

Summary of Outcomes

Montana Community Change Project (MTCCP)

Montana Strategic Prevention Framework – State Incentive Grant

A project lead by the Institute for Public Strategies (January 2008 – June 2011)

Excerpts taken from the final evaluation report - August 2011

Binge Drinking

1. Rates of student binge drinking in MTCCP counties were reduced including rates for American Indian students. Prior to 2010 their rates were significantly higher compared to the state and other non-MTCCP rural counties; by 2010, after a year of full program and strategy implementation, the rates in MTCCP counties had converged with those statewide and in non-MTCCP rural counties.
2. Binge drinking rates by seniors in MTCCP high schools dramatically decreased by 2010 to converge with the rates of high school senior binge drinking for the state and for other rural counties.
3. Significant declines in student binge drinking within MTCCP counties were accompanied by improvements in attitudes, community norms, and law enforcement efforts within MTCCP communities.

Drinking and Driving

1. MTCCP counties were significantly above state and other rural rates of student drinking and driving in 2008. Two years later, by which time MTCCP counties were in full implementation of their environmental strategies, student drinking and driving rates including American Indian student rates had declined significantly in these counties and were essentially equal to other rural counties and slightly above state rates.
2. The pattern of convergence between MTCCP rates, other rural, and the state as a whole also can be seen in student responses on riding in a car with a driver who has been drinking. The good news about riding with someone who has been drinking is the decreased rates reported by Montana students and the convergence of MTCCP county rates with other parts of the state. MTCCP counties reported significantly higher rates of riding in a vehicle with a drinker in 2008 but their reported rates dropped significantly to slightly above other rural counties and the state by the 2010 survey year.

Alcohol-Related Vehicle Crashes

1. During the period covered by this evaluation, 2008 to 2010, Montana's alcohol-related vehicle crashes and fatalities were affected by a number of factors in addition to the environmental strategies and interventions implemented by MTCCP communities. State agency policies and programs and changes in the amount of highway travel by Montanans also affected vehicle crash trends.
2. Statewide the number of alcohol-related vehicle crashes in Montana decreased in 2009 and 2010. MTCCP interventions within selected communities had some impact on these state-level outcomes.
3. Percentage decreases between 2009 and 2010 in alcohol crashes within the MTCCP counties were significantly larger than the percentage decrease in statewide rates of alcohol-related crashes.
4. Percentage decreases in alcohol-related fatalities within MTCCP counties as a group were significantly greater between 2009 and 2010 exceeding the statewide rate of decline.

Community Cultural Norms and Attitudes

1. Perceptions of unfavorable attitudes by parents to their children for drinking increased over the years leading up to and including 2010, and improvement in student perception of their parent's view on their drinking as very wrong. This improvement was especially pronounced in MTCCP counties.
2. MTCCP high school students reported a significant increase in their self-perception of drinking being wrong. This indicator increased 7 percentage points to 40% of students reporting in Montana's Prevention Needs Assessment survey.

3. Through the Media Advocacy work, MTCCP has increased the knowledge about the problems associated with alcohol abuse. However, as seen in the Statewide Perception Survey, Montana voters have still to completely embrace the fact that community norms and attitudes support continued alcohol abuse.

Law Enforcement

1. Statewide there was an increase in DUI arrests between 2006 and 2009.
2. MTCCP counties followed this state trend with significantly greater increases in the number of DUI arrests in 2008 and 2009. The 382 increased number of DUI arrests within MTCCP counties accounted for the major portion of Montana DUI arrests between 2008 and 2009 with MTCCP's increased numbers offsetting decreases in the number of DUI arrests in urban counties.
3. The significant increase in DUI arrests in MTCCP counties coincides with 2009 as the first year of active implementation of environmental strategies implemented at the community level by Montana's SPF SIG.
4. This positive outcome is one of the underlying contributing factors to Montana's downward trend in alcohol-related vehicle crashes.
5. All MTCCP communities but one had concrete examples of increased law enforcement. There was a wide variety of activities that made up these examples; the most frequently mentioned is the increased or initiated compliance checks.

Policy

1. MTCCP successfully impacted policy decisions related to the SPF SIG priorities. The 2011 Montana State Legislature passed eight new alcohol-related laws and a total of 45 specific changes were made in MTCCP counties to address high-risk behavior associated with alcohol.
2. Some communities did not see actual policy decisions during the lifetime of the project but, it would appear, that support for change is growing with the potential for future decisions to address alcohol abuse.

“This report shows the MTCCP efforts have contributed in many ways, not the least of which appears to be that citizens are no longer willing to tolerate the consequences of drunk driving and other negative results of alcohol abuse. Giving a voice to citizens who before were muzzled by the perceived community support for Montana’s hard drinking culture is a significant sustainable achieved result of the MTCCP efforts. These voices will save lives, save money, and contribute to healthier communities.” (Taken directly from Evaluation Report)

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