

University of Virginia

“Impaired Driving Prevention/Sober Driver Promotion Programs”

Program Topic: Impaired driving prevention/sober driver promotion

Program Goals/Objectives:

1. Decrease the number of impaired drivers.
2. Increase participation in the sober driver program
3. Increase participation in the Yellow Cab program
4. Increase awareness of the social norm of not driving after drinking

Target Audience: Students who drink at local restaurants/bars on the “Corner”

Program Description:

The Corner area is a strip of shops and restaurants adjacent to the University of Virginia where some students engage in high-risk drinking and may then drive home.

1. Increase participation in the sober driver rewards program. A number of restaurants on the Corner provide free non-alcoholic drinks for students who pledge that they are the sober drivers for their group. From 1999-2001, the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Team (ADAPT) distributed imprinted cups to advertise this service and to provide a healthy “souvenir” of nights when students serve as sober drivers. These cups were provided to all restaurants that provide free non-alcoholic drinks to sober drivers. ADAPT publicized the program by running ads in the student newspaper with a listing of participating restaurants.

2. Increase participation in the Yellow Cab Program. The University of Virginia maintains a relationship with the local Yellow Cab taxi service that allows students to charge cab rides to the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) when they find themselves with no money to get home. Students later receive a bill from ODOS and are given a month to repay the charge. Wallet-sized cards with information about the program are distributed to all first year students. Flyers with information about the Yellow Cab Program are posted at residence halls, academic buildings, buses and at Corner restaurants. In the 1999-2000 academic year, the Yellow Cab program was used 245 times. Participation has increased to 371 rides in the 2002-2003 academic year.

3. Increase awareness of the social norm of NOT driving after drinking. University of Virginia data indicates that most students (85%) did not drive under the influence of alcohol in the past year. ADAPT, the Center for Alcohol and Substance Education (CASE), and the Office of Health Promotion developed a coaster with information about the Yellow Cab program, the sober driver rewards program and the social norm. The coasters were pre-tested using intercept surveys, revised, printed and distributed to local restaurants.

4. *Newspaper PSAs.* ADAPT worked with the student newspaper to provide public service announcements (PSAs) on alcohol abuse and drinking and driving issues. The paper often has empty space to fill, and ADAPT developed a series of PSAs that could be used to fill blank space. Although ADAPT does not have their name on the PSAs, the message of low-risk use of alcohol and the dangers of drinking and driving have appeared several times in the paper.

Promotion and Publicity:

1. Flyers in residence halls, academic buildings, buses and at Corner restaurants
2. Coasters at Corner restaurants
3. PSAs in the student paper

Budget:

We received two grants of \$1,000 from the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Board to pay for 1,550 cups, 7,000 coasters and several newspaper ads.

Collaboration:

1. Office of the Dean of Students - Center for Alcohol and Substance Education
2. Student Health – Office of Health Promotion
3. Local restaurants

Duration: Year round

Location of Event: On campus and in the community

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