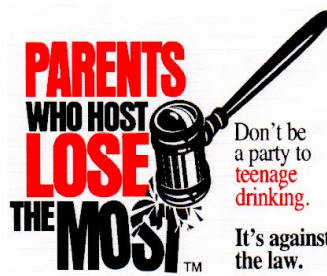


## A message to parents: Teens, Parties and Alcohol Don't Mix



Parents often look the other way when it comes to teen drinking, particularly during prom and graduation season when their children celebrate special moments in their lives. It is not unusual for well-meaning parents to provide alcohol to their teen's friends at house parties and take away their car keys in an effort to keep them "safe" from drinking and driving.

Parents often cite a misguided reason for hosting teen parties where alcohol is served, believing it is "safer" for kids to drink at home. When parents serve alcohol to teens in their home, in reality what they are doing is facilitating their child's comfort with alcohol. This practice sends a mixed message. Teens believe "If it's okay to drink at home, it's okay to drink." When children start to drink at a young age the consequences can be overwhelming, and in extreme cases fatal. Adolescents who drink heavily assume the same long-term health risks as adults who drink heavily.

Parents planning to host parties for their teens during prom and graduation season should think twice before serving alcohol. Hosting a party for teenagers with alcohol can be costly. It is illegal, unsafe and unhealthy.

### **Here are the facts:**

- Parents who give alcohol to their teen's friends under any circumstances, even in their own homes and with their child's friend's parents' permission, are breaking the law. You can face a minimum sentence of 3 months in jail and/or a \$500 fine.
- Parents who knowingly allow a person under 21 to remain in their home or on their property while consuming or possessing alcoholic beverages can be prosecuted and everything associated with such a violation can be confiscated, including personal property.
- Parents can be sued if they give alcohol to anyone under 21 and they in turn hurt someone, hurt themselves or damage property.

The Holly Area Youth Coalition, in conjunction with the Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities and the Oakland County Health Division have launched the "**Parents Who Host, Lose the Most: Don't be a party to teenage drinking**" public awareness campaign to help parents think about the dangers of teenage drinking parties. The campaign stresses to parents that hosting teen drinking parties should not be regarded as a 'rite of passage' but as a health and safety problem with legal ramifications. When celebrating special moments such as prom and graduation, parents can do their part to protect themselves and their children. Don't be a party to teenage drinking. Refuse to supply alcohol to children in your home or on your property; be at home when your teenager has a party; make sure your teenager's friends do not bring alcohol into your home; talk to other parents about providing alcohol-free beverages at youth events, provide teenagers with opportunities for alcohol free events and activities and report underage drinking to your local police department. For more information about this issue, contact the Holly Area Youth Coalition at 248-328-3135.