

Community Prevention & Wellness Initiative

Partners for Healthy Communities

Coalition Mission

To build safe and healthy communities by providing leadership, promoting prevention, and building partnerships that mobilize youth, families, and neighborhoods to reduce substance abuse and other destructive behaviors among youth and the broader community.

Coalition Coordinator

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Staffing for the coalition and CPWI services comes from the Whatcom County Health Department and the Whatcom Family & Community Network (WFCN). The Health Department is the fiscal agent for the CPWI project and WFCN serves as fiscal agent for all other coalition efforts.

Whatcom Prevention Coalition

Bellingham, WA



About the Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI)

CPWI is a partnership of state agencies, counties, schools and local prevention coalitions supporting communities in preventing alcohol and other drug abuse and its negative consequences. CPWI priorities include reducing underage drinking, marijuana use and opioid misuse/abuse among middle and high school aged youth. By providing evidence-based practices and promoting the positive changes in communities, we can build healthier communities.

About the Coalition: Communities & Schools Working Together

The Whatcom Prevention Coalition (WPC) began providing CPWI services in 2012, but has served the Shuksan/Birchwood area over the past ten years under the umbrella of the Whatcom Prevention Coalition.

WPC has provided ongoing leadership, experience, and resources to support strategies designed to serve the community. The coalition has successfully coordinated a variety of events that support ongoing services (identified on back page). These efforts have included:

- Town Hall Meetings on Underage Drinking
- Shuksan Community Family Nights
- Training on Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Marijuana forums
- Support of regulations to restrict vaping in public places
- Coalition and community training events

Ongoing participation among this dedicated group has come from schools, law enforcement, health professionals, youth-serving organizations, parents, youth, media, businesses, treatment providers, and a variety of other partnerships. The coalition has benefitted from a variety of members that bring a range of knowledge, skill, and passion to local efforts. Aside from the successes achieved by WPC, one challenge has been to ensure coalition participation is always reflective of the diversity found in the community. The coalition is always looking for new members and welcomes new participation.

The coalition will continue working with key partners to coordinate community assessment, planning, and strategy implementation. Efforts will result in a range of community-building activities, school and community-based strategies, and support for public awareness campaigns relating to drug issues in the community.



About Our Community

Bellingham is the seat of Whatcom County and currently possesses a population of approximately 90,000 individuals. Shuksan Middle School, serving as the hub of the Birchwood and surrounding neighborhoods, is home to a 666 students in grades 6-8. The school offers diversity in its student composition, including 51% white, 29% Hispanic, 11% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 6% reporting two or more races.

There are a number of strengths in the community, including its leadership, its ability to positively engage members of the community, and its overall capacity to support youth and families to help them succeed. These strengths help offset challenges commonly seen in areas with higher population densities (and rental property rates), and income disparities. About 57% of the student population is eligible for free/reduced lunch (compared to 35% for the district).

Bellingham has a beautiful physical environment as well as rich social environment. These natural community assets help both youth and adults to explore their passions and help to connect them to the community.

About Prevention Programs in our Community

The WPC utilizes a combination of direct services, environmental services (population-level), and school-based prevention/intervention services to serve youth and families in the community. Goals, objectives, and strategies include:

Goal 1: Decrease the risk factor of “Family Management Problems”

Objective: Increase the knowledge of family management and parenting skills among parents of middle school aged youth.

Strategy: Strengthening Families Program (Parent Education)

Goal 2: Decrease the risk factor of “Favorable Attitudes Towards the Problem Behavior”

Objective: Increase the correct perception of peer behaviors (i.e., peer use).

Strategy: Social Norms Campaign

Goal 3: Decrease the risk factor of “Availability”

Objective: Decrease youth access to prescription medications and other substances in the Bellingham community.

Strategy: Community Opioid Interventions

Goal 4: Decrease the risk factor of “Lack of Commitment to School”

Objective: Increase opportunities, skills, and recognition for prosocial involvement in school and the classroom.

Strategy: Communities in Schools (Case Management)

Coordinated efforts also focus on community organizing, media campaign efforts, and Project Success (delivered in schools). Results are measured through tools designed for each strategy.

Other Contacts



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For more information
about CPWI visit

www.TheAthenaForum.org