



## **Young Adults in Rhode Island Report Getting Alcohol from Parent, Guardian, or Friend** *New Public Awareness Campaign Aims To Reduce Underage Alcohol Consumption*

PROVIDENCE, RI, August 5, 2021—A recent study on youth behavior revealed almost 59% of alcohol users aged 18-20 in Rhode Island report receiving alcohol from a friend or relative who is over the age of 21. Among the youth surveyed, 35 percent report obtaining their alcohol from a parent or guardian.<sup>1</sup> Underage alcohol use harms the health of underage youth, impacting brain development and decision making skills.

To support the health and safety of their communities, six Rhode Island Prevention Coalitions (Regions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7) have collaborated to launch *Rhode Rules for Rhode Island*, a public awareness campaign to educate and inform Rhode Island residents about the Social Host Law.

“Rhode Rules for Rhode Island is a public health awareness campaign aiming to educate and inform Rhode Islanders about the Social Host Law, which states it is illegal to buy, provide, or supply alcohol, or to provide a place to consume alcohol, to anyone under the age of 21,” said North Providence Mayor Charles A. Lombardi. “The campaign also raises awareness of the social consequences for underage individuals who consume alcohol.”

Rhode Island is one of the majority of states that maintain a Social Host Law. The law states it is illegal to buy, provide, and supply alcohol, or provide a place to consume alcohol to anyone under the age of 21. This means adults are held responsible even if they don’t know youth are consuming alcohol on their property. Consequences of breaking this law include fines up to \$1,000, a prison sentence of six months for first time offenders and mandatory educational programs approved by the Department of Health.

“I am pleased with this renewed awareness of our state’s Social Host Law through the ‘Rhode Rules’ campaign,” said Executive Office of Health and Human Services’ Secretary Womazetta Jones. “The effects of alcohol use on the developing adolescent brain and decision-making abilities can lead to lifelong consequences. By not purchasing or providing alcohol to underage youth, and not hosting parties with alcohol, we not only protect those under 21, but also protect our communities and families. We hope every Rhode Islander will help us share the message of Rhode Island’s Social Host Law.”

“Underage drinking harms the short- and long-term health of our young adults. It can also have devastating impacts on families and our communities, but it is 100% preventable,” said Kate Manning, Tri-County Community Action Agency PFS Coordinator. “The goal of our new campaign is to encourage adults of legal drinking age to think twice before they provide alcohol to a minor and to store all alcoholic beverages out of reach.”

Steven Eiland, East Bay PFS Coordinator, said: “We all know someone who has been impacted by underage drinking. Regardless of where youth are drinking or how much they are drinking, consumption has dangerous effects. The best thing parents or young adults can do for the youth in their lives is to follow the Social Host Law.”

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<sup>1</sup> 2020 Rhode Island Young Adult Survey, Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals.

**EMBARGOED UNTIL AUGUST 5, 2021, 9:30 AM ET**

Campaign materials are [available for download \[riprevention.org/campaigns\]](https://riprevention.org/campaigns). Community members and prevention partners are welcome to download and share campaign materials with their communities.

Rhode Island Regional Prevention Coalition partnerships are comprised of dedicated members and partners working together to provide substance use prevention strategies and mental health resources while advocating for policies that support healthy and safe communities. Coalition members are youth, parents, elected officials, health care providers, faith leaders, local businesses, law enforcement, educational leaders, youth-serving organizations, and treatment providers. The seven regional coalitions connect 36 local coalitions across the state.

Funding for the Campaign was made possible by the Partnerships for Success II grant, provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH).

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