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# 'No Grey Area' campaign targets underage drinking in Dallas County

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By Morgan Young, Reporter  CONNECT

DALLAS CO., AL (WSFA) - The Council on Substance Abuse and the City of Selma came together Monday afternoon to film the first public service announcement for the "No Grey Area" campaign. COSA used grant funds to start the campaign in Dallas County in January in an effort to raise awareness about underage drinking.

"We distributed a survey in the Selma City School System and the Dallas County School System," stated COSA's Karen Wright, "and found that the youth in this area don't feel like there is anything wrong underage drinking. We started this campaign to show them that, under no circumstances, is it okay."

According to the Alabama Department of Mental Health, in Dallas County, 26 percent of ninth graders and almost 30 percent of 10th graders drink. For eleventh graders in Dallas County, the drinking rate is 34%. It jumps to nearly 54 percent by students' senior year.

Selma Mayor Darrio Melton said the numbers are unacceptable.

"Our kids have been exposed to so much at such a young age," Melton said. "We are going to do everything in our power to keep that kind of thing away from our kids."

Melton said the new generation's access to social media and the internet makes it harder for "kids to just be kids". So, he said campaigns like this one are more important than ever.

COSA will distribute the PSA to a numerous social media platforms in an effort to reach the target audience, students ages 12 to 17. Wright said this the first of many campaign projects that will be done in Dallas County to promote youth wellness.

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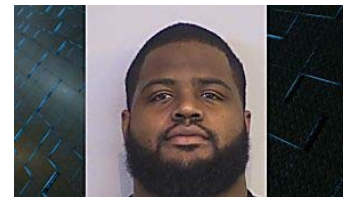
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