

Raising the Rigor of Alcohol Testing: Using EtG

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION • OFFICE OF SAFE AND DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS

STUDENT DRUG-TESTING INSTITUTE

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Student and Community Buy-In

- Series of programs for students and parents to provide information on the problem and encourage student interest in RSDT.
- Students are strong advocates of the program from the outset, in part because of tragedies in our community
- In March 2006, a group of five eighth graders prepared and presented an assembly program for the students of a middle school in another municipality to encourage them to adopt an RSDT Program at their school.
- Our first year, approximately 40% volunteered for the testing pool. During Year 2, that number doubled to 80%.

How Does It Work?

- Who is subject to testing?
 - In the **Mandatory Model** (high school), all participants in athletics and extra-curricular programs, students who wish to drive on campus, and participants in the voluntary program are subject to testing.
 - In the **Voluntary Model** (middle school), all students who enroll in the voluntary program are subject to testing.

Test Procedures

- Secure Testing Site (Nurse's Office)
- Students give a saliva and urine sample.
- We use a CLIA-Waived Split-Specimen Cup which tests for the standard NIDA five - THC, COC, OPI, AMP, PCP.
- Samples are screened for drug metabolites.
- We test for alcohol using a saliva swab (QED) or a urine test for Ethyl Glucuronide (EtG).

Getting Tough with Alcohol

- The results of our second community survey (May 2006) identified the need to more vigorously address underage drinking in our community.
- We researched various testing options for alcohol (we began the program by using a saliva swab) and found the EtG test for alcohol (“The 80-Hour Test”).
- We continued to look for evidence of the use of this test in schools and identified some issues with the sensitivity of the test as well as the need to control for “innocent positives” from environmental alcohol exposure (Nyquil and Purell).
- We began using the EtG test in February 2007 using a sensitivity level of 500 ng/ml.

Getting Tough with Alcohol

- EtG is a biomarker resulting from contact or consumption of alcohol identified and measured by laboratory analysis.
- With the swab, the effective range of detection is about 6-8 hours, the EtG Test raised the rigor of the test to up to 80 hours.
- The EtG test opened the window on weekend alcohol use.
- While there was little negative reaction to initiating our drug testing program, starting EtG alcohol testing gained national media attention.
- This identified a double standard involving alcohol use.
 - There is a prevailing opinion among many that drug use is bad, and alcohol use is a “rite of passage.”
 - Also, alcohol use is legal for those over the age of 21.

Getting Tough with Alcohol

- In our implementation of EtG Testing we decided to randomly select which students would receive this test.
- During our first year of EtG testing, one of three students tested received the EtG test.
- Early Results of EtG are underscored by ADA Survey data...

■ Alcohol Usage Last 30 Days* – Juniors and Seniors

<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>Actual Student</u>
54.5%	34.5%	20%	37% DECLINE	219 to 147 –

72 less students using alcohol

** The plan to include EtG testing was announced during this 30-day period.*

Alcohol and Drug Assessment Survey Results

“Reduction in the Incidence of Drug/Alcohol Use”

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	Baseline	Final	Difference
12 Months	12 Months	12 Months	12 Months	12 Months		
647 922	70% 446 807	55% 567 916	62% 501 904	55%	70%	21%
30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days		
315 922	34% 213 807	26% 278 916	30% 214 904	24%	34%	29%

“Reduction in the Incidence of Alcohol Use”

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	Baseline	Final	Difference
12 Months	12 Months	12 Months	12 Months	12 Months		
386 922	42% 304 807	38% 334 916	36% 315 904	35%	42%	17%
30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days		
242 922	26% 150 807	19% 182 916	20% 147 904	16%	26%	38%

ADA Summary

- Trends of use are consistent over the four surveys.
 - Alcohol is the drug of choice
 - Students are not using at school (for the most part)
 - Usage during the summer may be a significant factor.
 - There is a double standard about alcohol vs other drugs.
 - Different cohorts of students have different usage patterns
 - We have the greatest chance to affect change in the higher grades where usage is greater.
 - Continuing to stress prevention at the middle school is a positive deterrent which continues into the high school.

Our RDT experiences...

- To date, 1048 students have been tested under RDT.
- Since February 2007, we have used the EtG test for alcohol, testing a percentage of those randomly selected for RSDT.
- In our alcohol testing program, 775 students were tested using the saliva swab from 2005 through 2009. A total of 273 EtG tests were given from February 2007 to June 2009.
- We have had no positive results using the saliva swab, but we have had five positive EtG tests. These students have gotten assistance through some form of intervention program.
- The saliva swab essentially tests for students who are coming to school under the influence of alcohol.
- The deterrent value of our alcohol tests has increased with EtG because it also opens the window on weekend drinking.

Our RDT experiences...

- Student advocacy for the program has grown (particularly at the middle school where the program is voluntary). Up to 81% volunteerism.
- School climate has improved at both schools (MS,HS)
- Participation in athletics and activities at the high school has not suffered as a result of Random Student Drug Testing.
- We have also added the use of Breathalyzer testing for selected school events such as parties, dances, and proms.
- Parents and students sign a permission slip for each of these events with the understanding that students may be tested for alcohol before, during, or after the event.
- This addition has made our testing program even more comprehensive.

Contact Information

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