

Press Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Bilingual Presentation-Communities Talk to Prevent Alcohol and Other Drug Misuse

According to needs assessments, Alcohol remains the substance of choice for Glen Cove youth ages 10-18 followed by vaping and marijuana use. A bilingual presentation conducted by Mr. Lionel Pacheco MHC-LP of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (LICADD) educated parents about new drug trends and the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs on November 12th at Iglesia Ciudad De Refugio. The presentation was funded by SAFE and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

According to Mr. Pacheco, in 2022, an estimated 22 teens (ages 10-14) in the United States died each week from fatal drug overdoses (mostly due to fentanyl in counterfeit pills). According to the CDC, in 2023, Alcohol remains the most widely consumed substance among young people. Nearly half of high school seniors consumed alcohol at some point during the past year. Alcohol use damages almost every system in your body. It alters brain development (memory, learning, impulsiveness) and increases risky behaviors (sexual activity, driving while under the influence). People who start drinking under the age of 15 are more likely to develop an Alcohol Use Disorder than compared to peers who begin to drink at the age of 21.

Mr. Pacheco stated that 2023 CDC data reported Marijuana is the second most consumed substance among young people. In the United States, an estimated 29% of high school seniors used marijuana in the past year. 6.5% reported daily use in the past month. Marijuana use increases with age. An estimated 18% of 10th graders used Marijuana at some point in the past year compared to 8% of 8th graders. Marijuana use effects juvenile brain development in terms of memory, concentration, motor/impulse control and decision making. It may cause or exacerbate underlying mental health issues such as anxiety and depression and is 2-4 times greater than adolescents who do not use Marijuana. Use before the age of 18 can lead to Cannabis Use Disorder later in life.

An estimated 1 in 10 high school students reported using an e-cigarette (vape) in the past month. It is estimated that more than 1 in 4 middle and high school students reported current daily e-cigarette use. According to the NYS Department of Health, an estimated 1 in 5 High School students reported using an e-cigarette in 2022. E-cigarettes and nicotine use causes pulmonary diseases (popcorn lung), effects memory and concentration and increases the risk of Marijuana use.

Youth often use substances to alleviate stress with school, friends, family or out of mere curiosity. The risk of developing a Substance Use Disorder varies from individual to individual in terms of recreational use, coping skills, or self-medication.

Mr. Pacheco discussed how parents can identify the warning signs of alcohol and substance use: Does your child have mood swings, poor grades, new friends or no friends, truancy, isolation from the family. Mr. Pacheco advised parents to avoid lecturing as this can be discouraging and often ineffective. He urged parents to be curious and listen actively and to use open-ended questions to explore their child's perspectives on substances. Use open-ended questions to explore young people's perspectives on substances. Be curious and listen actively. Lastly, conversations should happen on a regular basis not just when situations or concerns arise.

After the presentation, Coalition Parent Committee members Brenda Lopez and Laurent Caballero, welcomed the audience, a blend of concerned parents, SAFE Coalition members and professionals from other organizations. Ms. Lopez thanked Mr. Pacheco for his expertise. "Knowing the warning signs of youth use and how to have the conversation will help parents make a difference".

The SAFE, Inc agency is located in Glen Cove and can be reached at 516-676-2008.

To learn more about LICADD please visit <https://www.licadd.org>. If you or a loved one is suffering with an Alcohol or Substance Use Disorder please contact the LICADD hotline for help at 1-631-979-1700.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is conducting an awareness camp alcohol and substance use awareness campaign entitled "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE" to educate and update parents and youth about its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website at www.safeglencove.org.