia and other countries. Some 90 percent of the world's opium supply originates in Afghanistan, and although the flow of illicit Afghan drugs to Russia and European countries is well known, much of Afghanistan's narcotics exports flow eastward to various Asian countries, including Iran and China.

During his main speech to the SCO, Hu called for enhanced intelligence sharing, stronger border controls, increased joint law enforcement efforts, and other cooperative measures to combat drug trafficking and other transnational crimes within Eurasia.

In response to the question, 'How do you assess the cooperation between Russia and Central Asian countries with China in combating narcotics?' Ivanov told me:

'We've reached an agreement with China—with Meng Jianzhu, the Minister of Public Security—to meet annually at the highest level. In addition, at the deputy level we hold meetings on cross-border cooperation because, many synthetic drugs and psychoactive substances go from China to Russia.

'Here our cooperation is quite specific. In addition, we've intensified our work on

information sharing and collaboration in interdicting narcotics trafficking from Afghanistan into the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. As you know, separatist movements exist there. There were serious disturbances a year ago, during which many people perished.'

All this means that Russia and China will likely deepen their cooperation regarding Afghan narcotics in the coming years as NATO forces withdraw their combat forces from Central Asia.

<http://www.topnews.in/5-million-pounds-heroin-seized-uk-border-2291170>

5 Million pounds of Heroin seized at UK border

18 November 2010

UK custom department has done a wonderful job by seizing 12 packages of [powerful](#) heroine in a sack. According to the custom officers of UK Border Agency at the harbor of Felixstowe, this narcotic product was coming from Asia to UK for the sale in the market.

A wing of underworld agency operates this export and import smuggled narcotic elements for earning huge [financial](#) profits. In the initial investigation, officers came to know that there was a large consignment which contained 600 sacks of chili dust.

However, after detecting a large size sack which was loaded with 12 packets of heroine which had the excellent market value. Custom officers think that it will be around 5 million pounds in [cash](#). It is a large consignment.

Investigative officers are worried about the constant entry of such unwanted elements into UK market. This narcotic element will be sold in the market for higher price.

The higher authority has already issued order to police department not to show leniency in punishing culprits who have been caught red handed. Heroine is considered to be Grade-A narcotic product which can terminate lives randomly.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Ton-of-cocaine-seized--from-Brazil-ship/Article1-627856.aspx>

Ton of Cocaine seized from Brazil Ship

18 November 2010

Italian police seized a ton of pure cocaine worth up to USD 340 million today in a container unloaded off a merchant ship coming from Brazil, in a joint inquiry with British police. "This is the biggest cocaine seizure in Italy in the last 15 years," Salvatore Cagnazzo, the commander in charge of

the investigation, told AFP.

The cocaine, with an estimated value of between 200 million and 250 million euros,

was found hidden inside four tractors unloaded from the Italian ship in the port of Gioia Tauro in southern Italy.

"Our suspicions were raised when we discovered that the Brazilians were travelling with irregular documents," Cagnazzo said.

No arrests have been made, he added.

"We tracked down the machinery with the help of SOCA," he said, referring to Britain's Serious Organised Crime Agency. "When we put it through the scanners we discovered the drugs stashed in the metal tubes."

The cocaine was destined not only for the Italian market but also for central and northern Europe, police said.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-11786433>

Database to tackle drug addiction in Swansea

18 November 2010

A database with information about drug addicts and other substance abusers has been launched in Swansea.

Police, social services and other agencies say the system that allows them to share information for the first time will help cut crime.

They say they will be able to step in more quickly and effectively to prevent or manage addiction, saving lives.

The system, called Paris-Smat, links up agencies in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend.

Swansea council cabinet member for social services Nick Tregoning said:

"Experience tells us that having the right information at the right time can make all the difference in prevention, treatment and protection from harm.

"It can even help save lives.

"For the first time agencies in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend will be able to share information at the push of a button and work together more effectively than ever to protect families and children as well as tackle the problems people with an addiction are dealing with."

Sue Stone of the ABMU Health Board's community drug and alcohol team, said: "The main benefit of Paris-Smat is that if a client presents to a service in crisis all the information that is required to assist that client is there on the system."

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From: [Lawson, Peggy](#)
To: [Drug Control](#)
Subject: News Articles, Thursday, November 18, 2010
Date: Thursday, November 18, 2010 11:49:09 AM

FLORIDA

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1330724/Parents-sue-makers-Four-Loko-drink-son-shot-30-hour-binge.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>

Parents sue makers of Four Loko drink

18 November 2010

<http://www.nbc-2.com/Global/story.asp?S=13526352>

Prescription drug overdoses hit Collier County

17 November 2010

<http://cbs4.com/local/dfyit.bayfront.park.2.2014708.html>

Mock Funeral at park shows dangers of drinking

18 November 2010

<http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/columns/legislature-will-close-loopholes-for-pill-mills/1134883>

Legislature will close loopholes for 'Pill Mills'

17 November 2010

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/article1134965.ece>

Gulfport man tries to kill himself as bank forecloses on his home

18 November 2010

NATIONAL

<http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local-beat/Plan-To-Open-Drug-Clinic-At-High-School-108801169.html>

High School plans to open Drug Clinic

18 November 2010

<http://www.indyposted.com/127549/teen-suicide-warning-signs/>

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<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/alcohol/index.html>

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INTERNATIONAL

<http://the-diplomat.com/china-power/2010/11/18/china-russia-tackle-drugs/>

China-Russia tackle drugs

18 November 2010

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<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Ton-of-cocaine-seized--from-Brazil-ship/Article1-627856.aspx>

Ton of Cocaine seized from Brazil ship

18 November 2010

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-11786433>

Database to tackle drug abuse in Swansea

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FLORIDA

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1330724/Parents-sue-makers-Four-Loko-drink-son-shot-30-hour-binge.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>

Parents sue makers of Four Loko drink

18 November 2010

The makers of an alcoholic cocktail dubbed 'blackout in a can' have been sued over the death of a student amid mounting calls for it to be banned nationwide.

Joe and Vicki Keiran say their son Jason was pushed over the edge after drinking Four Loko, which contains the equivalent of 18 beers and six coffees in just one can.

Wired and behaving erratically, the 20-year-old fatally shot himself in the head with a friend's gun after partying for 30 hours straight.

The coroner in Tallahassee, Florida, has not yet ruled whether Jason's death was an accident or suicide.

But friends who were at the party with the Florida State University sophomore said he would never have taken his life on purpose.

His mother said: 'I just miss him more and more everyday. I wish he would e-mail me, I wish he would call me...I wish he was coming home for Thanksgiving.'

Father Mr Keiran added that their son's death was every parent's worst fear, saying: 'We lived for our kids so they could get on their way in life.'

Four Loko is also known as 'cocaine in a can' and is 12 per cent proof, the equivalent to a bottle of wine.

With a malt liquor base, it also contains caffeine, taurine, guarana, carbonated water, sugar and flavourings. It is available at supermarkets and grocery stores around the U.S. for as little as \$2.50 per 23.5 ounce can.

Calls have been mounting for the drink to be banned across America following a series of disturbing incidents.

Officials at Ramapo College in Mahwah, New Jersey, banned it after 16 students needed hospital treatment for alcohol poisoning following a Four Loko binge.

Nine undergraduates from Central Washington University had to be taken to hospital after police found them passed out having drunk the beverage.

Lawmakers in Washington later banned its sale anywhere in the state. Three other states followed and next month beer distributors in New York will stop selling it.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is currently investigating Four Loko and similar energy drinks and is expected to rule that caffeine is an unsafe food additive to alcoholic drinks, a move that would effectively ban them from sale.

Energy drink: The makers of Four Loko, a 12 percent alcohol drink that sells for as little as \$2.50, disagree with findings that alcohol and caffeine are an unhealthy mix

New York Senator Charles Schumer, who is leading the calls for a ban, said Four Loko was 'almost a death wish disguised as an energy drink'.

Four Loko's makers Phusion Projects declined to comment and said they had not received the lawsuit.

They have said in a letter to government regulators that they 'don't agree with the notion that mixing caffeine and alcohol is inherently unsafe'.

The letter continued: 'We welcome the opportunity to have a discussion with you about working together to create uniform, industry-wide standards,' the firm stated. In a climbdown they have also announced they will remove caffeine and two other ingredients from their drinks.

<http://www.nbc-2.com/Global/story.asp?S=13526352>

Prescription drug overdoses hit Collier County

17 November 2010

COLLIER COUNTY: A problem that could happen anywhere in Southwest Florida, struck a small community in large numbers. Prescription drugs have claimed the lives of eight people and local leaders are now hoping a powerful image will sink in.

The only road in and out of town wants you to "Keep Copeland Clean." Wednesday night, the south Collier community of about 200 people gave new meaning to that slogan.

"Tabitha Daniels, Levi Anthony Weeks, Dana Robert Masey, Charles 'Chuck' Oliver Huggins, Zachary Wells," said Pastor John Gilmore as he read the names of people who have from overdose. "Charles Lawrence Fogle, Bobbie Dianne Mitchell, Cheryl Lynn Rain."

Their names are now on crosses leading into town.

"We wanted everybody to see! We wanted everybody to see!" said Pastor Gilmore.

Carol Sylvest's great niece, Cheryl, died last month. And that, she says, put her over the top.

"This should not happen," she said. "Is it our fault as a community? Yes!"

She blames everybody. So she and her congregation at Copeland Baptist put the crosses up and they're still short one of the eight.

Pastor Gilmore says they meet every Monday for prayer.

"Addicts, unfortunately, would steal pennies out of the eyes of a dead man, but they didn't start out that way," said Pastor Gilmore.

Reynolds Cavins drives by the crosses everyday and knows all seven names on the fence. He said that he too was once tied up in drugs.

"It's a spiritual warfare," he said.

He explained that he leaned on faith and avoided the same fate.

"We have a drug problem here in this community. And, we're willing to fight against that and do something about it," said Cavins.

The community will host a meeting at Copeland Baptist in two weeks and will plead county leaders for help.

<http://cbs4.com/local/dfyit.bayfront.park.2.2014708.html>

Mock Funeral at park shows dangers of drinking

18 November 2010

More than four hundred tombstones have been erected at Miami's Bayfront Park by Miami-Dade and Broward students as message to their friends about the dangers of underage drinking.

More than two hundred students, who are a part of Drug-Free Youth In Town (DFYIT) plan to stage a mock funeral procession, complete with Grim Reaper and ghostly students, Thursday afternoon at the park to make their point.

According to DFYIT, alcohol is the most commonly abused substance in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, more than marijuana and tobacco combined. The point to a 2008 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey which found, on average, 17-percent of middle school students and nearly 40-percent high school students surveyed said they had drank alcohol in the last 30 days.

Youth who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to develop a dependence to alcohol than those who wait until age 21, according to a 1997 National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey, 1997.

DFYIT says research shows that if you can keep children drug and alcohol free for the seven years of middle and high school then the odds are they will never have a problem with abuse. Recruiting kids to be peer leaders is a key part of their strategy.

There are currently 60 DFYIT clubs in Miami-Dade County and 23 Broward County middle and senior high schools. DFYIT provides kids with "social competency training, drug awareness counseling, conflict resolution skills, positive adult relationships, and pro-social involvement in their school and community."

<http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/columns/legislature-will-close-loopholes-for-pill-mills/1134883>

Legislature will close loopholes for "Pill Mills"

17 November 2010

Prescription drug abuse and the continuing threat caused by pill mills continue to be a top priority of mine.

With an average of six to seven people dying every day due to a causal connection with prescription drugs, it became obvious that something needed to be done to shut off the flow of drugs at the source.

Florida was once the destination of choice for out-of-state drug seekers. However, new laws my Senate office worked on are tightening the vise on pill mills and those who operate them. My hope is that one day soon, illegal pill mills will be put out of business in Florida, leaving behind only legitimate pain management clinics who serve those who truly are in need of medical care.

A new law, which took effect Oct. 1, makes it very difficult for unregistered pain clinics to operate. However, at least one unscrupulous individual has found a loophole in existing law.

As publicized in the St. Petersburg Times, a felon run out of Hillsborough County for running an unlicensed pain clinic recently moved to Pasco County and has opened up a cash-only urgent care clinic, the Wesley Chapel Medical Group. Because the operator does not accept third-party payments (i.e. Medicaid, private insurance) current law does not require the clinic to be registered. My staff and I plan to work on closing that loophole.

It is doubtful this business practice is limited to one community. I have no doubt my colleagues across Florida would not want people running unlicensed clinics in their respective communities.

During the 2011 session of the Florida Legislature, my Senate office has set its sights on making the acquisition of prescription drugs by abusers and dealers even more difficult. I will continue to strengthen the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), which was authorized in 2009 through legislation my Senate office worked on. The monitoring program is expected to go online in early 2011 and will provide pharmacists and doctors with a tool to identify doctor shoppers and others who may be abusing prescription medications. Pharmacists are tasked with using the program and reporting trends they may see (i.e. those who doctor shop or present fraudulent prescriptions). I will be sponsoring provisions that will help elevate the effort to national standards, which in turn will help the monitoring program's fundraising arm to apply for grants for which it now is not qualified.

Working in concert with the Florida Office of Drug Control, I will be sponsoring additional legislation that strengthens public safety in many ways. Conforming state drug schedules to federal drug schedules will assist law enforcement as new drugs (synthetic marijuana for example) become readily available to the public. The Statewide Drug Policy Advisory Council will be given a greater role in recommending to the Florida Legislature drug schedule changes as this group is uniquely qualified to identify the prevalence of emergent drugs. Additionally, this legislation will make

doctor shopping more difficult. Overall, the goal of my 2011 public safety legislation will be to save lives by decreasing prescription drug abuse and diversion.

I applaud local media for keeping the spotlight on pill mills as well as making the public aware of the need for the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.

Florida has come a long way in the last couple of years but we still have far to go. My staff and I look forward to the 2011 legislative session and the opportunities it holds for the chance to make Florida even safer.

Short of putting up signs at the border stating "Drug Abusers Stay Out," my Senate office believes that we will be successful in making Florida safer for our families and tourists, but not pill mill operators and the people who patronize them.

Sen. Mike Fasano represents District 11 which includes portions of Pasco and Hernando counties.

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/article1134965.ece>

Gulfport man tries to kill himself as bank forecloses on home

18 November 2010

GULFPORT — The foreclosure process started more than two years ago. Papers were served. Hearings held. Judges ruled. Back and forth it went, inexorably. Like millions across the nation, Boyd Rubright, 71, was slowly losing his home.

The writ of possession — the final document that strips someone of a foreclosed home — was signed Nov. 2. The occupant received 24 hours' notice. Then, ready or not, he had to go.

Monday was the day.

The bank representative was the first to arrive at 5840 Gulfport Blvd. S. It's the white house with the green trim and the empty birdbath.

The house looked vacant, but the representative thought he saw someone inside. A deputy arrived, and knocked on the front door. He announced himself from the outside, loudly.

No one answered.

The bank sent someone to drill through the lock. It was 9:02 a.m. when the drilling stopped. The busted lock hit the floor inside.

That's when they heard the gunshot.

•••

The deputy moved everyone away from the house and called for backup. Then he and a Gulfport officer went inside, weapons drawn.

They found Rubright slumped in an armchair in a small room. Police said he placed the barrel of a .357-caliber revolver in his mouth and pulled the trigger.

The officers couldn't find a pulse; paramedics were called.

His oldest daughter learned about the shooting when she talked to a *St. Petersburg Times* reporter Wednesday night.

"When the foreclosure started a couple of years ago, he told us that he was not giving up his house for anything," said Margaret Fitzgibbons, 44. "They would have to take him out or he'd kill himself.

"That's why I wasn't surprised."

•••

It's hard to find anyone who really knew Rubright. Everyone knew a piece of the man. But not the whole.

He was married and divorced three times. His last marriage ended in 2007. He has three daughters and a son from the first two. The son and a daughter want nothing to do with him.

The other two daughters tried to reconnect with their father. Fitzgibbons, who lives in New York, wanted her three children to know their grandfather.

It hasn't been easy. Depressed. Difficult. Disconnected. That's how the oldest daughter described her estranged father. They didn't meet until she was 14.

Rubright spent two decades working at Ted Peters Famous Smoked Fish. He left three years ago. He either quit, was fired, or retired, depending on whom you ask.

His health was failing, but he kept checking himself out of the hospital. He lived on Social Security and couldn't afford the house payments anymore.

As foreclosure loomed, Fitzgibbons said she and her half sister asked Rubright to come back to New York to live with them.

He refused. He had been in that house for two decades.

He threatened to take his own life. His daughters didn't know what to do.

"He didn't want to leave his home," she said. "He said if he left his home he couldn't keep his guns and smoke his pot."

•••

Mental health issues. Substance abuse. Stress. Hopelessness. Withdrawing from loved ones and friends. Mood swings. Rage. All classic warning signs of suicide.

Suicides hit a 12-year high in Florida in 2008, when 2,723 people took their own lives, according to the state. Pinellas County also had a record that year, with 177 suicides.

Is Florida's sour economy and unending housing crisis to blame? The cause of suicide is always greater than a single problem. But the economy has definitely become a factor.

"Dangerous times are times of transition," said Senta Goudy, director of the Florida Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention. "It's the loss of a spouse, the loss of a home, the loss of a job. Those are the times when a person is most at risk.

"They don't have the support network they need. They don't have a place to talk to somebody when they lose hope."

Pinellas sheriff's deputies evict people in landlord-tenant disputes and foreclosures about 300 times a month in the county.

It's rare for someone to still be living there by that point.

Sgt. Richard North oversees the court processing unit, which always seems to be delivering bad news: witness subpoenas, foreclosures, evictions, domestic violence injunctions.

While rare, Rubright isn't the first person to try to take his own life in the moment they must face leaving their home.

North has seen it a handful of times in the last 10 years.

It almost happened last month. A 42-year-old Clearwater man who was being evicted in a family dispute tried to hang himself. The deputy forced his way inside and pulled the man down from the belt tied around his neck.

"He saved his life," North said.

The man told the deputy he didn't have anywhere to go.

•••

Paramedics arrived at 5840 Gulfport Blvd. S just minutes after the gunshot. When they checked Rubright, they were able to find a pulse.

They rushed him to Bayfront Medical Center, where he has been in critical condition since Monday. Police believe the bullet may have missed his skull and instead went through his throat.

His prognosis is unknown. Rubright has not regained consciousness. But one of his few friends, 69-year-old Karla Kegerise, visited him Wednesday.

"I went down to pray with him and he looked good," she said.

His two daughters desperately want to fly down to visit him. But they can't afford it. Susan Rubright, 40, lost her job as an administrative assistant on Nov. 1. She has three children.

"They need us at the hospital," she said, crying on the phone from her home in New York. "We're his only next of kin, and they can't make any decisions without us.

"But we can't afford it at all. I can't even pay my rent."

NATIONAL

<http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local-beat/Plan-To-Open-Drug-Clinic-At-High-School-108801169.html>

High School plans to open Drug Clinic

18 November 2010

The calls started pouring in as soon as [William Floyd](#) schools superintendent [Paul Casciano](#) arrived at work.

Parents and taxpayers wondered why the district had proposed opening a drug clinic *inside* William Floyd high school.

"Something needed to be done," said Casciano of the school district's ongoing battle against student drug use.

Since the 2007-08 school year, the number of disciplinary cases involving students either possessing drugs in school or coming to class high had doubled, school officials confirmed.

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After consulting drug rehab experts, educators decided to explore the uncharted territory of moving a clinic into the school.

If approved by state officials, it would become the only in-school program of its kind in New York.

"We wanted to make it easier for kids to get help," said Casciano, citing the lack of programs like this in the school's [Mastic Beach](#) community.

Under the proposed plan, the drug clinic would be for counseling only. No drugs like

methadone would be dispensed.

Only district students could join the program. Addicts from the surrounding community would not be allowed to take part.

"Let's meet the kids where they are at and remove as many barriers to treatment as we can," said [Caroline Sullivan](#), managing director of the Daytop rehabilitation program.

Daytop has filed an application with New York state to run the William Floyd program.

There would be no cost to local taxpayers, according to both Sullivan and Casciano. A patient's personal health insurance would cover the costs.

Daytop currently runs programs across New York state; but, students come to the Daytop facilities, not vice versa.

"The fact that they're being proactive and not putting their heads in the sand - it's amazing," said William Floyd parent-teacher organization vice-president [Lorraine Mentz](#).

"The situation right now is scary; very scary."

It's unclear how long it could take for state officials to review the application for the in-school clinic. And the William Floyd school board would also need to approve it.

Before that, it might have to answer the concerns of doubters in the public.

"For those who think the school is not the place, then where is," countered Sullivan. "Our kids are dying out there; so, why not go to them."

<http://www.indyposted.com/127549/teen-suicide-warning-signs/>

Top 10 warning signs for Teen suicide

18 November 2010

Every year teens across the world commit suicide, due to a wide variety of factors – from emotional or neurological issues to environmental and peer problems. If you are concerned about the mental health of your teenager, here are the top 10 warning signs for teen suicide. Please, if your teen exhibits these symptoms, seek help right away. For more information about a growing movement to fight suicide, read [To Write Love on Her Arms: Twloha Fights Depression With Community](#) here on IndyPosted.

10. Sudden Disinterest

Your teen may be troubled if he or she suddenly loses interest in extracurricular activities he/she once enjoyed. Another symptom occurs when he/she becomes

disinterested or nonchalant about once cherished hobbies.

9. Poor Job Performance

If employed, a suicidal teen may stop caring about work duties – even the most basic such as arriving on time for work and working in a cleanly manner. He/she may neglect responsibilities once taken seriously.

8. Behavioral Issues

Abrupt changes in behavior and by association, seemingly in personality, can be a suicide warning sign. For example, an energetic teen becomes sluggish, or a well-behaved teen becomes unruly.

7. Physical Changes

If your teen undergoes physical changes such as sleep disruption, loss of appetite, or complains of aches and fatigue that may be due to emotional state, he/she could be at risk of suicide. Furthermore, another sign is neglecting appearance or personal hygiene.

6. Withdrawal

When a teen pulls away from family and friends, it's a suicide warning sign. Similarly, he/she may pull away from once trusted advisors, such as a school counselor or beloved teacher, too.

5. Poor School Performance

If a teen is suicidal, often his/her school work suffers. Grades may fall, and he/she may exhibit difficulty concentrating or focusing during class and while attempting to complete homework.

4. Risk Taking

When a teen suddenly becomes careless or disregards personal safety and/or property, he/she may be suicidal. This includes suddenly indulging in drug and alcohol abuse.

3. Suicidal Talk

While sometimes a teen who talks about suicide is merely seeking attention, no talk of suicide should go without mental health treatment. A suicidal teen may mention a suicide plan, and may even go so far as to write suicide notes.

2. Disregarding Possessions

When a teen gives away or throws away possessions, he/she may be contemplating suicide. This is especially true when the dispersal of possessions is methodical and almost ritualistic, as if delegating who'd receive possessions in a will.

1. Verbal Cues

Verbal cues, whether subtle or outright suicidal in nature, are the #1 warning sign on our list. Such cues may be saying something like “if something happens to me...” or “I won’t cause you any problems anymore.” Generally these are signs of impending suicidal plans or, at the very least, suicidal contemplation

<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/alcohol/index.html>

Preventing excessive alcohol consumption

18 November 2010

Excessive alcohol consumption is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States and is a risk factor for many health and societal problems. Among adults, it can take the form of heavy drinking, binge drinking, or both.

- Heavy drinking is defined as more than two drinks per day on average for men or more than one drink per day on average for women.
- Binge drinking is defined as five or more drinks during a single occasion for men or four or more drinks during a single occasion for women.

Underage drinking can also be considered a form of excessive drinking because it is both illegal and often involves consumption in quantities and settings that can lead to serious immediate and long-term consequences.

- Approximately 5% of the total population drinks heavily and 15% of the population engages in binge drinking (CDC).
- People aged 12 to 20 years drink 11% of all alcohol consumed in the United States. More than 90% of this alcohol is consumed in the form of binge drinks (OJJDP).

INTERNATIONAL

<http://the-diplomat.com/china-power/2010/11/18/china-russia-tackle-drugs/>

China, Russia tackle drugs

18 November 2010

Following is a guest entry by Diplomat columnist Richard Weitz looking at co-operation between China and Russia on their counter-drug trafficking efforts.

I recently had the chance to speak with Victor P. Ivanov, director of the Russian Federal Drug Control Service, while he was in Washington for the most recent meeting of the Counter

Narcotics Working Group of the US-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission. Ivanov had some interesting things to say about recent co-operation between Russia and China on tackling drug trafficking, a problem Hu Jintao in June equated to the 'three evil forces' of terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism that have traditionally preoccupied the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation.

The Commission promotes bilateral governmental cooperation on law enforcement, drug treatment and prevention, intelligence sharing and money laundering linked to drug trafficking activities. The working group is co-chaired by Ivanov and Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Gil Kerlikowske. But Russia has also worked with China and Central Asian governments within the SCO to combat Asian drugs trafficking.

SCO member governments include China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as four formally designated observer countries—India, Iran, Mongolia, and Pakistan. In the annual SCO leadership summit in June, Hu joined the leaders of Russia and other Central Asian governments in making clear Beijing's alarm about the Afghan narcotics problem.

One reason that Russia has become increasingly supportive of NATO's mission in Afghanistan is due to concerns regarding the export of Afghan narcotics into Russia and other countries. Some 90 percent of the world's opium supply originates in Afghanistan, and although the flow of illicit Afghan drugs to Russia and European countries is well known, much of Afghanistan's narcotics exports flow eastward to various Asian countries, including Iran and China.

During his main speech to the SCO, Hu called for enhanced intelligence sharing, stronger border controls, increased joint law enforcement efforts, and other cooperative measures to combat drug trafficking and other transnational crimes within Eurasia.

In response to the question, 'How do you assess the cooperation between Russia and Central Asian countries with China in combating narcotics?' Ivanov told me:

'We've reached an agreement with China—with Meng Jianzhu, the Minister of Public Security—to meet annually at the highest level. In addition, at the deputy level we hold meetings on cross-border cooperation because, many synthetic drugs and psychoactive substances go from China to Russia.

'Here our cooperation is quite specific. In addition, we've intensified our work on information sharing and collaboration in interdicting narcotics trafficking from Afghanistan into the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. As you know, separatist movements exist there. There were serious disturbances a year ago, during which many people perished.'

All this means that Russia and China will likely deepen their cooperation regarding Afghan narcotics in the coming years as NATO forces withdraw their combat forces from Central Asia.

<http://www.topnews.in/5-million-pounds-heroin-seized-uk-border-2291170>

5 Million pounds of Heroin seized at UK border

18 November 2010

UK custom department has done a wonderful job by seizing 12 packages of [powerful](#) heroine in a sack. According to the custom officers of UK Border Agency at the harbor of Felixstowe, this narcotic product was coming from Asia to UK for the sale in the market.

A wing of underworld agency operates this export and import smuggled narcotic elements for earning huge [financial](#) profits. In the initial investigation, officers came to know that there was a large consignment which contained 600 sacks of chili dust.

However, after detecting a large size sack which was loaded with 12 packets of heroine which had the excellent market value. Custom officers think that it will be around 5 million pounds in [cash](#). It is a large consignment.

Investigative officers are worried about the constant entry of such unwanted elements into UK market. This narcotic element will be sold in the market for higher price.

The higher authority has already issued order to police department not to show leniency in punishing culprits who have been caught red handed. Heroine is considered to be Grade-A narcotic product which can terminate lives randomly.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Ton-of-cocaine-seized--from-Brazil-ship/Article1-627856.aspx>

Ton of Cocaine seized from Brazil Ship

18 November 2010

Italian police seized a ton of pure cocaine worth up to USD 340 million today in a container unloaded off a merchant ship coming from Brazil, in a joint inquiry with British police. "This is the biggest cocaine seizure in Italy in the last 15 years," Salvatore Cagnazzo, the commander in charge of

the investigation, told AFP.

The cocaine, with an estimated value of between 200 million and 250 million euros, was found hidden inside four tractors unloaded from the Italian ship in the port of Gioia Tauro in southern Italy.

"Our suspicions were raised when we discovered that the Brazilians were travelling with irregular documents," Cagnazzo said.

No arrests have been made, he added.

"We tracked down the machinery with the help of SOCA," he said, referring to

Britain's Serious Organised Crime Agency. "When we put it through the scanners we discovered the drugs stashed in the metal tubes."

The cocaine was destined not only for the Italian market but also for central and northern Europe, police said.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-11786433>

Database to tackle drug addiction in Swansea

18 November 2010

A database with information about drug addicts and other substance abusers has been launched in Swansea.

Police, social services and other agencies say the system that allows them to share information for the first time will help cut crime.

They say they will be able to step in more quickly and effectively to prevent or manage addiction, saving lives.

The system, called Paris-Smat, links up agencies in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend.

Swansea council cabinet member for social services Nick Tregoning said:

"Experience tells us that having the right information at the right time can make all the difference in prevention, treatment and protection from harm.

"It can even help save lives.

"For the first time agencies in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend will be able to share information at the push of a button and work together more effectively than ever to protect families and children as well as tackle the problems people with an addiction are dealing with."

Sue Stone of the ABMU Health Board's community drug and alcohol team, said: "The main benefit of Paris-Smat is that if a client presents to a service in crisis all the information that is required to assist that client is there on the system."

Peggy Lawson

Executive Assistant to the Director

Office of Drug Control

Executive Office of the Governor

2105 The Capitol

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

(850) 488-9557

From: [Shipley, Claude](#)
To: [Goudy, Senta](#)
Subject: Question RE: News Articles, Wednesday, November 17, 2010
Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2010 12:15:11 PM

Hi Senta. So if I hit reply it shows Florida Prevention in the "to" block. If I hit send then it goes to all of the addressees below?

Second. Are you taking Peggy's entire articles report and then sending it to Florida Prevention?

vr, Claude

Claude W. Shipley

Florida Office of Drug Control
O: 850.414.8820

<http://www.flgov.com/drugcontrol/pdmp/index.html>

From: Florida Prevention
Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2010 9:43 AM
To: (dams@nova.edu); amity_chandler@ccps.k12.fl.us; Angie Ellison; Anne Frazier; anti-drug@cox.net; aventura@unitedwaybroward.org; b_town_00@hotmail.com; bcallahana@copecenter.org; Brooke Baker; bysap@bellsouth.net; campbell.gail@gmail.com; Carol Burkett; Carrie Baird (carrie@ovfv.org); cepps@roundtableslc.org; chrisfranzetti@aol.com; chrissy_bynum@ccps.k12.fl.us; Cindy Coney (cindyconey@aol.com); Clarice Powell; Clay; cparris@pascoasap.com; debbie@seminolepreventioncoalition.org; Debi MacIntyre (debi@safecimatecoalition.org); deborah@ovfv.org; dlees@highlandsheriff.org; Doug Leonardo (Douglas.leonardo@baycare.org); Ellen Piekalkiewicz (Ellen_Piekalkiewicz@dcf.state.fl.us); elwoodford@yahoo.com; Gail Dixon; geometrics@aol.com; gerry.brent@mcchildrensalliance.org; Goldstein, Ron; gwen_love@cdfsfl.org; heidi@pactprevention.org; Jacob, Leonard Robert; Jan Cairnes (jcairnes@hanleycenter.org); Janet Reilly; jcarter_fneasap@yahoo.com; jdoherty@operpar.org; Jim Hall UpFrontin (UpFrontin@aol.com); jjswell@aol.com; jmbardes@yahoo.com; Joan Helms (jah@nettally.com); Joel Kaufman (JKaufman@StartingPlace.org); Jon Quinon (jonq.teenalliance@gmail.com); Karen Perry (KPerry@nopetaskforce.org); Kathleen Roberts (kmr05g@fsu.edu); Kay Doughty (KDoughty@OperPar.org); Kelly Johnson; kingdavidinc@bellsouth.net; kthomas@roundtableslc.org; Ihilko@operpar.org; Lisa Jones; lisa.mcelhaney@gmail.com; Mae Waters (mwaters@mailier.fsu.edu); Maureen Simmons (Maureen.Simmons@C4BF.org); mcdonaldg1@windstream.net; meena.harris@myfloridalegal.com; Mike Jordon (cwjordan44@aol.com); nwfipc@bellsouth.net; pcastillo@unitedwaybroward.org; Penny Detscher (penny.detscher@fldoe.org); prevention@embarqmail.com; prevspec@aol.com; PSapp@informedfamilies.org; Putnam; putnamcountyanti@bellsouth.net; Rebecca R. Todd (rtodd@cfbhn.org); Regina Birrenkott (RBirrenk@mendezfoundation.org); Rick Howell (rlh1995@mailier.fsu.edu); riley.kim@MAIL.DC.STATE.FL.US; rjablons@tampabay.rr.com; Shipley, Claude; skramer.mcac@gmail.com; Sonya Bufe; stephanie.geoghagan@ccbhc.org; Substance Free Citrus; susan@safeandhealthyduval.org; suwanneecoalition@mac.com; Tiffane_Raulerson@doh.state.fl.us; togetheragain@earthlink.net; Vicki Kress (vkress@smabehavioral.org); youthadvocacy@gmail.com
Subject: FW: News Articles, Wednesday, November 17, 2010

FLORIDA

<http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2010/nov/15/editorial-drug-abuse-down-among-students-but-a/>

Drug abuse down among students

16 November 2010

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/16/1929589/caffeinated-alcohol-risk-or-reward.html>

Caffeinated alcohol: Risk or reward?

17 November 2010

NATIONAL

<http://healthland.time.com/2010/11/16/will-the-fda-ban-sales-of-four-loko/>

Will the FDA ban sales of Four Loko?

16 November 2010

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/loko-removes-caffeine-energy-drink/story?id=12167659&tkw=&tqshow=GMA>

Four Loko removes caffeine from energy drink

17 November 2010

<http://www.delawareonline.com/article/20101117/OPINION11/11170304/1004/OPINION/Parental-involvement-is-key-to-drug-prevention>

Parents involvement is key to drug prevention

17 November 2010

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/more-states-doing-employee-drug-testing--firing-108650029.html>

More states doing employee drug testing

17 November 2010

<http://www.staho.com/heroin-addiction-rose-90-percent-since-2007-according-to-samhsa/207320/>

Heroin addiction rose 90% since 2007 according to SAMHSA

17 November 2010

INTERNATIONAL

http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1371450_sister_of_tragic_megan_gillan_make_bullying_a_crime

Sister of tragic Megan Gillian: "Make bullying a crime"

17 November 2010

FLORIDA

<http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2010/nov/15/editorial-drug-abuse-down-among-students-but-a/>

Drug abuse down among students

16 November 2010

An annual survey of drug use among Florida middle and high school students offers some encouraging news. While marijuana use is up slightly and alcohol use remains above national figures, overall drug abuse among students is down.

The recently released Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey of nearly 73,000 middle school and high school students was done by the Florida Office of Drug Control.

"I see this as great news for Florida," said Bruce Grant, director of the agency. "It shows that prevention does work and that if you focus communities, you focus neighborhoods and you focus the state on these issues, you can make a difference. But, you can't overcome everything."

The annual survey has been conducted since 2000, and while the trends for drug abuse are generally down, there needs to be concern that early intervention and education remain strong and that only programs that work be adequately funded.

In recent years, there has been reduced funding at the state level for some education and prevention programs, such as in tobacco use prevention. If funding for quality anti-drug programs is not sufficient, positive trends could quickly reverse.

The survey found that the use of alcohol or other drugs has declined among students from 60 percent to 56 percent in the past decade.

During the past three years, however, marijuana use has increased among students from 15 percent to 19 percent.

Among those releasing the survey results was Gil Kerlikowske, former Port St. Lucie and Fort Pierce police chief, director of the White House Office of Drug Control Policy.

Increased marijuana use in Florida is similar to increased use nationwide, he said, calling the trend "very concerning."

Still, the biggest concern in Florida is with alcohol abuse. Overall, 28.8 percent of students said they use alcohol. While that is down from 34.3 percent during the decade, it remains excessively high. Binge drinking, which has declined from 18.8 percent to 14.1 percent, is also worth concern and action.

One positive note in regard to alcohol abuse is that students are waiting longer to try alcohol.

Prevention programs that work must be replicated and adequately funded. Some programs work better than others.

In recent years, concerns have been raised, for example, about the effectiveness of the popular Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program.

Whatever programs a community or school district adopts, though, the goal must be to encourage young people to avoid drugs and to do so in a positive and continuing way.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/11/16/1929589/caffeinated-alcohol-risk-or-reward.html>

Caffeinated alcohol: risk or reward?

17 November 2010

What will college kids miss most about high-octane alcoholic energy drinks like Four Loko -- aka "blackout in a can" -- which the Food and Drug Administration is expected to ban?

"I'm gonna miss the shakes, the headaches, the blackouts, the colorful vomit," someone with the Twitter name erinneuwirth tweeted Tuesday, after word of the FDA's decision spread.

"RIP Four Loko."

After a yearlong study, the FDA has concluded that caffeine is an unsafe food additive to alcoholic drinks. At least six deaths in Florida have been linked to Four Loko, the top-selling brand, including University of Miami rugby player Kelly McConnell, who police say was hit by a drunken driver.

FDA spokeswoman Siobhan DeLancey would not confirm any upcoming action but said the agency recognizes "this very important public health issue."

The brightly colored cans could be off store shelves in a week. If there's any left.

"I've already heard students talking about stocking up," said University of Miami student Nicolette Roque, who wrote a front-page story about the drinks for the UM Hurricane newspaper on Sept. 22. "They're wanting to hoard. They think it's less threatening to their health than a couple of beers."

So what's the attraction?

A fast, cheap drunk -- with the illusion of extreme alertness, according to Four Loko fans.

The concoction comes in fruity flavors like punch, lemon-lime, cranberry, orange, grape and blue raspberry. A 23.5-ounce can sells for about \$2.50 at convenience stores and gas stations and, with a 12 percent alcohol content, packs the punch of four beers.

One can has about the same amount of caffeine as a cup of coffee, and contains energy-drink ingredients like taurine, guarana and wormwood -- a key ingredient in absinthe.

UM junior Yorence Ramiz, 20, said that since the cans look like energy drinks, "many of the employees don't even think there is alcohol in them, making it easier for teenagers to get it."

Several studies have suggested that people who drink products like Four Loko engage in riskier behavior than alcohol alone. Caffeine masks the effects of alcohol, making drinkers think they can continue to imbibe past the point of drunkenness.

Four states have already banned the drinks.

Dr. Mary Claire O'Brien, a professor of emergency medicine at Wake Forest University, warned the FDA last year that the alcohol-caffeine combination is dangerous.

"There's a particular interaction that goes on in the brain when they are consumed simultaneously," she said. "The addition of the caffeine impairs the ability of the drinker to tell when they're drunk. What is the level at which it becomes dangerous? We don't know that, and until we can figure it out, the answer is that no level is safe."

This fall, UM administrators passed out fliers on campus titled "The Lowdown on Four Loko: By The Numbers," to educate students about risks.

Pat Whitely, UM's vice president of student affairs, said she has heard student leaders responding positively.

Phusion Projects, which makes Four Loko, defends its product on the company website.

"While we don't agree with the notion that mixing caffeine and alcohol is inherently unsafe, we do agree with the goal of keeping adults of legal age who choose to drink responsibly as safe and as informed as possible," company officials wrote.

They continued: "If product-specific bans remain the preferred course of action, we will protect our rights as a business to the fullest extent of the law."

Although Four Loko flies off his shelves on the weekends in Coral Gables, Gulf Liquors manager Noel Delvalle said he supports a ban of caffeinated alcoholic drinks.

"The problem is not the product, it's that the kids drink it too fast so they get high or drunk," said Delvalle, who sells 10 cases of Four Loko a week at \$2.39 a can. "The kids don't care about the flavor. They care about the alcoholic content."

Ramiz, the UM junior, said that "you usually start to feel tipsy after one can. After the second one, you should be good for the night."

"If you dare to pop a third can, be ready to pray to the porcelain god."

NATIONAL

<http://healthland.time.com/2010/11/16/will-the-fda-ban-sales-of-four-loko/>

Will the FDA ban sales of Four Loko?

16 November 2010

On the heels of several statewide [bans](#) on alcoholic energy drinks like Four Loko and Joose, the Food and Drug Administration is expected to weigh in this week on the safety of drinks that mix caffeine and alcohol.

This past weekend, a collective of New York State's largest beer distributors, along with Four Loko-maker Phusion Projects, [agreed](#) to stop supplying the drinks to local stores by Dec 10. So far, four other states have banned the drinks outright, following several incidents of serious drunkenness, illness and death. (**More on Time.com:** [4 Reasons Binge Drinking Is a Public Health Problem](#))

Four Loko, the top-selling alcoholic energy drink, was [implicated](#) in the recent deaths of two Florida teenagers — one mixed the drink with diet pills and the other shot himself after drinking several cans of Four Loko. The drink was also recently found at the [scene](#) of a kidnapping and torture case in New York City, and has been blamed for the hospitalization or illness of students who consumed it at college parties at Central Washington University, Skidmore College and Ramapo College in New Jersey, among others.

Four Loko contains about 12% alcohol (the equivalent of two beers) and about as much caffeine as a cup of coffee. The combination [tricks](#) drinkers into thinking they are not as drunk they are, because the caffeine keeps them alert. For many drinkers — especially teenagers and college students, among whom the drink is popular — this mixing of alcohol and caffeine can turn deadly. (**More on Time.com:** ['Blackout in a Can': Alcoholic Energy Drinks Keep Wreaking Havoc](#))

"There's a particular interaction that goes on in the brain when they are consumed simultaneously," Dr. Mary Claire O'Brien, a professor of emergency medicine at Wake Forest University [told](#) the *New York Times*. "The addition of the caffeine impairs the ability of the drinker to tell when they're drunk. What is the level at which it becomes dangerous? We don't know that, and until we can figure it out, the answer is that no level is safe."

The FDA has been reviewing the safety of alcoholic energy drinks, which come in about 40 different varieties, for the past year. The agency is expected to come to a decision as soon as Wednesday, Nov. 17. The *Times* reports:

The agency declined to say what it would do, but several food safety lawyers who once worked for it said a likely option was to use warning letters to inform manufacturers that the drinks were adulterated and, therefore, not safe.

...

Such letters would probably give the companies a deadline to reformulate the drinks voluntarily or take them off the market.

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/loko-removes-caffeine-energy-drink/story?id=12167659&tqkw=&tqshow=GMA>

Four Loko removes caffeine from energy drink

17 November 2010

The makers of a controversial [caffeinated alcoholic energy drink](#) are removing the caffeine from the product following widespread outcry over safety concerns.

Dozens of students have been hospitalized after drinking [Four Loko](#), police said.

Four states have now banned the product, and New York Sen. Charles Schumer's office is reporting that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is set to rule as early as today that the drink is unsafe and may be banned.

The makers of the drink, Chicago-based Phusion Projects, maintain their product is safe, but say they're removing the caffeine "after trying unsuccessfully to navigate a difficult and politically-charged regulatory environment at both the state and federal levels," in a statement posted on their [website](#).

It's a bittersweet victory for Joe and Vicki Keiran, who say their 20-year-old son, Jason, died after becoming wired and drunk after drinking at least three cans of the energy drink Four Loko. The amount he consumed was the equivalent of 18 light beers and 6 cups of coffee.

Each fruit punch-flavored 23.5-ounce can has about 2.82 ounces of alcohol and about 156 milligrams of caffeine.

The family's attorney, Don Van Dingenen, says the Florida State sophomore picked up a friend's gun after partying with his roommates for 30 hours straight on Sept. 17.

"They say he started to act crazy. He pointed the gun at his head and everyone else. He said 'I realize I'm freaking you guys out take the gun away from me,'" Van Dingenen said.

The Keirans believe the drink caused their son to become so manic and erratic that he accidentally shot himself. They say they

are suing the makers of Four Loko to send a message that this and other similar products need to be banned.

The medical examiner's office has not ruled on whether Jason Keiran's death was an accidental shooting or suicide.

However, friends who witnessed the tragedy say it was an accident and his parents say he would never have taken his own life on purpose.

"I just miss him more and more every day I wish he would e-mail me I wish he would call me -- I wish he was coming home for Thanksgiving," Vicki Keiran said.

The Keirans say they talked with their son's friends after his death, and the drink kept coming up in conversation. Then, they started hearing stories about young people across the country who had behaved erratically after ingesting the product.

Police say dozens of students have been hospitalized including nine from Central Washington University who became violently ill at a party.

Four Loko "should have a skull and crossbones on it and sitting up there beside rat poison on the shelf," said Joe Keiran.

The makers of Four Loko had no comment on the Keirans' lawsuit, but they condemned underage drinking, noting that their product was intended for adults only.

<http://www.delawareonline.com/article/20101117/OPINION11/11170304/1004/OPINION/Parental-involvement-is-key-to-drug-prevention>

Parental involvement is key to drug prevention

17 November 2010

The softening of young people's perception of the harms from illegal drug use continues with the starkest impact on the nation's minority teens.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy data show significant increases in drug use among young African-American teen girls and Hispanic teen boys between 2008 and 2009.

Drug use among black/non-Hispanic females ages 12 to 17 increased from 7.3 percent in 2008 to 10.4 percent in 2009, and Hispanic males of the same age group from 9.2 percent in 2008 to 12.8 percent in 2009; increases of 43 percent and 39 percent, respectively.

The government's prescription for the problem is continued aggressive outreach with vital prevention and treatment resources from community, school and religious leaders, in partnership with parents, who truly bear the mother lode of responsibility.

And to do so each one will need to keep up to date on the latest trends. For example, many students combine perfectly legal ingredients to make illegal drugs. Cans of whipped cream camouflage for dangerous inhalants, including nitrous oxide.

In Delaware, officials cite a rise in methamphetamine, Ecstasy and "date rape" sedatives at the beach resorts provided by outsiders and made available at nightclubs and teen parties during the summer.

Such knowledge becomes useless, though, without a mutually respectful relationship between parents and their soon-to-be young adult children.

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/more-states-doing-employee-drug-testing--firing-108650029.html>

More states doing employee drug testing

17 November 2010

CHICAGO, Nov. 17, 2010 /PRNewswire/ -- The increase in prescription painkillers is prompting more states to conduct employee drug testing. Now 15 states have pro-drug testing laws that allow employers to test and terminate workers based on results. Yet, some employees who are testing positive for prescription meds went on them due to work-related injuries.

Recently, The New York Times featured Americans who suffered job loss due to positive drug tests (http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/25/us/25drugs.html?_r=2&pagewanted=1&src=twr). Now pro-drug testing states are expanding testing to go beyond cocaine, marijuana and natural opiates – codeine and morphine – and into synthetic opiates such as OxyContin and Vicodin. Pro-drug testing laws give companies a benefit – a discount on their workers' compensation premium – for screening employees. Advocates say that incentive supports a safer workplace; opponents say the real issue -- dangerous drug dependency – isn't being addressed or treated.

Now Americans who are jobless as a result of positive drug testing are asking why their companies didn't take a more caring approach. One company has developed a program that takes *care* into consideration. Rising Medical Solutions' (www.risingms.com) "Ask-A-Nurse" program adds a medical professional's guidance back into the claims process, resulting in faster, healthier return-to-work cases and safer workplaces.

Companies refer cases to "Ask-A-Nurse" for several reasons:

- A patient's care becomes static or worsens.
- A patient doesn't understand the diagnosis or prescribed treatment.
- A patient's drug use is potentially hazardous.
- A patient's claim isn't getting resolved in a reasonable timeframe.

Rising receives these types of cases and a nurse evaluates treatment guidelines, care provided and drugs prescribed. Often, the patient has been using opiates or short-acting narcotics for too long. Rising's Physician Pharmacy Reviewer gathers the drug use data and provides a summary to the treating physician to discuss a healthier treatment plan, timeline and drug weaning program. This is just one way the "Ask-A- Nurse" program impacts costs.

"Runaway cases impact America's whole healthcare cost structure," says Jamey Masingill, Vice President of Claims, FirstComp Insurance Company. "Rising keeps an eye on the injured party's long-term picture, returning to work stable and healthy."

Rising's Medical Review Unit Director, Anne Kirby cites "runaway" cases as destructive to all parties. "When cases go unmonitored there's a higher propensity for rebound. Too often meds go unsupervised and an injured worker returns to work on heavy doses of narcotics, jeopardizing their own life and others."

As Americans struggle to hold onto their jobs and healthcare coverage, medical oversight on workers' compensation cases is imperative. Moreover, with healthcare reform, monitoring prescription use will become more necessary as additional people enter the system. So while losing a job is a difficult pill to swallow, it is perhaps even more difficult knowing that preventative tools are available that could have helped an employee avoid such a devastating loss.

About Rising Medical Solutions Inc.

Rising Medical Solutions is a national medical-financial solutions firm that provides medical bill review, hospital bill review and medical cost containment services to the group health, auto, workers' compensation, and liability markets. *Inc.* magazine and the Private Company Index (PCI) rank the Chicago-based company as one of the fastest growing private enterprises in America.

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Heroin addiction rose 90% since 2007 according to SAMHSA

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Beverly Hills, California – A recent study by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health released by the substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) showed the overall number of individuals struggling with heroin addiction rose by nearly 90 percent since 2007, from 213,000 to 399,000 people.

The study also revealed that within the same time frame, the number of first-time users increased 70 percent – from 106,000 to 180,000 individuals – with the average age of 25 but also with kids as young as 12 trying the drug.

The Waismann Method of Opiate Detoxification is a pioneering medical opiate detoxification procedure, and on November 16 it reported a substantial increase in the number of teenagers and young adults seeking treatment for their heroin addiction. According to Clare W. Kavin, addiction specialist with the Waismann Method, Oxycontin is still the number one opiate among patients, but increasingly more impressionable teens and young adults experience heroin addiction.

Kavin added that the number of young people with a heroin addiction has already reached alarming dimensions, and it is extremely important to educate both parents and young adults about the health risks and potentially fatal dangers of the drug before heroin addiction develops into a life-long social-psychological dependency issue. According to the same SAMHSA survey, one in eight teenagers under the age of 18 find heroin to be "fairly" or even "very" accessible. In such situations, the Wasimann Method encourages teens and young adults to acknowledge the dangers of drug abuse and take charge of their heroin addiction by seeking proper care.

The Wasimann Method of Opiate Detoxification provides a safe and humane treatment for opiate dependency, performed in a hospital intensive care unit. It carefully administers medications to reverse the psychological dependence on opiates, while also addressing the symptoms of withdrawal. The patient experiences minimal conscious withdrawal during the procedure, and will be able to return home within days.

INTERNATIONAL

http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1371450_sister_of_tragic_megan_gillan_make_bullying_a_crime

Sister of traffic Megan Gillian: "Make bullying a crime"

17 November 2010

The sister of a schoolgirl who took a fatal overdose because she was being bullied has called for the government to make bullying a crime.

Megan Gillan was 15 and a pupil at Macclesfield High School when she was found dead in her bedroom by her parents at Flying Fields Drive in January last year. An inquest recorded it as an accidental death.

Megan's parents, Mark and Margaret Gillan, called for social networking sites to be monitored when the inquest into Megan's death heard she took painkillers to kill herself after classmates waged a hate campaign against her on Bebo.

Megan's oldest sister Hayley Heffernan, 31, became an ambassador for bullying charity Beatbullying which wants a bill to protect children and teachers at school or online. Hayley, a travel agent, is due to hand over a petition with 700,000 signatures to deputy prime minister Nick Clegg today.

It is part of an internet protest – the first of its kind – to ask the government to make bullying a criminal offence.

Hayley said: "There needs to be a change in the law – both online and in schools

Schools have to have a bullying policy but they should be made to use it so bullies pay for their actions. Schools choose not to act because it looks bad. Megan's high school didn't handle it properly."

Beatbullying's The Big March is the world's first virtual protest for children's rights and started on Monday to mark Anti-Bullying Week.

The 750,000 'virtual demonstrators' includes Archbishop Desmond Tutu, teachers, more than 100 parliamentarians and thousands of children.

A Cheshire East Council spokesman said: "Megan's death shocked and saddened the whole school. She was a bubbly and intelligent young person with a bright future.

"Social networking sites cannot be accessed from school computers.

"Macclesfield High School has a robust anti-bullying policy which is annually reviewed.

Following Megan's death the headteacher and governing body examined the policy and were satisfied."

n Youth centre Just Drop-In and anti-bullying champion Jade Prest teamed up to run three Macclesfield events, including a road trip to Macclesfield College where Jade studied.

A window display at 14 Duke Street where people can get advice was also produced.

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