



## **National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month Brings Awareness to the Dangers of Driving Under the Influence**

December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention month, which draws attention to accidents and fatalities related to driving under the influence (DUI), also considered one of the deadliest crimes in America, DUI claims thousands of lives every year.

“Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention month is an effective way to bring awareness to what happens when people drive under the influence,” said Donni Kuck, Vice President of Addiction Recovery and Prevention Services at Pathways Community Health. “Driving while under the influence of alcohol has been a topic that has received a fair amount of publicity through the years—and rightly so. Recently, we’ve brought driving while under the influence of drugs into public discourse. Both pose huge threats to public safety. December will enable yet another opportunity to educate people—of all ages—about the consequences of driving impaired.”

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), approximately 30 people die daily in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver. This amounts to one death in the U.S. every 48 minutes. The CDC also reports that alcohol related crashes cost over \$51 billion annually.

### **Drugged Driving**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that drugged driving is just as fatal as alcohol-impaired driving. The organization reports that 63% of the 21,798 drivers killed in 2009 motor vehicle crashes were tested for drugs. Of those, 3,952 tested positive.

### **A look at blood alcohol content (BAC)**

BAC is the amount of alcohol present in an 100 milliliter (mL) volume of blood. For instance, .08 grams of alcohol is written as .08% or .08 BAC. In Missouri, .08 BAC represents an illegal blood alcohol content level. To put BAC levels in proper context, the following information compares how blood alcohol content can affect the body’s physiological and cognitive abilities based on the amount of alcohol consumed:

.02% (about 2 beers)

- Loss of judgment
- Trouble performing two tasks at the same time

.05% (about 3 beers)

- Reduced coordination and ability to track moving objects
- Difficulty steering

.08% (about 4 beers)

- Trouble controlling speed

- Difficulty processing information and reasoning

.10% (about 5 beers)

- Markedly slow reaction time
- Difficulty staying within the driving lane and breaking when needed

.15% (about 7 beers)

- Serious difficulty controlling the car and focusing on operating the vehicle

“The most proactive measure to take is not to drink, use drugs and drive—and whenever possible, help others to do the same,” Kuck said.

If you or a loved one is battling an alcohol or drug addiction, Pathways has 34 treatment centers throughout Missouri. The not-for-profit community mental health provider works collaboratively with community resources, recovery support providers, health care home network and substance abuse experts to provide individualized care. Treatment levels range from early intervention to residential (inpatient) services based on results from the individual’s clinical assessment.

Pathways offers some of the following treatment options:

- *Challenge to Change* – a program that serves adolescents age 12-17 addicted to drugs and alcohol and provides support for their families
- Adult addiction and recovery services (inpatient and outpatient)
- Drug court (Substance Abuse Traffic Offenders Program, SATOP)
- Prevention and education
- 24-hour crisis hotline

### **How to reach us**

To seek help for yourself or for someone you know, call 660.885.8131 or visit [PathwaysOnline.org](http://PathwaysOnline.org) for a location near you. Pathways’ crisis hotlines are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1-888-279-8188 (Johnson, Cass & Lafayette counties) or 1-800-833-3915 (Bates, Benton, Camden, Cedar, Cole, Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Henry, Hickory, Maries, Miller, Laclede, Osage, Pulaski, Phelps, St. Clair and Vernon counties).

### **About Us**

*Compass Health is the parent company of Pathways Community Health and Royal Oaks Hospital, located in Windsor, MO. Together, the non-profit community behavioral healthcare center with 34 offices throughout 36 counties in Missouri and the 41-bed behavioral health hospital, provide a full continuum of evidence-based behavioral health services for children, adolescents and adults. Services include comprehensive psychiatric treatment, addiction recovery, and crisis & prevention services. Pathways has been providing behavioral health services for over 30 years. For the Children Foundation, the primary funding-raising arm of Compass Health, raises money for children who suffer with behavioral issues but*

*have no way to pay for treatment. Funds raised by the Foundation help children receive needed services at Pathways and Royal Oaks.*