



GATHER/GTHHSC Substance Abuse Committee May 2006 Fact Sheet



UMass Requires Class on Alcohol – All new Amherst students are required to take an online course on the topic of student alcohol abuse on campus, to guarantee all first-year students get some basic alcohol information, in terms of education. They've found that students who complete the course report a decrease in their alcohol use. Students have until October 15 to complete the 75 minute course. If they fail the test, they continue taking it until they pass. Students read articles about alcohol and are asked basic questions. They receive feedback on their drinking habits and have their alcohol consumption compared to their peers. Because students overestimate how much their peers are drinking, they try to drink up to the false norm and expectation. Nation wide, 52% of students do not binge drink, but at UMass, 59% report they are binge drinkers. See www.mystudentbody.com.



More Middle Age Americans Dying of Drug Overdose - Even as federal officials tout progress in cutting teen drug use, more middle-aged Americans are dying of drug overdoses, experts say. The [Psychiatric Times](http://PsychiatricTimes) reported in its April 2006 issue that the typical addict is likely to be in their mid-30s to mid-50s, but that prevention programs often overlook Baby Boomers. The Drug Addiction Help Line reported that the typical overdose victim in 2005 was age 43, compared to 32 in 1985 and 22 in 1970. The Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) reported that more than half of overdose deaths in 2003 were among 35-to-54-year-olds. Older drug users also predominate in emergency-room. Potent prescription painkillers like the widely abused OxyContin may be contributing to overdose deaths among older Americans. Cocaine and methamphetamines also are factors, although many overdose victims had used more than one substance. Middle-aged Americans also have been involved in more crimes nationally, a trend that may have its roots in drug addiction. (www.jointogether.org/news/headlines/inthenews/2006/addiction-increasingly-seen.html)



1 in 400 Students Lose Aid due to past drug offenses, according to data from the U.S. Department of Education. That's 189,065 students since the law went into effect during the 2000-01 school year. A majority of students were able to restore their eligibility by completing a drug rehabilitation program, an Education Department spokesperson said. (www.jointogether.org/news/headlines/inthenews/2006/one-in-400-students-lose-aid.html) The American Civil Liberties Union and Students for Sensible Drug Policy are asking federal courts to void the law that prevents students with drug convictions from getting financial aid for college.

Dangerous Pesticides Found in Cigarettes - Scientists identified the chemicals, two of which are classified as human carcinogens. They said the substances could negatively affect early development, reproduction, and hormonal processes. All of the pesticides have been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency for use on tobacco. The study found that the chemicals survived the burning of tobacco leaves to retain about 10 percent of their original potency. The research appears online in the journal [Analytical Chemistry](http://AnalyticalChemistry). (www.jointogether.org/news/research/summaries/2006/dangerous-pesticides-found-in.html)

Smoking Kills More Asian-Americans Than Thought - Researchers from the University of California found that Korean, Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese American men have three times the cancer death rate of South Asian women -- a disparity almost entirely attributable to smoking. The cancer death rate among Asian women is among the world's lowest, and researchers suggest that Asian men would enjoy similar health if they didn't smoke. The annual cancer mortality among South Asian women living in California is 58 per 100,000 population, compared to a national average of 193.5 per 100,000. Meanwhile, lung-cancer rates doubled among South Asian men between 1998 and 2001. (www.jointogether.org/news/research/summaries/2006/smoking-kills-more.html)

