

Paterson Coalition Against Substance Abuse

Who we are

Vision & Mission

- ◆ P-CASA's vision is to empower the community to build a safe, healthy, and drug-free Paterson.
- ◆ P-CASA's mission is to foster collaboration among key community sectors in an effort to increase the capacity for environmentally-based substance abuse prevention activities throughout Paterson's 1st Ward, with the ultimate goal of reducing substance use among Paterson's youth.

What we do

Community Engagement

- ◆ Capacity Building
- ◆ Community Forums / Town Hall Meetings / Health Fairs
- ◆ Improving Community Knowledge & Awareness

Environmental Strategies

- ◆ "Above the Influence" and "Talk: They Hear You" Social Marketing & Social Norms Campaigns
- ◆ Advocating for Local Ordinance Change
- ◆ Policy Analysis & Development

Data Collection & Research

- ◆ Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Analysis
- ◆ Needs Assessment Activities (e.g., Youth Survey, Information Sessions, and Focus Group Interviews)
- ◆ Dissemination of Research Findings to Community Partners



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With federal support from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), the Paterson Coalition Against Substance Abuse (P-CASA) has developed the infrastructure of an anti-drug coalition targeting at-risk racial and ethnic minority adolescents from the ages of 12 to 17 in Paterson's 1st Ward. As a collaborative effort between Montclair State University and a diverse group of community stakeholders, the proposed initiative is focused on implementing evidence-based environmental prevention strategies to meet the goals of the Drug Free Communities (DFC) Grant Program, which are to: 1) increase community collaboration and 2) reduce substance use among youth aged 12-17.

Paterson is the third largest city in New Jersey and has one of the highest rates in the state for both substance abuse and drug-related crime. Structural barriers, such as poverty and population density, have placed this economically disadvantaged community at heightened risk for many social problems. Focus-group interviews conducted with key community stakeholders conveyed that the scarcity of prevention

resources and gaps in service delivery have contributed to the social problems experienced by Paterson youth. The Coalition works closely with various community sectors (e.g., youth, parents, civic groups, faith-based organizations, schools, social service agencies, law enforcement, and media outlets) in its effort to change social norms that promote alcohol and drug use (through social marketing/social norms campaigns), reduce youth access to alcohol and tobacco products, and support policies that will improve the regulation and oversight of alcohol and tobacco-selling establishments (through advocating for local ordinance change).

Further, our intensive planning efforts, community outreach, and implementation strategies will help facilitate sustainability activities that contribute to the permanent expansion of environmental prevention strategies throughout Paterson's 1st Ward. In our ongoing work to mitigate the adverse social and health consequences associated with youth substance use, our ultimate goal is for P-CASA to serve as a model prevention initiative for both the city of Paterson and the State of New Jersey.

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