

# Operation SafeHB

*A community-based initiative dedicated to reducing underage and excessive drinking among youth and young adults (ages 12-25) in Huntington Beach*



## Problems with Underage and Excessive Drinking

Alcohol is the number one drug used by American youth (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse) and is closely linked with accidental deaths among teenagers (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse). Binge drinking, commonly seen among young adult populations, is linked with increased rates of crime, serious injuries, deaths due to alcohol-involved crashes, unwanted pregnancies, and academic troubles.

## What's happening in Huntington Beach?

In Huntington Beach, 32% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders say they use alcohol and 72% say it's easy to obtain (California Healthy Kids Survey, 2011-12). These students reported most commonly getting alcohol from a party, from friends, or from their own home. In 2010, 57% of fatal automobile collisions in Huntington Beach involved alcohol (Statewide Integrated Traffic Records Systems).

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## What We Do

Operation SafeHB aims to curb the problems related to binge and underage drinking in Huntington Beach through the use of evidence-based strategies. Research shows that people are less likely to engage in risky behaviors like drinking and driving when they are aware of the legal consequences. Accordingly, Operation SafeHB supports local law enforcement in their efforts to arrest intoxicated drivers through DUI checkpoints and DUI-focused operations, and aims to let the community know about these heightened enforcement activities. Additionally, research suggests that local laws which prohibit providing alcohol to minors help to reduce underage drinking. For that reason, the City of Huntington Beach has adopted a Social Host Ordinance, which cites and fines homeowners who provide alcohol to minors. Operation SafeHB supports law enforcement efforts to patrol home parties and works to let community members know about the new law. The initiative also partners with bars and restaurants in downtown Huntington Beach to support them in serving alcohol responsibly.

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## Who We Are

The initiative is led by an Orange County non-profit organization, Community Service Programs (CSP), Inc. – Project PATH (Positive Action Toward Health). It is supported by the Huntington Beach Police Department, the California Department of Health Care Services and local community groups such as the Huntington Beach Downtown Residents Association. Operation SafeHB works to bring these and other organizations together to improve the city's safety and in doing so improve its business climate, preserve its attractiveness for residents, reduce crime, and improve well being for everyone.