

## For Immediate Release

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### **KDADS Promotes Alcohol Awareness Month** *2013 Campaign Highlights Underage Drinking*

TOPEKA – Alcohol is the number one drug of choice among Kansans, both adult and youth, and the consequences can be devastating for families and communities alike. In Kansas and across the country, April has been designated as Alcohol Awareness Month, an annual public awareness campaign that encourages local communities to recognize the serious problem of alcoholism and alcohol-related issues. This year, the national campaign highlights the important health issue of underage drinking.

According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc., alcohol use by young people is dangerous and has far-reaching consequences in the community. Underage drinking is directly related to traffic fatalities, suicide, violence, educational failure, alcohol overdose, unsafe sex and other problem behaviors. Annually, more than 6,500 people under the age of 21 years die from alcohol-related injuries and thousands more are injured.

Kansas Department on Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) Secretary Shawn Sullivan encourages everyone to get involved with reducing alcohol dependency in their community. “We can prevent alcoholism and addiction among our youth if we are diligent about offering education, intervention and treatment to them at an early age,” he said. “We must have a cooperative effort not just from government agencies, but from our schools, parents and community leaders.”

KDADS partners with many agencies and organizations at all levels in its prevention infrastructure, including federal partners like the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention to help reduce alcohol dependency in the state.

For more information about underage drinking or Alcohol Awareness Month, visit the NCADD website at [www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org) or visit [www.teenthinking.org](http://www.teenthinking.org), a resource for Kansas parents, communities and teens.

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*The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services' mission is to foster an environment that promotes security, dignity and independence, while providing the right care at the right time in a place called home.*