



Heartland Health Region

Building a region of healthy people and healthy communities!

HealthLine
1-877-800-0002

MEDIA RELEASE

Date September 2009
For Immediate Release

Drug and Alcohol Strategy Launch Date Set

Members of DAWN are people just like you who want their communities to be healthy, safe and supportive. In an attempt to make this happen and be one step closer to the goal of healthy, safe and supportive communities, the Drug and Alcohol Awareness Wellness Network (DAWN) will launch their regional drug strategy to communities across the region on Tuesday, September 22, 2009. The strategy has been a year in the making. The launch will take place in Kindersley at 11:00 am at the Norman Ritchie Centre and anyone is welcome to attend.

While developing the DAWN strategy, committee members made a point of ensuring it addressed the needs and issues faced in rural Saskatchewan with respect to drugs and alcohol. Community consultations were held between June 2007 and January 2008. Once they were completed, the call for partners was put out. The first partners' meeting was April 1, 2008. The drug strategy was completed in December 2008. DAWN took the information gathered at the community consultations to develop the regional drug strategy. This was in response to the common message they heard from the participants of the consultation – “where do we start?” The KDAWN committee in Kindersley did a test run of the strategy until the spring of 2009 to ensure it was community friendly.

DAWN's committee members represent youth, parents, justice, ministerial, education, sport and recreation, municipal and health sectors. They have come together from across the region with a common goal of helping West Central Saskatchewan communities reduce the use of drugs and alcohol. DAWN's purpose is to assist communities with their work to decrease substance use/abuse, advocate for positive change, promote connections between communities and act as a liaison as needed. The document contains 17 recommendations to provide guidance and suggestions on ways to make local communities safer and healthier places to live, work and play. These recommendations were in response to issues and concerns raised at community consultations Heartland held throughout the region.

Crystal Storey, DAWN Chairperson says “When Heartland first started holding community consultations; we had hoped a few people would be interested in working with us to address issues community members brought forth. What we got was an overwhelming positive response from partners with diverse backgrounds and viewpoints across the region to create DAWN.” “We are very excited about sharing this document with others who want to affect positive change. DAWN is especially proud of the drug strategy because of its strong rural perspective, taking into consideration the uniqueness of our communities.” The release will be held at 11:00 a.m. and everyone is welcome to attend.

Corporate Office ❖ P.O. Box 2110, Rosetown, SK S0L 2V0

Tel: (306) 882-4111, ext 233 ❖ Fax: (306) 882-1389 ❖ Email: leanne.paproski@hrha.sk.ca

Visit Heartland's website at www.hrha.sk.ca!

Background:

DAWN's mission statement is "To assist communities in building capacity to identify the harms associated with drug and alcohol use and assisting communities in their efforts to affect positive change." DAWN is a regional team working at a regional level to benefit all communities within west central Saskatchewan. Individual communities are encouraged to work in partnership with DAWN as they address the issues unique to them.

Due to the limited resources available in many rural communities, it is essential that groups and communities work together to achieve common goals. In this instance, that goal is to decrease the use and misuse of alcohol and other drugs. DAWN will undertake, but is not limited to, the following roles in decreasing substance use amongst west central Saskatchewan residents:

- Create/promote a framework document for communities.
- Provide leadership, direction and support to groups working towards decreased substance use within their communities.
- Act as a liaison between governmental, legislative, etc. entities and local committees as needed.
- Advocate for policy and action to decrease substance use.
- Empower residents to take responsible action against substance use.
- Encourage residents to be pro-active.
- Provide a venue to evaluate and monitor the progress of communities in their efforts.
- Compilation and sharing of resources to benefit local committees' work/initiatives.

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Media: For more information or to arrange interviews please contact LeAnne Paproski, Communications Coordinator, (306) 882-4111, ext. 233