

Fairfield Behavioral Health Services Recognizes Alcohol Awareness Month



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People drink to celebrate, socialize, and relax. Alcohol plays a major part in our society, and many people use it in different settings. Throughout history, people have struggled to understand and manage alcohol's power. It can be used as a recreational/social drug, or it can be abused and cause harm to individuals, families, and communities. At Fairfield Behavioral Health Services, we recently celebrated our 23rd Annual Run/Walk in recognition of Alcohol Awareness Month. Our theme this year was "Run for Recovery."

According to the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention, "More than 140,000 people die from excessive alcohol use in the United States each year. Each day, there are more than 380 deaths" (CDC, 2023). Bringing awareness to individuals to reduce the stigma around alcoholism is extremely important, and the FBHS team knows from experience that people can recover.

Recognizing Alcohol Awareness in April allowed us the opportunity to share alcohol facts on our Facebook page and during our 5K Run/Walk event. Daily, our clinicians and prevention professionals diligently educate clients and students on the negative impact that alcohol can have on an individual, their families, and the community. The prevention department implements two evidence-based curricula in the schools of Fairfield County. We chose these curricula based on the data we received from students during our needs assessment.

Recently we conducted The SC Communities That Care (CTC) Survey. This survey is conducted every two years in Fairfield County. This year, it was conducted in March for all schools in Fairfield County -- including public (1 middle and 1 high school), private (1), and charter (1). The results showed that 78.7%

(607) 7th - 12th graders reported they have never used alcohol; 36.5% (264) 7th - 12th graders reported said it was "very easy or sort of easy" to get alcohol; 20.6% (148) reported "no risk or slight risk" from binge use [4 or more drinks per occasion for women and 5 or more per occasion for men]. These results are an indication that more work is needed. Consequently, FBHS provides an array of evidence-based prevention programs and services to help curtail negative statistics and change attitudes and behaviors around underage drinking and addiction: programs such as Keep it REAL, Life Skills Training, Strengthening Families, and Retailers Education Programs to name a few. In addition, we offer our Alcohol Education Program, which is an 8-hour diversionary program delivered in 2-hour increments for underage (17-20) drinking offenders with a 1st offense for purchasing, possessing, and transferring.

Regarding adults, alcohol abuse and addiction can be served/helped with several interventions, services, and programs. As the sole authority for providing substance use services in Fairfield County, FBHS offers the mandated re-licensing program for anyone with a DUI (driving under the influence) offense as required by the Department of Motor Vehicles. Addiction is a complex disease that requires complex interventions. FBHS also offers Medication Assisted Treatment for clients who have an opioid use disorder, as well as an alcohol use disorder that involves regular substance abuse counseling, prescribed medications, and regular medication management by a medical provider. Despite the opioid epidemic in this country--and even the devastating number of opioid overdoses with an increasing number of deaths each year in Fairfield, alcohol continues to be the number one drug of addiction people seek help for at FBHS and similar facilities across the state and country.

Did You Know?

- According to the 2022 County Health Ranking and Roadmaps report, Fairfield's excessive drinking rate was 19% compared to 22% for the State; and while the State's 2022 rate of 33% for alcohol-impaired driving deaths is the same as reported in 2021, Fairfield's rate in 2022 of 39% increased by 3 percentage points, higher than the state and

national rate of 27%.

- According to The County Level Profile on Substance Use-Related Indicators in South Carolina Rank (1 - 46 is the range of worst to best counties), Fairfield County ranked 1st or **worst** in the Overall Alcohol Domain in 2022 and 1st or worst in the state for Alcohol- Related Hospitalizations in 2022.
- Alcohol is more likely to kill young people than all illegal drugs combined.
- Those who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcoholism than those who begin at age 21.
- Alcohol continues to be one of the nation's most preventable causes of death, behind only tobacco, poor diet/sedentary lifestyle, and illegal drugs.
- Heavy alcohol use can increase the risk of certain cancers, stroke, and liver disease.
- Alcohol poisoning kills six peo-



ple every day. Of those, 76 percent are adults ages 35-64, and three of every four people killed by alcohol poisoning are men.

- Kids who start drinking young are seven times more likely to be in an alcohol-related motor vehicle accident.
- Alcoholism is the 4th leading lifestyle-related cause of death in the nation
- A large percentage of South Carolina car crashes are alcohol related. The State Department of Transportation statistics show that 47% of fatalities and 43% of injuries on secondary roads in South Carolina are due to drunk driving.

To learn more about how we can help you or someone you know who is struggling with alcohol abuse or addictions, please contact Fairfield Behavioral Health Services at 803.635.2335 or visit our website at www.fairfiledbhs.org.

CEREMONY from page 1

Professional Counseling, and a Bachelor's degree in Social Work.

Coach Richardson prides herself in being a Weight Loss Motivator and Influencer. She has served as a Team Leader for various gyms, which granted her the skills to instruct classes for all levels.

Her greatest accomplishment, however, is being the mother of five and losing over 90 pounds while on her own fitness journey, letting others know, 'If I can do it, so can you! We are in this together!'

Coach Richardson shared, "Words can't express the way I feel other than 'thankful' for this opportunity to make a difference in my community and the lives of the people in my community!"

She is available for consultations and offers a Rags to Riches Program.

For more information, call 803.801.3029 (Winnsboro) or 803.339.9361 (Lexington) or email:

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FUNDS from page 1

private citizens, will select projects that will receive funding in 2023.

CWHEP is a cooperative effort by Duke Energy, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR).

The program is funded annually from a fee charged to individuals and residential marina developers seeking permits to build piers on the Catawba-Wateree lakes. The Foothills Community Foundation administers the funds.

Those interested in seeking funds from CWHEP this year are encouraged to complete an application found at Catawba-Wateree Habitat Enhancement Program and submit it for consideration before July 31, 2023.

In addition to the Catawba-Wateree program, a Keowee-Toxaway Habitat Enhancement Program (KTHEP) was established in 2015 for projects along Lake Keowee and Lake Jocassee and their watersheds in the foothills region of South Carolina. Program information for the KTHEP can be found at Keowee-Toxaway Habitat Enhancement Program.

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