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## **Governor Rell Ushers In Summer With Strong Message to Parents About Underage Drinking**

HARTFORD, CT – The onset of summer this weekend brings picnics, parties and an increased risk of underage drinking, according to The Governor’s Prevention Partnership, a nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping kids safe, successful and drug-free for a stronger workforce tomorrow.

“Typically, summer is a time of higher risk for underage drinking,” said Governor Jodi Rell, The Partnership’s co-chair. “And with underage drinking comes risky behavior, driving while drunk, accidents, serious injuries and deaths, all of which may be prevented when parents do their part.

Despite the worries many parents may be facing today regarding economic and employment issues, parents must remain vigilant and take responsibility for their children, paying close attention to their social life during the coming summer months. Many youth are at home unsupervised more often as parents work, or have personal disposable income from part-time summer jobs. With more time and money on their hands, the potential for harm related to alcohol abuse is far greater.”

While one in four teens reports having attended a party where minors were drinking in front of parents (American Medical Association, 2005) we know that high school students in CT are much less likely to binge drink if parents keep track of their whereabouts and they see their families as loving and supportive (CT School Health Survey 2007).

The Governor’s Prevention Partnership is issuing five reminders to parents about their responsibility to keep a watchful eye on their teenagers during the coming summer months:

1. Parents should know where their teens are, know their friends or get to know them;
2. Parents should call other parents to confirm that alcohol will not be served at a party and that a parent will be present;
3. Parents should remind their teens about the serious legal, safety, and health consequences of underage drinking and alcohol abuse, including the potential for life-threatening injury;
4. Parents should remind themselves that alcohol adversely affects the teenage brain. Teens who start using alcohol before age 15 are five times more likely to have alcohol-related problems later in life – especially troubling since 40% of kids report they get free alcohol from adults, sometimes parents (SAMHSA).

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5. Parents should recognize that underage drinking, “house party” and teen driving laws are being enforced. Parents (or any adult over 18) can be, and have been in Darien and Cornwall, CT, charged with “risk of injury to a minor” for providing alcohol. Providing alcohol to minors is a felony; you will be arrested. For youth under 21, hosting an underage drinking party can result in fines and a mandatory driver’s license suspension of 30 days.

“All parents must do their part to prevent underage drinking and support the laws that are in place for the safety and well-being of their families,” says Jill Spinetti, President of The Governor’s Prevention Partnership. “Staying vigilant over the summer months can help save young lives.”

Celebrating 20 years keeping Connecticut kids safe, successful and drug-free, The Governor’s Prevention Partnership is a statewide, nonprofit public-private alliance, building a strong, healthy future workforce through leadership in mentoring and prevention of youth violence, underage drinking, and substance abuse.

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*MISSION: With a focus on Connecticut’s youth, The Governor’s Prevention Partnership is a statewide public-private alliance, building a strong healthy future workforce through leadership in mentoring and prevention of violence, underage drinking, alcohol and drug abuse.*