Using Social Host Laws to Reduce College Drinking at Off-Campus House Parties

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PAST PRESIDENT
GREATER TOWSON COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

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Alcohol Policy Conference 18
As required by the Alcohol Policy 18 Conference, I/we have signed a disclosure statement and note the following conflict(s) of interest:

I have no conflicts of interest.
Towson Neighborhoods
Maryland Collaborative

Structure

Governance Council
(College Presidents)

Advisory Board

Public Health Faculty
Amelia M. Arria, Ph.D. (UMCP)
David H. Jernigan, Ph.D. (Johns Hopkins)

Funding Acknowledgment:
The Behavioral Health Administration (BHA)
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
The problem
Hotspot for high-risk drinking

Percentage of past-month drinkers who drank at least once in the past month at an off-campus house party. (MD-CAS)

73.2% of Students under 21
60.3% of Students 21 to 25
Guide to Best Practices

• **Hotspots**
  - Identify the environments where excessive drinking is occurring
  - Social vs. commercial settings

• **Evidence-based Approach**
  - Identify a best practice approach to addressing that environment to reduce and/or prevent excessive drinking
Social host ordinances
key components

• Civil citations – NOT criminal
• Issued to party host and/or landlord
• Level of fine – high enough to deter, but not excessive
• Conduct triggering citation can include:
  • Excessive noise
  • Public intoxication
  • Public urination
  • Assault
  • Blocking right of way
  • Underage drinking
The Process

Process used to educate key stakeholders and build support for a social host policy
10 Policy Steps

1. Develop a policy action statement
2. Engage enforcement
3. Collect data to establish a legal basis
4. Make your case
5. Draft policy language
6. Use media advocacy
7. Mobilize support and provide community education
8. Get the policy adopted
9. Ensure enforcement of the policy
10. Evaluate campaign effectiveness
The Baltimore County Council will pass a civil Social Host Ordinance holding accountable those who host and allow loud and unruly parties to persist.
Overcoming obstacles: Issue Briefs

- Education tool
- Organizing tool
  - Identifies the problem
  - Gives examples of SHO successes
  - Describes how SHOs solve problem
  - Tells how to get involved
Obstacles in passing SHO

• Lack of knowledge about SHOs
  • Among community members
  • Among key stakeholders
  • Among lawmakers
• Opposition from landlords
• Opposition from apartment management
• Opposition from lawmakers
Keeping the peace in Towson

January 11, 2016, 4:50 PM

The problem of Towson University students throwing wild and disruptive parties in rental houses in the residential neighborhoods around campus is an old one. Community members have gone to great lengths over the years to deal with problem tenants, from tracking the license plate numbers of cars parked outside of houses to calling the cops. The county has enacted a rental registration program, and the university has changed its policies to hold students accountable for their behavior off-campus. But given the nature of college students — and the glaring mismatch between Towson's enrollment (22,000) and the number of beds in dorms (6,000) — the neighboring communities can’t possibly have enough tools at their disposal to address the problem. As such, County Councilman David Marks' proposal for what's known as "social host" legislation is most welcome and deserves to be enacted.
Policy Adoption Success

In January 2016, Baltimore County passed a social host ordinance
Legislation

- 20 hours community service and $500 for 1\textsuperscript{st} offense, $1,000 for 2\textsuperscript{nd} and subsequent offenses
- 24-month look back period for landlord
- Tied to rental permit
- Holds host and landlords accountable
- Must give warning to landlord upon first offense
Social Host Ordinance Update

• Area where law is in effect expanded 3 times:
  • June 2016
  • February 2017
  • November 2017
Expansion from 2016 to 2018
Enforcement

• Educate:
  • Community members
  • Students
  • Law enforcement officers
Educating Students about the new law

**Party at Your Place? Think Twice!**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Baltimore County has a new social gathering ordinance that could affect you!

**Here are the details:**

1. **Having a Loud and Unruly Party Is:**
   A gathering of four or more people at a residence or other private property where there is underage drinking or conduct disturbs the peace.

2. **Persons Responsible Are:**
   The people who organize and supervise the gathering and any other person who accepts responsibility for the gathering.

3. **Penalties for Renters Include:**
   $500—$1,000 in fines + community service per person responsible.

4. **Penalties for Property Owners:**
   Written warning, fines and revocation of rental license.

For more information visit http://www.gtcca.org/resources/shoreference/

**Respect the Block & Stay Safe!**

1. **Look Up**
   Use crosswalks and walk in well-lit areas. Walk in pairs and put away cell phones and headphones, too!

2. **No Fakes**
   Don’t waste your money on a fake ID. It will be confiscated by police or security and you’ll receive a citation!

3. **Keep Quiet**
   When walking or driving back to your place at night keep voices and music low. Neighbors are trying to sleep!

4. **Don’t Touch**
   Never destroy or steal a neighbor’s property or public sign. It is a crime and defaces the community.

Student Affairs LIFE Line
(410) 704-LIFE (5433)
Evidence of Effectiveness
Complaint calls

Address Complaints Received

Address Complaints Received

- 2015-16
- 2016-17
- 2017-18

- 0
- 10
- 20
- 30
- 40
- 50
- 60
- 70

2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Off-campus Drinking Trends, Towson University

Drinking on campus, among past-year drinkers:
- 2015: 18%
- 2017: 18%
  - Stable, no significant changes

Drinking at off-campus parties, among past-year drinkers:
- 2015: 62%
- 2017: 52%
  - Significant decline from 2015 to 2017
Baltimore County extends pilot program to crack down on college parties

November 20, 2017 • By Alison Knezevich

A Baltimore County pilot program meant to crack down on unruly parties in Towson will be extended through 2022.

Under the law, first passed by the County Council in early 2016, offenders face fines and community service, while their landlords can be fined and eventually lose their rental license if their tenants are cited for repeated offenses.
Towson residents, police welcome widening of law limiting rowdy parties

November 28, 2017 • By Margarita Cambest

“I regard the social host legislation as one of the most important initiatives this council has passed.

I am very pleased with the bipartisan, unanimous support from my colleagues, who recognize that this is not just a public safety issue—it's a property rights issue, since unruly disturbances erode neighborhoods over time.”

Baltimore County Councilman David Marks
Additional Outcomes

✓ Implementation & enforcement of policy

✓ Change in norms & community discussions about alcohol-related problems

✓ Foundation built for additional alcohol policies
Thank you!

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