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U.S. Surgeon General visits Ohio

Ohio First Lady, ODADAS Director, and Drug-Free Action Alliance join Acting Surgeon General, Rear Admiral Steven Galson, M.D., for an underage drinking prevention forum.

(Columbus, OH- February 27, 2008)- The nation's top health educator spent the day in the Buckeye State spreading the word to elected officials and drug prevention specialists about his office's national "Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking."

Rear Admiral Steven Galson, acting U.S. Surgeon General, joined Frances Strickland (Ohio First Lady), Angela Cornelius (Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Director), and Patricia Harmon (Drug-Free Action Alliance Executive Director) at a public event this afternoon detailing what Ohio can do to prevent the state's youth from drinking alcohol.

"This *Call to Action* presents a compelling foundation for change to the accepted culture and attitudes towards underage drinking in America," said Dr. Galson. "We can no longer ignore the devastating effects of alcohol on the health, safety and well-being of our children. I am here today asking Ohio parents, communities and educational systems to take a stand to work for a solution. This is everyone's problem and therefore everyone's responsibility."

"Underage drinking presents a very real and proven health risk to children in Ohio as well as throughout the nation," noted Patricia Harmon, Drug-Free Action Alliance. "Studies have proved that memory and learning capabilities can be damaged and decision-making and reasoning areas of the brain can be compromised when adolescents use alcohol."

The forum, sponsored by the Drug-Free Action Alliance, was held at the Trinity Episcopal Church on Capitol Square and is a part of the agency's ongoing effort to form partnerships, coalitions and networks that take action to prevent underage and high-risk drinking and illegal drug use. Beginning the week of March 31st, ODADAS and the Drug-Free Action Alliance, will be hosting town hall meetings in 43 communities focusing on underage drinking prevention. Today's event was attended by approximately 250 audience members.

The Drug-Free Action Alliance and Surgeon General also used the day to visit several other venues and reiterate his concerns about underage drinking. To begin the day, Dr. Galson held a roundtable discussion with prominent faculty members at Nationwide Children's Hospital. He then traveled to Granville and spoke at a forum hosted by Denison University and attended by presidents and representatives from Ohio's colleges and universities. After the afternoon's public forum at Trinity Episcopal Church, he attended a Statehouse reception with Ohio's elected officials.

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Red Ribbon Celebration

College Initiative to Reduce
High Risk Drinking

Ohio Resource Network
Clearinghouse

Statewide Prevention
Coalition Association

Parents Who Host, Lose The Most:
Don't be a party to teenage drinking

Ohio Center for
Coalition Excellence

Know!

Youth Philanthropy
Council

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The Surgeon General serves as America's chief health educator by providing the best scientific information available on how Americans can improve their health and reduce the risk of illness and injury. The Office of the Surgeon General oversees the operations of the 6,000-member Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service. The Office is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Ohio is the third state on Dr. Galson's scheduled nationwide tour as newly appointed Surgeon General. This isn't his first brush with the Buckeye State in his extensive public health career. Dr. Galson worked in Cincinnati for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and at the University of Cincinnati in the occupational health clinic.

Drug-Free Action Alliance is a statewide, private, non-profit prevention agency celebrating more than twenty years of educating key leaders on the problems facing their communities and providing the resources needed to take action to promote safe and drug free communities.

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