

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT OF SAFE HARBOR COHASSET COALITION

The mission of the Safe Harbor Cohasset Coalition (SHCC) is to foster a strong and inclusive community that encourages healthy, educated and responsible choices about drug and alcohol use by promoting communication and collaboration designed to meet the unique needs of Cohasset families. The coalition's overall goal is to decrease substance use amongst 12-17 year old youth, resulting in prevented addiction in adulthood. 2020 marked the third full year of the Drug Free Communities (DFC) Federal funding grant. This is a 5-year grant awarded to the Town of Cohasset to fund the previous, current, and new efforts put forth by Safe Harbor Cohasset Coalition.

**There are two required goals of the DFC Grant, each goal broken down into objectives. Progress toward these goals in 2020 is noted below:**

Goal 1: Increase and strengthen community collaboration

- Maintained 18 Community Partners/ Sponsors
- Increased Coalition Membership of 12-17-year-olds from 32 to 50
  - Launched Year 3 of the Youth Ambassador Program
    - 4 Youth Leaders, 2 Youth Leaders-in-Training
    - 2 Statewide Leaders on the 84 Leadership Team
    - Engaged CHS National Honor Society
    - Lenny's Hideaway, Seabird Coffee, Atlantic Bagel, South Shore Athletic Club, & Treetop Adventures continue to provide incentive program to registered youth ambassadors
- Continued Coalition Membership Training for member satisfaction
  - CADCA Virtual Mid-Year Training July 2020
    - 4 Youth Members, 2 Adult Members
  - Nigel Wrangham-Youth Leadership Training Aug 2020

Goal 2: Reduce youth substance use (*Percentages compared between 2017 and 2019 Cohasset Wellness Survey data. Surveys administered to grades 6-12*).

- 30-day use of alcohol by teens 14-17 from 33% to 29%
- 30-day marijuana use by teens 14-17 from 20% to 19%
- 30-day use of non-personally prescribed drugs by teens 14-17 from 3% to 2%

National evaluations show that communities that work together in a Coalition can substantially lower youth rates of substance use. Based on our evaluation efforts, SHCC has already helped make a difference in lowering alcohol and drug use among Cohasset youth. SHCC enjoys robust community-wide support, especially from our public health and other town departments, youth and parents, political leaders, the public schools, police and fire departments, the library, health care, faith and business organizations, first responders, and our local media.

The Coalition has one paid fulltime staff and one paid part time staff, employed to strengthen collaborative relationships, and implement programming, town wide. The coalition is led by the 10-member Steering Committee: Annemarie Whilton (Chair), Karen Bailey-Francois (Treasurer), Karyn Ellinger (Secretary), Kristen Esson, Ron Menard, Patrick Sullivan, Kevin McCarthy, Officer Greg Taylor, Michael Duggan, and Margaret Curley. 12 Sector Representatives, 50 Youth Ambassadors, and over 40 volunteers make-up the foundation of the overall coalition.

**Community Reach Numbers:**

- 93 Active Coalition Members
- 7,198 SHCC Website visits
- 840 Subscribers to the SHCC bi-weekly newsletter
- 83,544 reaches via SHCC Facebook page
- 210 lbs of prescription medication were returned at the Cohasset Police kiosk on October 2020 Prescription Drug Takeback Day

**Programs, meetings, and events over the 12-month period include, but are not limited to, below:**

Prior to March, the coalition was able to host 1 in-person coalition meeting, 8 in-person youth ambassador meetings, 2 in-person Ground Level Cafes, 2 in-person Parent Coffee Hours, and a Screenagers viewing in partnership with PSO. Since March, the coalition has experienced many successes despite COVID-19 limitations. We continued to hold open coalition meetings, virtually, on a bi-monthly basis and steering committee meetings on the alternative months. Though we have had to adjust and omit strategies from our initial action plan, we have successfully increased capacity, raised awareness, increased patrol in high-risk underage drinking areas, addressed IDing issues in the peak of COVID, performed and analyzed key informant interviews, collected coalition member satisfaction data, continued education partnerships with the Freshman Wellness classes, and kept communication strong amongst sectors.

The youth coalition, also known as Youth Ambassadors, has helped meet coalition goals immensely. Youth Ambassadors took the stage in January at the Osgood school to present Samantha Skunk: Medicine Safety to grades Pre-K through 2. Core learning points of this presentation were: Someone else's medicine might be bad for you, never give yourself medicine, if you find medicine – tell an adult. The Youth Ambassadors continued to meet weekly, virtually, from 3/17-6/2 and 9/17-present, increased from 26 to 50 members from grades 6-12 and are facilitated by 6 youth leaders. They had two main focuses in the Spring: to prevent underage substance use during COVID and to provide resources for their peers if they were struggling mentally or otherwise. They began with Social Distancing and Mental Health campaigns and PSAs, that provided healthy coping skills and involved painting encouraging words on rocks that were left at Aaron River Reservoir. The Aaron River Reservoir is a hot spot for underage substance use and other risky behavior and is an area that the group hopes to tackle with a substance-related litter clean up and community presentations. They completed other various trainings and campaigns in the Spring regarding the new No Menthol in

Massachusetts law that went into effect June 1<sup>st</sup> and vaping cessation tips. In the Fall, they focused on themed months that will all lead up to National Prevention Week in May 2021. This involved completing a community assessment, allowing the youth to identify the hot spots and the top issues they wanted to address. October focused on Mental Health, which was the top issue the students identified among their peers. They kicked off every meeting in October with an Our Minds Matter activity, created/disseminated a sticker for all K-12 students with the Interface Referral Service information, and focused on planning/implementing the community-wide pumpkin event to increase community connectedness during an isolating time. They wanted to ensure that they also included prevention resources within this event. November/December focused on alcohol use, the next top issue they identified. They developed a sticker and planned a sticker shock prior to Thanksgiving, presented to the girl and boy scouts on alcohol prevention, created a red-flag resource for parents with college students coming home that included signs to look for if their child seems to need intervention with their drinking, and are working on an athlete committed code of conduct with the Athletic Director.

Many additional and notable coalition accomplishments occurred during this year, including the ability to offer successful drug-free alternative events for youth and families and the motivation that stemmed from the coalition leadership to host these events for the community. These events include: Cars Under the Stars, Ground Level Café at Sandy Beach, and the Community-Wide Pumpkin Contest. The success of these events came from the strong collaboration across many town sectors with a like-minded mission to prevent risky behavior amongst the youth. Other accomplishments include the ability to host the annual International Overdose Awareness Vigil in-person, hosting virtual parent and caregiver trainings, hosting a Narcan Training with free Narcan, performing in-person sticker shocks, launching a Safe Homes Pledge Campaign, and working towards modifying a bylaw to address underage alcohol use. Furthermore, with so many at home, increased liquor sales were seen community-wide, and youth were home with more free time. We found it pertinent to address a way to limit liquor access in the home and partnered with Curtis Liquors, providing free bottle locks with informational printouts as to why it is important for parents to lock up their bottles at home. Additionally, we partnered with the Town to provide DeTerra pouches during April and October Drug Take Back Days to any resident that would like to dispose of medication at home. Lastly, the data subcommittee developed various infographics using the data collected from both the youth and parent surveys to reach a broader audience with the facts and helpful tips to prevention. Most notable, however, is the communication and connectedness we have been able to maintain and strengthen. As mentioned, we have continued to hold coalition meetings, virtually, knowing that this work must continue in a time such as this. During these meetings of brainstorming, we have been able to make connections and partnerships with organizations that we have not had at the table previously.

Although positive impacts have been made, substance use and mental health issues continue to affect the Cohasset community. Throughout 2020 and beyond, Safe Harbor Cohasset Coalition remains committed to working toward its vision of Cohasset to be a healthy, substance-free environment for its youth by providing quality services, programs, and activities to the Cohasset community. We continually encourage input, suggestions for improvement, and town-wide

participation. Data to show any programmatic impact is collected every two years via the Cohasset Wellness Survey in collaboration with Cohasset Public Schools. The most recent collection occurred in April 2019 for High School and May 2019 for Middle School. For additional information and resources, please visit [www.safeharborcohasset.org](http://www.safeharborcohasset.org).

Respectfully submitted,  
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Safe Harbor Cohasset Coalition