

Community Prevention & Wellness Initiative

Partners for Healthy Communities

Coalition Mission

The mission of the Okanogan County Community Coalition is to effectively address the problems of youth substance abuse and violence in our community by promoting: collaboration, cooperation, communication, commitment, and cultural competency.



O K A N O G A N
COUNTY COMMUNITY

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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

Originally formed as part of Community Mobilization, the Okanogan County Community Coalition began as primarily a Meth Action Team. Over time, the Coalition evolved and began to target other substances, such as tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drugs. In 2010, the Coalition was awarded the Drug Free Communities grant – and at the same time was selected to participate in Cohort 1 of DBHR's Prevention Redesign Initiative. This began the Coalition's process of embracing not only the traditional evidence-based direct service programs, but also environmental strategies to begin to shift the overall community climate that made youth vulnerable to substance abuse. Since 2010, the Coalition has contributed to over a 60% reduction in 10th grade prescription drug abuse, over a 50% decrease in high school underage drinking, and early data is suggesting a 30% decrease in high school marijuana use.

Our Coalition encompasses all sectors of our community including: Colville Confederated Tribes, Washington State Patrol, Okanogan County Sheriff, Washington Fish & Wildlife Police, News Director – North Cascades Broadcasting, Okanogan County Prosecutor's Office, Community Health Director – Public Health, High School, Middle School and Elementary Principals, Nursing Director – Mid Valley Hospital, Parents, Omak Police Department – Police Chief, Omak City Council, Behavioral Health and Chemical Dependency, Youth, Dispute Resolution Center, Juvenile Detention Administration, Family Health Center, and DUI Crash Survivors.



About Our Community

With just over 40,000 people, Okanogan County is the largest geographic county in Washington and includes the western portion of the Colville Indian Reservation. The County is larger than several states, and covers 5,281 square miles, making it the geographically largest county in Washington.

According to the most recent American Community Survey, Omak is roughly 70% white, 17% American Indian, 12% Latino, and 1% falling into other racial groups. Our county is not only rural; it is remote, which reduces access to services, extended out-of-school time activities for students, and increases opportunities for identified risk factors.

Despite this challenge, shine a light on Omak, and you will find a strong, independent, and resilient community. With a small community, dollars can stretch further, professional partnerships are more personal, and the tipping point for change can be palpable. Stakeholders and community leaders understand that working in a silo isn't just ineffective, but impossible in a small community with very limited resources; therefore, creating lasting and meaningful partnerships is simply a way business is done in Omak.

About Prevention Programs in our Community

Goal: Reduce and prevent underage drinking, marijuana, and prescription/Over-The-Counter (OTC) medicine abuse, as well as prevent and/or foster resiliency related to complex trauma with the following strategies:

- Highly visible enforcement of underage drinking and marijuana laws.
- Comprehensive storage and take-back program for Rx and OTC medicine, paired with ongoing training for medical professionals about patients' vulnerability to addiction and overdose.
- Parents: Parenting the Love & Logic Way
- Students: PAX/Good Behavior Game and Project Success.
- Positive social norms using MOOV (Most of Okanogan Valley) brand.

Our **greatest challenge** is the legalization of marijuana for adults over 21, and the mixed message and increased access youth will have with this drug. Our **greatest strength** is that the Coalition is full of passion, wisdom, and history and has what it takes to accomplish even the most difficult task.

Outcomes will be measured using a variety of qualitative and quantitative data sources including: Healthy Youth Survey, monthly student surveys at Omak High School, environmental scans, law enforcement data, and health department data.

Other Contacts

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For more information
about CPWI visit
www.TheAthenaForum.org