

# asac action

February 2009

## Area Substance Abuse Council

### Board of Directors

Nicole Pizzini  
President

Ann Stoner  
Vice President

Roseanne Matuszek  
Secretary

Dan Allison  
Treasurer

### BOARD MEMBERS

Lu Barron  
Joan Craig  
Don Davis  
Keith Dirks  
Norman Griser  
Thomas Levi  
James Randall  
Al Rathje  
Dave Romont  
Jason Sanders  
Mark Zaiger

John Garringer  
Executive Director



Visit our web site at  
[www.asac.us](http://www.asac.us)

## Binge Drinking and Heart Disease

By Erin Gavin, Prevention Specialist

Studies show that having a drink a day can lead to people having better health and living longer than those who abstain. Moderate drinkers are generally less likely to have hypertension, peripheral artery disease, Alzheimer's disease or even the common cold. In addition to these illnesses, modern research shows a strong consistent relationship between moderate alcohol consumption and a reduction in cardiovascular disease in general and coronary artery disease in particular, and, with this being February, heart health awareness is on many people's minds.

**But what is "moderation"?** Medical researchers generally describe moderation as one drink for a woman and two drinks for a man per day. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, one drink is defined as 1.5 oz. of hard liquor, 5 oz. of wine, and 12 oz. of beer.

**Although drinking in moderation has been shown to be healthy, binge drinking has the opposite effect on your health, especially cardiovascular health.** Drinking too much alcohol can lead to a rise in heart issues. Men with heavy drinking habits are found to be most likely to have high blood pressure and stiffening of the arteries and heart muscle. Women in the same range, on the other hand, were most likely to have enlarged hearts. People with enlarged hearts are five to six times more likely to have a heart attack. Once the heart becomes enlarged, indicating it is being over worked; it is very difficult to bring it back to normal size (Heartzine, 2008). More specifically, though, binge drinking can lead to Atherosclerosis, the buildup of fats in and on your artery walls (plaques), which can restrict blood flow. These plaques can also burst, causing a blood clot. Although atherosclerosis is often considered a heart problem, it can affect arteries anywhere in your body.

**Binge drinking, according to the CDC, is five or more drinks for a male, four or more drinks for a female, in roughly a two hour period.** Alcoholic beverages contain Ethanol, which is mostly converted into Acetaldehyde once someone has been drinking at binge levels for an extended period of time. Current studies are clarifying for the first time that binge levels of Acetaldehyde cause an important type of immune cell, the monocyte, to become better able to stick to blood vessel walls, an important step in initiating Atherosclerosis disease. Binge drinking increases the amounts of monocyte cells in the body by 700 percent (Science Daily, 2008).

While many studies have found that moderate drinking improves heart health, heavy drinking counteracts these effects and causes serious harm. Unfortunately, there really can be too much of a good thing.

## NIDA Addiction Research News

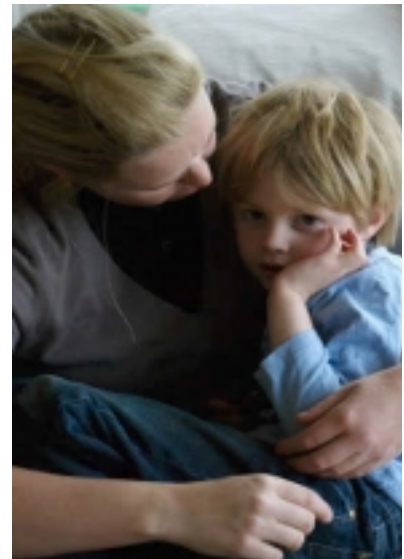
### First-Year College Students Show High Rate of Cannabis Use Disorders

In the first study to measure the prevalence of cannabis use disorders (CUD) among young adults attending college, researchers funded by NIDA found that in a group of students who had used cannabis 5 or more times in the past year, 1 in 10 met the clinical Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)-IV definition for cannabis dependence, and 14.5 percent met the definition for cannabis abuse. The researchers screened 3,401 first-year college students and recruited 1,253 to participate in the study. Interviewers asked all participants about their use of 10 illicit substances. Students who had used cannabis 5 or more times in the past year (474 participants) were considered at risk for CUD and were asked to answer questions about problems they may have encountered in the past year because of their cannabis use. Of these students, 24.3 percent regularly put themselves in physical danger when under the influence, and 10.6 percent continued to use despite problems with family or friends. In addition, 40.1 percent reported concentration problems, and 13.9 percent reported missing class. In addition to the students who met the criteria for CUD, 12.6 percent met only one or two of the DSM-IV criteria for dependence (but not abuse) and were classified as diagnostic orphans, “suggesting that some cannabis-using college students might be at risk for cannabis-related problems even if they do not appear to be heavy users,” explain the authors. “The prevalence of CUD and other cannabis-related problems are not trivial, and if replicated, these findings highlight the need for improved screening and early intervention for drug-related problems among first-year college students,” they conclude.

Caldeira KM, Arria AM, O’Grady KE, Vincent KB, Wish ED. The occurrence of cannabis use disorders and other cannabis-related problems among first-year college students. *Addict Behav.* 2008;33(3):397–411.

### Flood of 2008: Not “So Over”

Natural disasters set off a series of stressful changes in the lives of young children which can ultimately derail their healthy growth and development—physically, cognitively, and emotionally. A report titled *Flood of 2008 Not “So Over” The effects of the 2008 Flood on the healthy development of young children in Linn County, Iowa* was written on behalf of flood-affected families with young children in Linn County and the community organizations that serve them. The intent of the report is to debunk “the flood is so over” mentality and to focus on the needs of young children affected by the flood. Flood recovery is a long-term process. Like early childhood needs, if disaster problems are addressed earlier rather than later, there is greater return on investment and greater likelihood for success. Heart of Iowa’s child care was one of fourteen licensed child care centers damaged in the June flood. In addition, 35 state-registered child care homes were closed due to major flood damage. To read the report please go to [www.fivegiantsteps.org](http://www.fivegiantsteps.org).



five giant steps is an early childhood initiative in Linn County and Idea #14 of the Cedar Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation’s Fifteen in 5 Community Planning Process.

## National Children of Alcoholics Week

**February 8–14, 2009**

National Children of Alcoholics Week is an annual, national observance that recognizes the damaging effects of alcoholism on children. Often, the people hurt most by alcohol abuse don't even drink. They are the children of alcoholics. The 2009 campaign theme is "A Celebration of Hope and Healing."

For more information go to the National Association for children of Alcoholics (NACoA) web site at [www.nacoa.org](http://www.nacoa.org). The mission of NACoA is to educate the public and raise awareness about the hardships suffered by children living in households with one or more parents who drink. There is also a web site for Children of Alcoholics (COA) Teens where teens talk about the reality of living with alcoholic parents. Visit this powerful new blog site at [www.shoutinginside.com](http://www.shoutinginside.com).



## Linn County Partnership on Substance Abuse

The Linn County Partnership on Substance Abuse (LCPSA) is a community coalition that was formed in response to substance abuse/use being consistently rated as one of the primary concerns of Linn County, Iowa residents in community needs assessments. In 2006, the LCPSA was awarded a Drug-Free Communities grant that provided resources needed to serve as a catalyst for citizen participation in local drug prevention efforts.

LCPSA strives to always have diverse representation, including (but not limited to): youth, parents, civic organizations, youth-serving organizations, faith community, law enforcement, elected officials, business professionals, education, health care, media and substance-abuse experts. Anyone, however, is invited to join the coalition to develop, implement and monitor strategies that will help make Linn County become a safe, healthy and drug-free community. Together, sharing ideas for a stronger community, we can reduce and prevent substance abuse among youth and overtime adults, by creating a community that values healthy youth development, community involvement and respect for all individuals regardless of their circumstance.

Linn County Partnership on Substance Abuse monthly meetings are open to the public. For more information contact Stephanie Neff, Executive Director of Healthy Linn Care Network at (319) 369-8600 or [Stephanie@HealthyLinn.org](mailto:Stephanie@HealthyLinn.org).

### **Linn County Partnership on Substance Abuse Mission Statement:**

**To provide a unified community effort for sharing resources, increasing awareness of substance abuse through education, building relationships, and advocating for people affected by substance abuse.**