

Steve Wright - R&R Partners
PH: 801-531-6877 EMAIL: steve.wright@rrpartners.com

IF WALLS COULD TALK, HERE IS WHAT THEY WOULD SAY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Utah teen alcohol use is the lowest in the nation, but Utah leadership wants it gone. A partnership between the Governor's Office, Utah Department of Human Services, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Utah Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control and Parents Empowered aims to eliminate underage drinking.

Salt Lake City, May 11, 2017 – With May ushering in high school prom and graduation celebrations, Utah's First Lady, Jeanette Herbert joins several public/private leaders to launch an important statewide initiative, urging Utah parents to set clear rules about no underage drinking. Utah leadership has encouraged public and private organizations to help keep Utah's kids alcohol-free. Answering the state's call-to-action, the Utah Department of Human Services and the Utah Department of Environmental Quality have partnered with Parents Empowered—the state underage drinking prevention initiative—to remind Utah parents of the negative consequences of teen drinking and what parents can do to prevent it. “We are very proud of the state's commitment to keep our kids alcohol-free,” shares Doug Thomas, Director of the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health. “We understand the life-long implications alcohol can have on a developing teen, and we aim to ensure all teens grow up free from the potential devastation caused by underage drinking.”

Leadership from several state agencies and local health coalitions will join First Lady Herbert to launch the prevention initiative at a formal press event on Tuesday, May 16th at 2:00 p.m. at the Utah Department of Human Services located at 195 North 1950 West, Salt Lake City, Utah. The media event will be held outside the primary entrance on the East side of the building.

As part of the partnership, the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health will feature custom messages throughout the interior and exterior of the building, each reminding Utahns of the harmful effects of teen drinking and what can be done to prevent it. “New research shows just how harmful alcohol is to the developing teen brain, robbing our kids of bright, healthy futures,” shares First Lady Jeanette Herbert. “We see this initiative as a fantastic opportunity to share an important message with parents about how they can influence their teen's decision of whether he or she will drink or not.” The featured messages range from 30-foot exterior building wraps to interactive messaging on elevators, doors and hallways showcasing tips for parents to keep kids alcohol-free.

Speakers for the event will include: First Lady Jeanette Herbert; Susannah Burt, the Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health; Doug Thomas, Director of the Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health; Peighton Summers, a youth student advocate from Washington Terrace Elementary; and Doug Murakami, Director of Alcohol Education at the Utah Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control. Speakers will showcase the campaign, discuss the expected results from the initiative, share the latest research findings related to underage drinking in Utah, and answer questions about the potential harms of underage drinking.

Parents Empowered is a statewide campaign focused on eliminating underage drinking in Utah. Its primary goals are to educate parents about the dangers of underage drinking and provide them with proven skills to help their children remain alcohol-free. More information is available at www.ParentsEmpowered.org.

USAAV Underage Drinking Prevention Workgroup

- Utah Attorney General's Office
- Utah Behavioral Healthcare Committee
- Utah Chapter/Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)
- Utah Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control
- Utah Department of Health
- Utah Department of Public Safety
- Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health
- Utah Juvenile Court
- Utah State Office of Education/Safe and Drug-Free Schools
- Utah Substance Abuse Advisory Council/Utah Prevention