

Missoula County Media Release

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Coalition to Host Community Forum on Youth Substance Use

The Missoula Underage Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition invites parents, youth and other concerned community members to “It Takes A Village: A Conversation about Youth and Substance Use,” a unique, interactive community forum from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 11, at the Zootown Arts Community Center.

The public townhall meeting will provide information and answer questions about teen substance use, including alcohol, vaping, cannabis and tobacco. The conversation will focus on how to help youth make healthier decisions around substances and build a stronger, more resilient Missoula County. Attendees will learn valuable tools and resources while problem-solving with other adults.

"As the use of methamphetamine and other drugs continues to be a problem in our community, it's crucial that we take action. One of the best ways to address adult drug abuse is by preventing young people from starting to use drugs and alcohol in the first place," says Leah Fitch-Brody, substance abuse prevention coordinator at the Missoula City-County Health Department. "But prevention isn't always easy and straightforward, and it requires the involvement and efforts of parents and community members alike."

With this event, MUSAP is hoping to empower parents and other adults to start having conversations with young people about substances early and often so that when confronted with the choice to use, they are better equipped to make healthy decisions.

The event will kick off with a free, family-style dinner. All ages are welcome, and those under 18 should be accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Childcare and activities will be available, and student artwork from the Flagship afterschool program will be on display.

In addition to the Missoula Underage Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, the event is co-sponsored by Parenting Montana and Tobacco Free Missoula County.

Those planning to attend should RSVP at www.missoulacounty.us/sap or call Maura Jones, community health specialist, at 406-258-3384.

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