

# North Country Prevention Newsletter



**Date:** April 2009

## North Country Prevention Newsletter

Welcome to another edition of the North Country Prevention Newsletter. This is a monthly electronic communication to and for the North Country Prevention Coalitions including the Juvenile Justice Project, Northern Grafton County Coalition and Task Force, Coos County Coalition, North Country Prevention Network, Woodsville Area Stakeholders and the Coos County Family Support Project, community partners, program participants, the community and interested stakeholders and is a project of North Country Health Consortium's Community Substance Abuse Prevention Program.

We invite items for the newsletter from our readers that relate to prevention, youth and parent programs, new developments, training and opportunities. The deadline for submissions to this monthly newsletter is the 26<sup>th</sup> of each month. Send items to [yherres@nchcnh.org](mailto:yherres@nchcnh.org).

To remove your name from this email list hit reply and type "remove from list" in the subject box.



## April is Alcohol Awareness Month

April is "Alcohol Awareness Month." In 1987, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence began promoting awareness that alcoholism is a disease and not a moral weakness. It is treatable. Since then they have campaigned to reach the American public with information about alcoholism.

Alcoholics can and do recover. In support of Alcohol Awareness Month, the Council has implemented a help line, available 24 hours a day at 1-800-NCA-CALL.

Over the past 11 years, the focus of Awareness Month has been on underage drinking, the dangers of alcohol use and abuse for youth. However, alcohol abuse is prevalent within all age groups in the United States. People who abuse alcohol can be:

- College students who binge drink at local bars;

- Pregnant women who drink and put their babies at risk for fetal alcohol syndrome;
- Professionals who drink after a long day of work; and
- Senior citizens who drink out of loneliness.

For every alcohol dependent person at least 9 others are affected. Early use of alcohol can lead to a lifelong problem. Youth who drink alcohol before the age of 13 are four times more likely to become alcohol dependent. The adolescent brain is still changing and growing and alcohol alters the brain permanently.

The North Country has one of the highest rates of binge drinking amongst high school youth in the state. According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey 32.3% of students in the North Country admitted to

binge drinking, where the state average was only 28.4%.

Postponing alcohol use until the minimum legal drinking age of 21 has been proven to keep youth healthy. Drinking harms learning, judgment and memory more in youth than it does in adults. The adolescent brain is more sensitive to the “reward chemicals” that are released by alcohol. Because alcohol impairs judgment, about 1,000 traffic fatalities a year have been prevented since the drinking age was raised to 21.

The North Country is seeing a reduction in youth alcohol abuse overall, but rates of lifetime use, current use, and binge use of alcohol among North Country students are still higher than state and national averages.

In 2005, over half of Coos youth (52.2%) reported they drank alcohol on one or more days during the past 30 days. In 2007, the rate of current drinking among youth went down 6.1% to 46.1%. For the same period, the rates of current drinking reported by students *went up* marginally in NH and in the US.

Binge drinking, defined as 5 or more drinks in a row, accounts for 90% of all alcohol consumed by young people. This decreased for youth in the North Country by 3.3% from 2005 to 2007, but is still above the NH average in 2007.

A recent survey taken by parents, youth, service providers and law enforcement, conducted by the North

Country Coalitions, found that youth drinking is considered a ‘rite of passage’ by many adults, even those who strongly disapprove of youth drinking. Of 184 parents surveyed in Coos and Grafton Counties, 27% agreed that youth drinking is part of growing up. Most youth and adults surveyed believed that underage drinking was more common than data indicates, contributing to a social norm that encourages youth to experiment with alcohol.

They also felt that alcohol is very easy for minors to get. Siblings and friends over 21 are the most commonly cited sources of alcohol for youth as indicated by youth themselves.

It’s crucial that parents talk to their children about alcohol. In 2007, 80.1% of North Country students reported that their parents thought it was wrong or very wrong for someone their age to drink regularly which increased from 74% in 2005. Parental disapproval has a positive effect in preventing young people from experimenting with alcohol.

The North Country Coalitions will be conducting a month long campaign promoting Project Monitor Anonymous Tip Line, Project Monitor SafeHomes Pledges, Buyer Beware ads, and Parents Who Host Lose the Most. For more information, contact Valerie Herres 837-2519 or email her at [vherres@nchcnh.org](mailto:vherres@nchcnh.org).



## **Prescription Drug Abuse**

### **DEA Agent Lisa Remick Presented Information on Prescription Drug Abuse to 37 North Country Members on March 23<sup>rd</sup> in Gorham.**

Lisa Remick, Special Agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration traveled north to Gorham on March 23<sup>rd</sup> to give a presentation on Prescription Drug Abuse to

37 people, including members of the Juvenile Justice Project and community residents.

Lisa centered the rising abuse in our social attitudes of using increasing numbers of prescription medications. Unfortunately, young people who would never think to try an illegal substance have the mistaken notion that prescription drugs are safer.

Access to such drugs is easy, not only in our homes, but on the internet. Mrs. Remick noted that there are only 16 legally authorized pharmacy websites (authorized by VIPPS) but well over 350 sites (which change from day to day) willing to send out prescriptions, including schedules 2 to 4 drugs.

Commonly abused medications include pain relievers, stimulants, and anti-depressants. She also indicated that many over the counter medications are abused. Young people throughout the country are holding “skittles” parties where they find, steal, save or otherwise obtain medications to bring to parties and then toss them into a large bowl for everyone to “partake” of them not knowing what they are ingesting and risking life and limb.

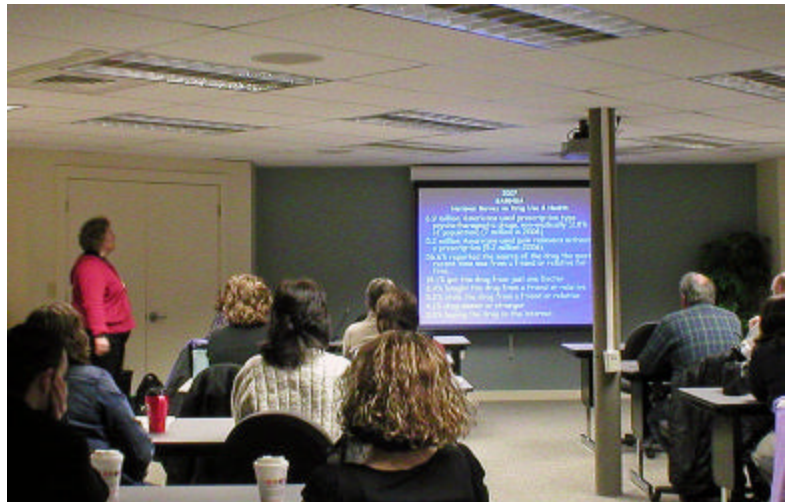
Special Agent Remick stated that the Attorney General will be establishing a Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force in the next few months that will include law

enforcement, pharmacists, educators and others. The Task Force will then hold Forums throughout the state to assess the scope of the problem.

Unfortunately, there is no one study that provides NH residents with a clear picture of the number of youth abusing prescription drugs, but there will be by next year. Lisa referred to additional questions which will be added to the bi-annual Centers for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Survey which gives policy makers, law enforcement, and program planners a “snapshot” of what current drug trends exist and the extent of use.

Several activities that local communities can do at this point are to establish “take back” medication sites so that old and unused prescriptions can be disposed of easily. In addition, coalitions throughout the state are conducting educational awareness campaigns to alert citizens of the dangers of prescription drug abuse.

For more information on Prescription Drug Abuse, materials or information, contact Valerie Herres at 837-2519 or [vherres@nchnh.org](mailto:vherres@nchnh.org).



DEA Special Agent Lisa Remick receives certificate of appreciation and presents information to the group. for talk to group.

## “Sustainability During Hard Economic Times” Workshop Planned for April 16<sup>th</sup>.



The Community Substance Abuse Prevention Coalitions have scheduled a “Sustainability During Hard Economic Times” Workshop for Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup> at UNH Cooperative Extension in Lancaster from 9:30 to 11:30 am. The workshop will focus on the 4 elements of a well thought out plan to sustain a program

or project when there is a downturn in the economy. Participants will learn the four strategies for obtaining resources and how to design an action plan to succeed. Flyers will be sent out shortly. RSVP’s will be required. Contact Valerie Herres at 8387-2519 or at [vherres@nchcnh.org](mailto:vherres@nchcnh.org) for more information.

### From the SAMHSA Weekly News Digest:

#### New Report Reveals Treatment Admissions for Prescription Pain Killers are on the Rise (3/17/2009)

Treatment admissions for prescription pain killer misuse has risen dramatically over the past decade – from constituting 1 percent of all admissions in 1997 to now

representing 5 percent, according to a report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).



### Youth Grants Awarded by North Country Substance Abuse Prevention Coalitions

Martha McLeod, Executive Director of North Country Health Consortium, is pleased to announce that thirteen grants of \$1000 each have been awarded to various youth groups in the region by North Country Substance Abuse Prevention Coalitions, consisting of the Coos County Coalition, Northern Grafton County Coalition and the North Country Network.

The grants are part of the Coalition’s Youth Leadership Project (YLP). The YLP also sponsors middle school youth to participate in Leaders in Prevention Trainings by the NH Teen Institute. The youth grants have been made possible through funding sources awarded to the North Country Health Consortium by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration (SAMHSA) Drug Free Communities Support Program and the STOP Act along with the NH Strategic Planning Framework – State Incentive Program.

McLeod stated that “The thirteen groups are from all areas of the North Country and are made up of teens committed to preventing substance abuse among their peers using environmental strategies. Each team of youth submitted a grant proposal and plan of action for its project. Prevention activities will continue through the middle of June.”

The Colebrook Academy S.A.D.D. will address the issue of underage drinking. Pat Allen, S.A.D.D. Chapter Facilitator, will be working with the S.A.D.D. group on Project Monitor Anonymous Tip Line and Project Monitor SafeHomes Pledge Campaigns. The group is planning to hold a school, parent, and student event and conduct an informational mailing to parents.

In Stratford, Robin Ramsdell will be working with the school’s Students Helping Students Make Good Choices Group (SHSMGC), consisting of members of the Student Council, National Honor Society, the Stratford Improvisational Players, and the Youth Leaders in Prevention Merrowvista group. The SHSMGC group will be using the Parents Who Host Lose the Most and Project Monitor SafeHomes Pledge Campaign, along with promoting the Project Monitor Anonymous Tip Line. The group is planning on holding a community celebration, consisting of a dinner and various informational activities, including a skit by the Stratford Players.

Groveton’s Leaders in Prevention Group (GLIP), with facilitator Brian Hardy, will be targeting prescription drug abuse and plans to record public service announcements. GLIP will be partnering with the Northumberland Police Department to develop a “drop off” location in order to “Dump the Pills.” Materials, such as posters and brochures, will be

distributed to inform the community of this growing drug trend.

The Androscoggin Valley 4-H Horse Club, facilitated by Ann Morin, was awarded two grants to perform environmental strategies. One project will address prescription drug abuse. The group will be partnering with Androscoggin Valley Hospital to establish a prescription drug disposal program and will record a YouTube video and radio spot ads to promote the disposal program and to educate the community on the growing issue. The AV Horse Club’s second project addresses tobacco prevention. The club will record radio ads, a video, make a website, conduct various Kick Butts Day activities in schools, including performing store surveys on tobacco product placement and signage.

Janet Steinert will facilitate the Whitefield Wilderness Explorers Group, who will conduct a tobacco prevention project. This project includes information for parents, a hike up Mt. Washington carrying a “Live Tobacco Free or Die” banner signed by students pledging to live tobacco free. The group will also promote prevention in the Whitefield School.

The Littleton High School Recreation and Resiliency Class, facilitated by Lauren Hepburn, will be addressing prescription drug abuse as well. The group will be holding a “Spring Cleaning Week”, “8 is Enough” school assembly, setting up a “take back” drop off point for prescription drugs, and will develop a presentation.

The Daisy Bronson and Lakeway Schools Group in Littleton, led by Arlene Soule, will be conducting a tobacco prevention project by recording radio spot ads and educating school youth on the impact of tobacco use.

The North Country Boys and Girls Club in Northern Grafton County, led by Mike Ferrant, will be targeting underage drinking. The group will promote the “Buyer Beware” campaign by partnering with local businesses and the Littleton Police

Department. They will also be working with Lyndon State College to produce ads.

In Bethlehem, Profile School's Friends of Rachel Club and advisor Paula Frank will be targeting underage drinking. They will be implementing a social norms campaign addressing alcohol prevention messages and will conduct community and school educational campaigns.

The Woodsville High School S.A.D.D Group, with Wayne Dickey and Erika Tierney, will be focusing on underage drinking prevention. The group will be developing materials for parents, and will conduct community and school campaigns.

ADAPT in the Lincoln Area was awarded two grants. Facilitator for both projects is Sean O'Brien. The Lincoln Leaders in Prevention Group will use results from a Teen Assessment Survey to develop a social norms campaign and conduct a "For Youth by Youth" clothes line. They will also conduct a media awareness school and community campaign. The Lincoln Inspire Group will

also be addressing underage drinking by recording radio ads, producing a Public Service Announcement, and additional materials for the community.

North Country Health Consortium is a network of health and human service providers whose mission is "to lead innovative collaboration to improve the health status in the region." The Substance Abuse Prevention Coalitions have been working together on the Youth Leadership Project and have plans to conduct the youth grant project annually. Youth groups will come together in the fall to celebrate their accomplishments and report their progress to the community.

For more information on North Country Health Consortium's Substance Abuse Prevention Coalitions or the Youth Leadership Project and Grant Award Program, contact Valerie Herres, Director of the Community Substance Abuse Prevention Program at the Consortium at 837-2519 or by emailing [vherres@nchcnh.org](mailto:vherres@nchcnh.org).

## **REDUX: FINDYOUTHINFO.GOV—A NEW WEB SITE DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING YOUTH PROGRAMS**

The Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs is pleased to announce the launch of [FindYouthInfo.gov](http://FindYouthInfo.gov), a collaborative effort of 12 Federal departments and agencies developed out of a shared goal of strengthening community resources to support our Nation's youth.

This site provides targeted information to help youth-serving organizations and community partnerships plan and implement effective youth programs.

[FindYouthInfo.gov](http://FindYouthInfo.gov) offers customized strategies and practical resources designed to help communities:

- Build and sustain effective community partnerships

- Generate maps of community resources
- Develop evidence-based youth programs addressing risk and protective factors
- Access up to date information on Federal programs, funding opportunities and youth-related issues

This Web site features many Federally-developed interactive tools to help users build quality partnerships within their communities and help America's youth reach their full potential. Online tools include social bookmarking, a calendar of events, news feeds, mapping tools, searchable youth program database, and much more.

[FindYouthInfo.gov](http://FindYouthInfo.gov) will be continually

updated with new features and enhancements. Comments and suggestions on the site are appreciated, and can be submitted through the online Feedback Form. Visitor feedback will be used to enhance the Web site in the coming months.

Visit [FindYouthInfo.gov](http://FindYouthInfo.gov) today to learn about all its great features, and sign up for e-blasts to stay abreast of the latest youth-related news and new site features.

Finally, help spread the word about [FindYouthInfo.gov](http://FindYouthInfo.gov) by forwarding the news to your friends and colleagues.

## **Stratford Middle School Get a Sobering Lesson in Alcohol Use March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

Middle school students at Stratford Public School in North Stratford, New Hampshire have recently had a “*Reach Out Now* National Teach-In” to learn about the dangers of underage alcohol use when Diana Gibbs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug (ATOD) Prevention Coordinator for the North Country Health Consortium and Stratford High School class of 2004 Valedictorian, visited their school to participate in a *Reach Out Now* Teach-In. The *Reach Out Now* National Teach-In is a nationwide program sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to help prevent underage drinking.

“Most fifth and sixth graders in our community are not using alcohol, but it is a decision many face,” explains Valerie Herres. “Alcohol use is reported by 41 percent of eighth graders. Far too many children are beginning to drink at a dangerously early age. This *Reach Out Now* Teach-In is an important step in helping our kids get a clear and consistent message at home and at school that

**NOTE:** The material provided in this OSDFS PREVENTION NEWS BULLETIN is for informational purposes only. The opinions expressed herein may not always reflect the views of the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools or the US Department of Education, nor do they imply an endorsement. We hope that you find this information to be useful

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<http://www.ed.gov/news/newsletters/listserve/preventioned.html>

underage drinking is dangerous, illegal, and unacceptable.”

Underage drinking burdened NH citizens with costs around \$180 million in 2005. These costs include medical care, work-loss, pain and suffering associated with the many problems resulting from underage drinking. That equals \$1,397 per youth. Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times as likely to develop alcohol dependence. Early onset of alcohol use, low perception by youth of the risks of drinking alcohol, and low parent and other adult disapproval of alcohol use are all contributing factors to the problem.

In the North Country, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 2007, which is an instrument used to survey high school students on their engagement in risky behaviors, such as alcohol and tobacco use, 36.9% of males and 27.6% of females reported ‘binge drinking,’ which is having 5 or more drinks in a few hour period. Unfortunately easy access to alcohol and underage drinking problems make more comprehensive strategies all the more necessary.

SAMHSA reports that families exert a great deal of influence on whether a child uses alcohol. "What parents may not realize," says SAMHSA Administrator Terry Cline, Ph.D., "is that children say that their parents' disapproval of underage drinking is the key reason they have chosen not to drink." SAMHSA reports that children and

teens are less likely to abuse alcohol if parents are involved in their children's lives, make and enforce clear rules, and are positive role models.

The North Country Health Consortium, in collaboration with SAMHSA, led the Teach-In.



Stratford's 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade engaged in an underage drinking discussion with Teach-In facilitator Diana Gibbs, Stratford High School Class of 2004 graduate and now Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Prevention Coordinator of the North Country Health Consortium in Whitefield, NH.

## Coos County Coalition

The Coos County Coalition meets bi-monthly in Lancaster at UNH Cooperative Extension. These are breakfast meetings held from 8"—to 9:30 (sometimes with additional informational sessions held after). Dates for 2009 are: Coos County Coalition meetings will be on Thursdays, from 8:00 to 9:30 on the following dates:

April 16  
June 18  
August 20  
October 15  
December 17

## Tobacco Prevention and Control News

### Middle Schoolers 'Smoke' Smarties Candy

March 23, 2009

#### Join Together News Summary

Middle-school students have found a new use for Smarties candy -- "smoking" them.

The Wall Street Journal reported March 20 that students are crushing the sugary candy discs into a powder, tearing off one end of the cellophane wrapper, pouring the powder into their mouths, and then blowing the dust out of their mouths and nose.

Adults worry about the health ramifications associated with such behavior, but they are also concerned that it may lead to kids smoking cigarettes or marijuana.

"It's kind of like eating the candy, but a different way to eat the candy," said 14-year-old Titus Williams, who insists he will never smoke cigarettes. Titus created an "instructional" YouTube video on how to smoke the candy.

Students at Hewitt-Trussville Middle School in Alabama are no longer allowed to carry Smarties while in school, after school administrators caught wind of the trend last year. "I have made it clear to our students that possession of Smarties (or similar candy) will result in a Class II offense," which usually means detention, said principal Phyllis Faus. She called 'smoking' Smarties "hazardous to your son or daughter's health."

Mark Shikowitz, an ear, nose and throat doctor at Schneider Children's Hospital said that while Smarties may irritate throats and noses -- and lungs if inhaled -- the candies are not life-threatening because they will dissolve. "I still don't think it's a great idea," he warned.

## Change in State TPCP Web Site and Access to Quit Line Updated

Susan Morrison from the NH Tobacco Prevention and Control Program has updated us on their website. She wrote:

"Exciting news: Our TPCP webpage on the DHHS site will be updated to reflect us currently,  
<http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/ATOD/TPCP.htm>

"Also, our self-referral form on the [www.trytostoph.org](http://www.trytostoph.org) site is active!

"So now people visiting our website can email the NH Smokers' Helpline instead of calling, and a counselor will call them back - saving us money and making sure we don't lose them after they go online.  
<http://www.trytostoph.org/quit.htm>

"Questions about our website should be directed to Christin H. D'Ovidio,  
[christin.h.dovidio@dhhs.state.nh.us](mailto:christin.h.dovidio@dhhs.state.nh.us).

## Parents Must Monitor Internet Use By Children

Here's a website that shows children how to "Smoke Smarties." It's pretty scary. It definitely gets kids used to smoking tobacco and marijuana! Here's the link to

YouTube at  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACDSkCeEfWs>

## Project Monitor:



Join with the efforts of others in your community to stop underage drinking and prevent underage drinking parties.

Project Monitor is an anonymous tip line that anyone can call if they become aware of a party being planned that may provide alcohol and/or drugs to youth. It is a prevention program of North Country

Health Consortium, local coalitions and law enforcement from Northern Grafton County and Coos County have agreed to contact the potential hosts to alert them of the legal and libel consequences of providing alcohol to underage youth. Spread the word. If you would like flyers with tip line numbers call Valerie Herres at 837-2519 or email [vherres@nchcnh.org](mailto:vherres@nchcnh.org).

## **New Futures – Statewide Advocacy and Leadership Training to Reduce Underage Drinking**

New Futures, a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization working to reduce underage alcohol problems and increase access to treatment in New Hampshire identifies and recruits advocates, who then take action on public policy issues related to underage drinking and addiction treatment. This state-wide network of concerned advocates was key in defeating a bill in the last legislative session which would have allowed an enhanced alcohol content in “flavored malt beverages”. This session a bill to lower the drinking age from

21 to 18 will be a focus of their advocacy efforts.

You can join with other advocates in making a difference by participating in a New Futures’ one-day leadership retreat, designed to increase knowledge about the NH Legislature and enhance advocacy skills. While December seems far away – mark your calendars for December 9, 2009 when New Futures will host their next retreat in Concord. Visit [www.new-futures.org](http://www.new-futures.org) and check out the Community Leadership Initiative page!

## **Project Monitor Tip Line Numbers in your area:**

Berlin: 752-3131

Colebrook: 237-4487

Gorham – 466-2336 or email [gpde@ncia.net](mailto:gpde@ncia.net)

Groveton – 788-3232 or email [npd@northumberlandpolicenh.com](mailto:npd@northumberlandpolicenh.com)

Lancaster – 788-3282

Littleton – 1-800-564-6911 or 603-787-2111

North Stratford - 922-3821

Pittsburg – 237-4487

Stewartstown – 237-4487

Whitefield – 837-5266 ext 50

NH Liquor Commission anonymous tip line for Buyer Beware and providing alcohol to underage youth – 1-888-8-OVER 21.

The NH Liquor Commission also has a line to call anonymously tied to their **Buyer Beware Program** which targets young adults who purchase alcohol for youth. The number to call is 1-888-8-OVER 21.

## Project Monitor SafeHomes Pledges:

The North Country Substance Abuse Coalition now have printed Pledge cards that you can use at your events and to spread the word. Taking the **Project Monitor SafeHomes Pledge** is a positive step that parents and other caregivers can make in pledging not to provide alcohol to children in their home and to supervise parties closely. It is also a safe way for parents to connect with other parents and

develop a system of working together to help their children. If you would like pledge cards for you or for an event contact Valerie Herres at [vherres@nchcnh.org](mailto:vherres@nchcnh.org) or call 837-2519.

A Project Monitor Display and materials are now available on loan for your event. Contact Valerie for more information.

## Free Satellite and On-Line Training in Interesting Topics

The Distance Learning section of the Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force Training Program offers more than a dozen telecasts and videos each year dealing with a variety of Counterdrug topics

ranging from Raising Drug-Free Kids to Electronic Tattletales: Drug Evidence in Online Social Networking Groups. [www.mctft.com/telecasts/upcoming\\_telecourses.shtml](http://www.mctft.com/telecasts/upcoming_telecourses.shtml)

## Training Opportunities for Substance Abuse Prevention and Related Topics

Be sure to check out the New Hampshire Training Institute on Addictive Disorders website at <http://www.nhadaca.com/training.html> for

information on upcoming offerings. It also includes news, resources, job listings, peer assistance and legislative updates related to training

## North Country Substance Abuse Prevention Coalitions

This news update is supported by funds from the NH Tobacco Prevention and Control Program and the Drug Free Communities Support Program.

Please send comments and news items to Valerie Herres at [vherres@nchcnh.org](mailto:vherres@nchcnh.org).

If you would like to have your name removed from this newsletter send an email to [vherres@nchcnh.org](mailto:vherres@nchcnh.org) and type Remove from List in the email subject box.

If you have any comments on the content or would like to send information, news updates, important links and other information to be added to subsequent electronic updates send them to [vherres@nchcnh.org](mailto:vherres@nchcnh.org).

It is a project of the North Country Health Consortium, a rural health network improving the health of North Country residents through innovative collaboration. Working together with businesses and other community organizations, the health and human service provider members of the Consortium are building a regional health care system to address the needs of Northern New Hampshire.

“North Country Health Consortium leads innovative collaboration to improve the health status of the region.”

The vision of the North Country Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition is:

**“Working together to create healthier communities for our children.”**