

**i** **talk**  
they hear you

2017

ANNUAL REPORT

**National Media  
Campaign for the  
Prevention of  
Underage Drinking**

***Talk. They Hear You.***  
**Campaign Highlights**

June 2017

# Leading Change 2.0: SAMHSA Acts To Prevent Underage Drinking

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) seeks to promote positive mental health and prevent substance misuse and mental illness. SAMHSA has long worked to reduce the impact of these issues on America's communities.

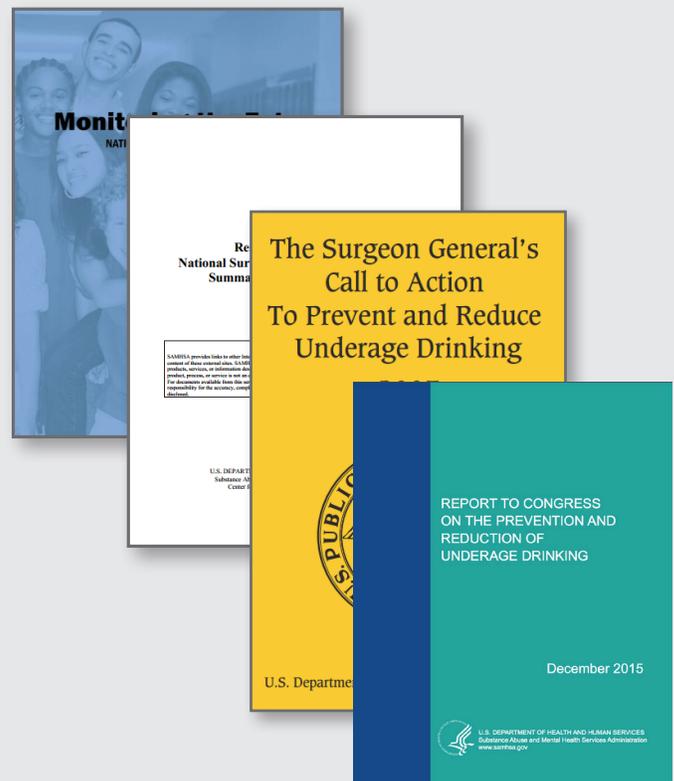
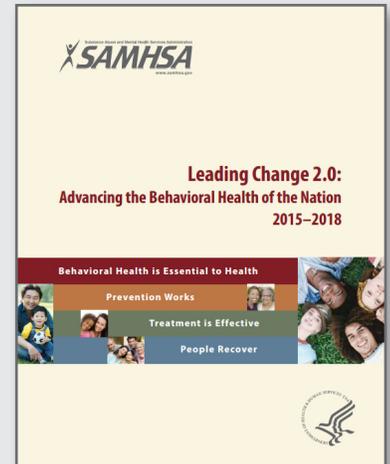
Alcohol use by those younger than the legal age of 21 remains a serious public health and safety problem, undermining the well-being of America's youth. Ten percent of 9- to 10-year-olds have already started drinking,<sup>1</sup> and more than 20 percent of underage drinkers begin drinking before age 13.<sup>2</sup> The human cost of underage alcohol use is enormous, with many of the harmful consequences immediate and all too evident for youth, families, and communities.

In response, SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), through the Sober Truth on Underage Drinking Act (STOP Act), created the Underage Drinking Prevention National Media Campaign. The Campaign—**Talk. They Hear You.**—engages parents and caregivers of children ages 9 to 15 in preventing underage drinking.

The Campaign aims to:

1. Increase parent *awareness of the prevalence and risk* of underage drinking;
2. Equip parents with the *knowledge, skills, and confidence* to prevent underage drinking; and
3. Increase parent *actions to prevent underage drinking*.

This Campaign supports SAMHSA's ongoing efforts to prevent and reduce underage drinking and young adult problem drinking. The **Talk. They Hear You.** Campaign is congressionally mandated and is evaluated and reported annually in the *Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking*.



Note: The background activities in the Preface describe efforts conducted in the 2013 and 2014 fiscal years.

## What the Research Suggests

Alcohol continues to be the most widely misused substance among our nation's young people. SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that a higher percentage of youth (22.8 percent) ages 12 to 20 used alcohol in the past month than used tobacco (7 percent) or illicit drugs (9.4 percent).<sup>3</sup> Underage alcohol consumption increased with age in a steady progression from 1.2 percent for 12-year-olds to 53.3 percent for 20-year-olds.<sup>4</sup>

Parents have a significant influence on young people's decisions about alcohol consumption.<sup>5</sup> When parents know about underage alcohol use, they can protect their children from many of the high-risk behaviors associated with it. Furthermore, parents who do not discourage underage drinking may have an indirect influence on young people's alcohol use.<sup>6</sup>

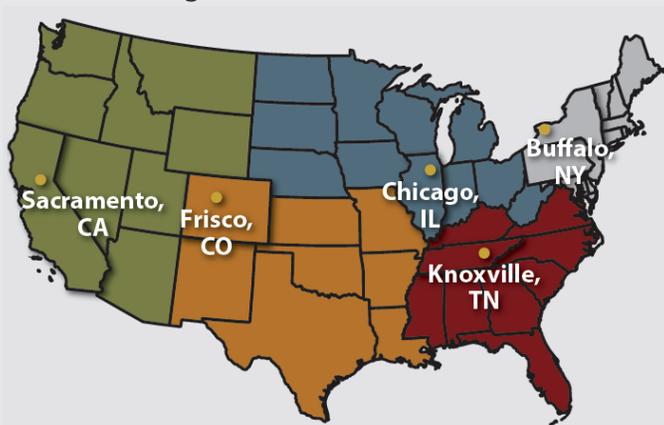
SAMHSA's *Talk. They Hear You.* Campaign addresses these issues by drawing from social marketing and health education behavior theories and from the latest scientific research and feedback from audiences across the country.

## Piloting *Talk. They Hear You.* Across the National Prevention Network (NPN) Regions

In early to mid-2012, SAMHSA developed a national pilot program to test and refine Campaign creative materials and pretest the Campaign's national objectives in communities across the country. Five pilot sites implemented and evaluated the Campaign. The feedback received from market testing was incorporated into the final materials prior to launch.

### Pilot sites were asked to:

- Use Campaign messages and materials in current underage drinking awareness and education activities;
- Host at least one underage drinking awareness event;
- Include underage drinking research in existing educational materials;
- Provide overall feedback on the public service announcements (PSAs); and
- Gauge attitudes, behaviors, and concerns about underage drinking.



**The National Prevention Network's Five Regions**

### Selected pilot sites:

- People Reaching Out (Western NPN Region)
- Metropolitan Drug Commission (Southeast NPN Region)
- Asian Health Coalition (Central NPN Region)
- Summit Prevention Alliance (Southwest NPN Region)
- Erie County Council (Northeast NPN Region)

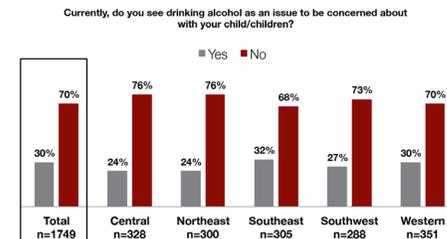
# Pilot-Testing Campaign Effectiveness Before Launch

In addition to the pilot sites, SAMHSA administered a national Web survey to establish baseline attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors linked to underage drinking. Through “control” and “stimulus” groups, SAMHSA assessed longitudinal changes in underage drinking prevention behaviors and attitudes over a 3-month period. A small sample provided qualitative feedback on the content, layout, and delivery of the PSAs.

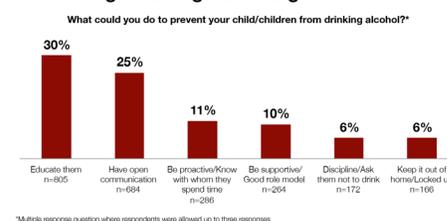
## Measuring our success:

- Underage drinking is not a top-of-mind issue; less than half of all parents surveyed reported concern.
- Education and conversations with children were the top two ways parents said they could prevent underage drinking.
- Women are much more likely to have talked with their children about underage drinking.
- The majority of parents exposed to the materials said they were believable; a third said the materials left an impression on them.
- A quarter of parents exposed to the PSAs agreed the PSAs were among the best ads they had seen on underage drinking prevention.
- A quarter of parents exposed to the PSAs said they would seek out more information about SAMHSA.
- Parents exposed to the PSAs were much more likely to have talked with their children about the dangers of underage drinking in the last 3 months.
- Parents and caregivers asked for more modeling scenarios in the print PSAs.

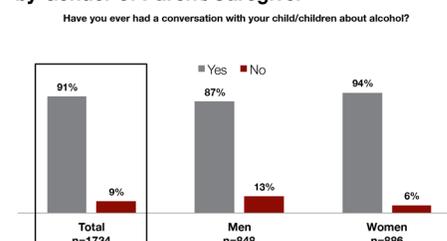
### General Attitude Toward Underage Drinking: by Region



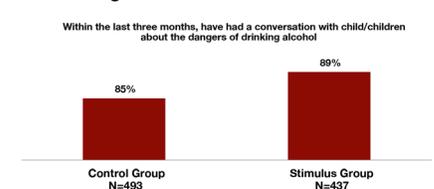
### Preventing Underage Drinking



### Discussion of Underage Drinking: by Gender of Parent/Caregiver



### Discussion with Children About the Dangers of Drinking Alcohol



<sup>1</sup> Donovan, J. E. (2007). Really underage drinkers: The epidemiology of children’s alcohol use in the United States. *Prevention Science*, 8(3),192–205.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 2011. *Surveillance Summaries. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 61, SS-4, 1–162.

<sup>3</sup> Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2015). *Behavioral health trends in the United States: Results from the 2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. SMA 15-4927, NSDUH Series H-50).

<sup>4</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2013). *Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables*. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. From <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUHresults2012/NSDUHresults2012.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Nash, S. G., McQueen, A., and Bray, J. H. (2005). Pathways to adolescent alcohol use: Family environment, peer influence, and parental expectations. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 37(1), 19–28.

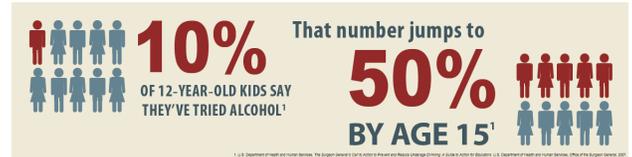
<sup>6</sup> Sieving, R. E., Maruyama, G., Williams, C. L., and Perry, C. L. (2000). Pathways to adolescent alcohol use: Potential mechanisms of parent influence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 10(4), 489–514.

## Empowering Parents To Prevent Underage Drinking

SAMHSA's *Talk. They Hear You.* Campaign engages parents and caregivers of children ages 9 to 15 in the prevention of underage drinking. Underage drinking remains a national public health issue, especially among adolescents.



### Parents have significant influence on young people's decisions about alcohol consumption.



- Despite its prevalence, underage drinking is not a top-of-mind issue for parents.
- Children said that parents are the primary messengers for underage drinking prevention.
- To succeed, parents need prompts and conversation starters for talking with their children.

As generations of parents continue to evolve, SAMHSA aims to keep *Talk. They Hear You.* consistent and relevant. To maintain a lasting message, the Campaign trademarked its logo in 2016. This trademark helps lend credibility to the materials, instills trust in the Campaign, and promotes consistency when organizations implement the Campaign in their communities.



## The Year in Review

Building on lessons learned from prior years, the Campaign continues to leverage communication channels to promote Campaign resources and help increase actions by parents to prevent underage drinking.

**Collective promotion activities from June 18, 2016 – June 16, 2017 helped drive 34,392 visits to [www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking](http://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking).**

This year, a priority for SAMHSA was to expand the *Talk. They Hear You.* Campaign beyond parent-to-child modeling by considering ways that parent-to-parent modeling and communities may help reinforce the Campaign's message. While parents and caregivers are a leading influence on a child's decision to not drink, surrounding support systems are critical to encourage and reinforce the need for parents and caregivers to have effective conversations with their children.<sup>7</sup> The influence of one's peers in the community and perceptions of social norms can be a powerful motivator for change ("Well, if everyone else is talking to their kids about drinking, maybe I should, too").<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (2013). *Parenting to Prevent Childhood Alcohol Use*. From <https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/adolescentflyer/adolflyer.htm> (accessed June 7, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Perkins, H. W., and Berkowitz, A. D. (1986). Perceiving the community norms of alcohol use among students: Some research implications for campus alcohol education programming. *International Journal of the Addictions*, 21(9-10), 961-976.

## TIMELINE

### May 2013

- Launched *Talk. They Hear You.*
- Launched Campaign website

### December 2013

- Delivered campaign materials to partners
- Released inaugural PSAs

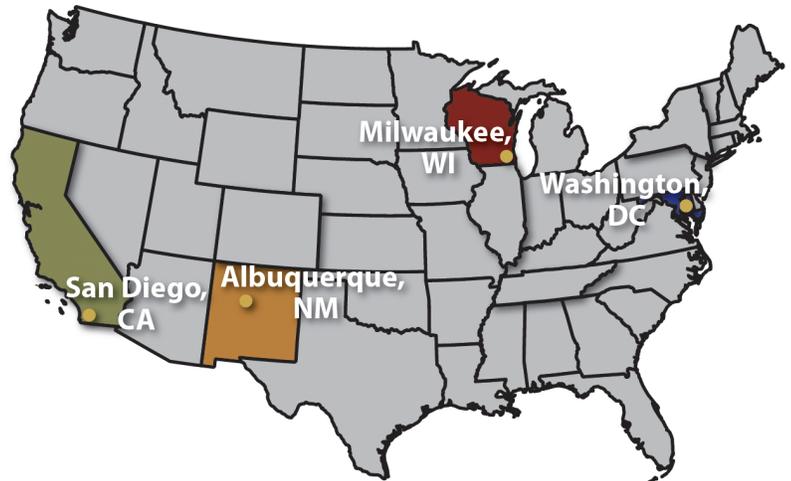
### February 2014

- Released new TV PSA, *Mom's Thoughts* during 2014 National Prevention Week

# PSA Concept Testing and Development

This year, SAMHSA developed a new PSA for television and radio. Different PSA concepts were developed for testing in focus groups in the following four regions:

- Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- San Diego, California
- Washington, DC



The selected concept, *Dads*, was favored across focus groups because of the scenario's relatability. Parents and caregivers viewed the concept as a realistic portrayal of family activities, and valued the need for clear communication with their children about underage drinking. Many also liked how the consequences of underage drinking were clearly presented.

Since its launch in February 2017, the new television PSA has collectively garnered 9,521 airings and 209 million impressions (209,841,734) worth an estimated \$2.1 million (\$2,187,810) in free air time. Airings included significant play on network shows such as *Good Morning America*, *The Dr. Oz Show*, and *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, among other popular shows. The corresponding radio version has collectively garnered 7,462 airings and 50 million impressions (50,233,416) worth an estimated \$602,800 in free air time.

## Discussion Starter Video

Concurrently, SAMHSA produced a continuation of the above PSA in a longer form, 4-minute Discussion Starter Video designed for use during community events. The video features the same family from the *Dads* PSA, carrying the story into a new setting and providing consistency and brand recognition for parents and caregivers.



### May 2014

- Released *Talk. They Hear You.* mobile app

### February 2015

- Promoted mobile app during 2015 National Prevention Week

### March 2015

- Launched paid advertising campaign on social media
- National Partner Meeting

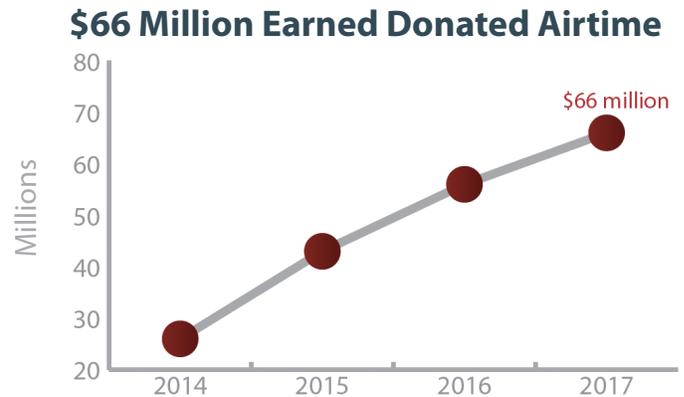
### June 2015

- Translated campaign materials into Spanish

# Reaching Parents Through Relevant Channels

Through June 16, 2017, the *Talk. They Hear You.* PSAs have appeared in all 50 states and earned more than:

**6.27**  
billion  
impressions



Generated an advertising equivalency of more than \$66 million across all media outlets

Since launching in 2013, the PSAs have been distributed to more than:



**2536**  
broadcast  
TV stations



**1116**  
cable TV  
stations

**4615**



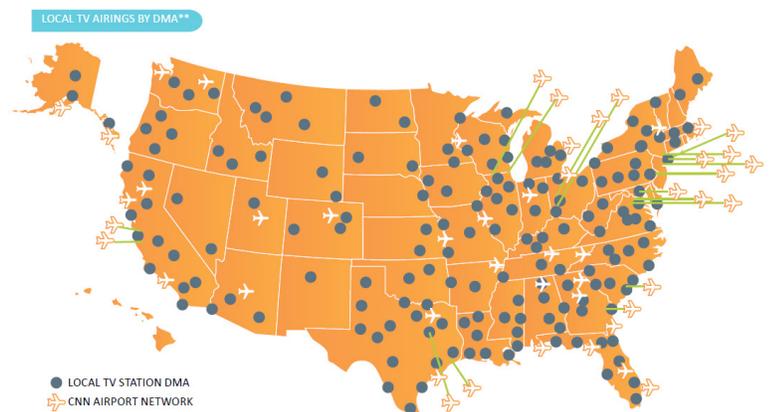
**radio  
outlets**

**3131**



**print  
outlets**

In terms of additional out-of-home exposure, the *Dads* television PSA was also picked up by the CNN Airport Network. In the month of April in conjunction with Alcohol Awareness Month, the PSA aired in 50 airports on 2,000 screens 5 times per day across the country. Respective exposure generated an estimated 15 million impressions.



## December 2015

- Launched #WeTalked social media campaign

## January 2016

- Conducted pilot survey with parents and caregivers of children ages 9 to 15

## March 2016

- Launched new Spanish-language campaign site, *Hable. Ellos Escuchan.*

- Started production of new Spanish-language TV PSA, *Dinner Table*

## A Soundtrack for Prevention

This year's Campaign's expansion also included release of the Campaign's first original Soundtrack, *Talk. They Hear You.* The product features talented musicians and custom lyrics to encourage parents to start a conversation about underage drinking with their children. The Soundtrack launched in November 2016 and is available through online music platforms including Amazon Music, Jango, and SoundCloud, and is also featured in the campaign's newest PSA and Discussion Starter Video.

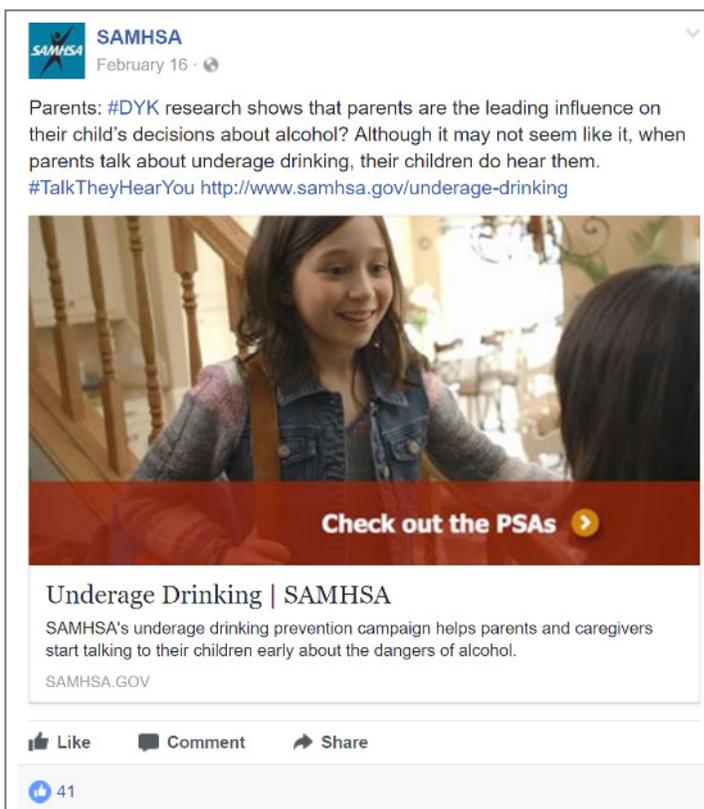


Early success landed the Soundtrack in the top 7 of Amazon Music's Top 100 Free Albums list in its first week. To date, the Soundtrack has garnered 538 downloads and 66,752 plays across platforms.

## Online Conversations

Throughout the year, SAMHSA promotes the *Talk. They Hear You.* through strategic social media messaging on Facebook and Twitter. Altogether, 13 editorial calendars were shared monthly with SAMHSA's Office of Communications for integration into SAMHSA's overall social media strategy. Content leveraged observances, such as Alcohol Awareness Month (April) and SAMHSA's National Prevention Week, to share relevant resources and messages with SAMHSA's followers. SAMHSA shared 39 *Talk. They Hear You.* social media posts in the last year to help drive traffic to the Campaign website.

This year, the top-performing *Talk. They Hear You.* Facebook post was posted by SAMHSA on February 17, 2017. The post linked to Campaign PSAs and garnered 136 engagements (reactions, comments, and shares).



### March 2016

- Launched 30-day paid Facebook campaign to promote mobile app

### April 2016

- Conducted outreach to all 50 partners for Alcohol Awareness Month, including 10 new Hispanic/Latino organizations

### May 2016

- Released new Spanish-language TV PSA during 2016 National Prevention Week

### July 2016

- Launched the new Spanish-language TV PSA, *Hora de Cenar*

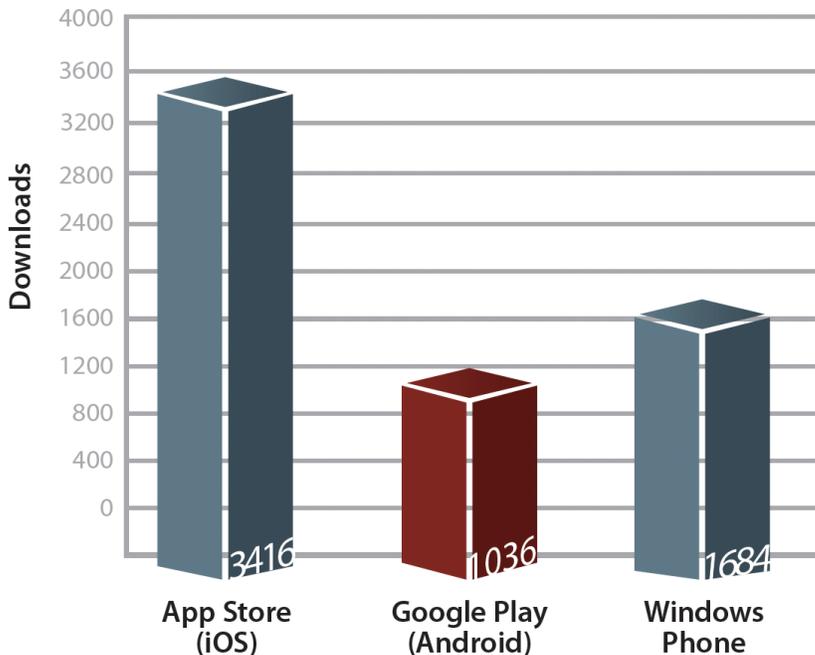
# Building Skills With the *Talk. They Hear You.* Mobile App

The *Talk. They Hear You.* mobile app features an interactive simulation that uses avatars to help parents practice bringing up the topic of alcohol, learn the questions to ask, and get ideas for keeping the conversation going.



# Promoting the *Talk. They Hear You.* Mobile App

The *Talk. They Hear You.* mobile app garnered 1,546 downloads in the last year—a 29 percent increase from cumulative downloads garnered in the prior year.



Total Number of Downloads

**6,429**

The mobile app is available through the App Store<sup>SM</sup>, Google Play<sup>TM</sup>, and the Windows<sup>®</sup> Phone.

### September 2016

- Conducted Media Evaluation Testing with CADCA in original locations where the pilot survey was conducted

### October 2016

- Began PSA Concept Testing for the 2017 *Dads* PSA

### November 2016

- Shared social media messages with Hispanic/Latino partners to promote the *Hora de Cenas* PSA ahead of the holidays
- Released the first-ever *Talk. They Hear You.* Soundtrack on Amazon Music

# Broadening Campaign Reach Through Partners

This year, SAMHSA expanded partner outreach by 214 percent, engaging 107 national and local organizations, which led to distribution of more than 350 Partner Toolkits; 900 printed materials such as post cards, wallet cards, and table tents; and three packages of English- and Spanish-language promotional social media messages promoting the Campaign during the holidays and throughout Alcohol Awareness Month and National Prevention Week.



For example, SAMHSA worked with Harris County Public Health in Houston, Texas, to distribute *Talk. They Hear You.* PSAs, translate social media content for local Spanish-speaking audiences, and share Campaign handouts for use at a town hall event.

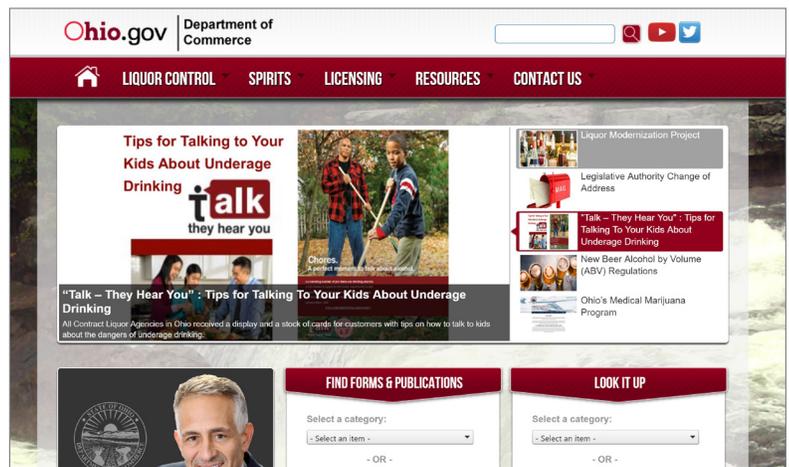
Collaboration got PSAs airing on 167 Houston-area movie theater screens and during local television programming, and helped earn on-air Campaign mentions with a local NBC news affiliate. Additionally, the Campaign was featured on the area’s popular Friday Football Frenzy mobile application, used by parents across the region for checking high school football scores.

Collectively the partnership helped reach more than 300,000 people in Harris County, nearly saturating the regional market with the Campaign’s message.

National partnerships were also instrumental in promoting *Talk. They Hear You.* materials in the last year. As a result of the campaign’s partnership with the National Alcohol Beverage Control Association, the Ohio Division of Liquor Control distributed the Campaign’s point-of-purchase materials to all 467 of the state’s Contract Liquor Agencies.

Materials displayed in liquor stores statewide included a branded display holder and wallet-sized cards directing parents and caregivers to check out the Campaign website for tips on talking to their children about alcohol from an early age.

The state’s work promoting the Campaign also led to results online—as the Ohio Department of Commerce was a top-referring website to <https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking> the following 3 months.



## December 2016

- Started production on the *Dads* PSA and on the new 5-minute Discussion Starter Video

## February 2017

- Officially launched the *Dads* PSA and Discussion Starter

Video at SAMHSA’s National Prevention Day

## April 2017

- Recorded that PSAs exceeded 6 billion cumulative impressions

- Conducted outreach to partners in conjunction with Alcohol Awareness Month

## Continuing To Evolve

To prevent underage drinking and empower parents to talk to their kids about it, the *Talk. They Hear You.* Campaign continues to grow. Upcoming activities include:



- Creating a new *Talk. They Hear You.* PSA (including video, radio, and print versions) that will resonate with military families. Concepts will be tested in focus groups among target audiences.
- Evaluating the Campaign to inform future approaches. This will include convening a technical expert advisory panel for input; implementing a national survey for feedback; and conducting forced-exposure case studies in selected school sites in areas that currently have limited Campaign outreach.
- Exploring new ways to distribute campaign messages and materials clearly and consistently, such as through licensing of the trademarked campaign brand for added credibility.



The screenshot shows the SAMHSA website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Home, Newsroom, Site Map, and Contact Us. Below that is a search bar and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and a Blog. The main content area is titled 'Programs & Campaigns' and 'Underage Drinking'. It features a large banner with the 'talk they hear you' logo and the text 'Underage Drinking Prevention'. Below the banner, there's a section for 'Talk. They Hear You.' with a video player and a 'Check out the PSAs' button. To the right, there are sections for 'In the News' and 'Featured Resources' with various links to news articles, videos, and soundtracks. At the bottom, there are two boxes: one for the 'Talk. They Hear You.' Application and another for 'Parent Resources'.

### May 2017

- Conducted outreach to partners in conjunction with National Prevention Week
- Strategically applied Radio Airplay credits to garner over 150 new Soundtrack fans
- and 8,000 plays during National Prevention Week



**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**

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<https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking>