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News Release

Powell Township Gives ‘Moderate’ Drinking a Definition with 0-0-1-3 Policy

BIG BAY – Powell Township adopted the Marquette County Board of Health’s recommendation aimed at defining moderate alcohol consumption for attendees at community events and athletic events. The policy is known as “0-0-1-3.”

The numbers represent no alcohol for people under 21 years of age, no driving under the influence of alcohol, one alcoholic beverage per hour, and no more than three alcoholic beverages at one event. Powell Township is the first municipality in the country to adopt the policy for public events held in the township.

"When you consider that alcohol abuse is America’s No. 1 youth drug problem, communities should support programs that assist in preventing problems," said Powell Township Clerk, Diane Burns.

“We’ve all seen those billboard ads along the highway for an alcoholic beverage or watched a television commercial promoting the same thing. At the bottom of these ads we see the words ‘drink responsibly,’ ” noted Shelby Nordheim, health education intern at the Marquette County Health Department. “We hear those words again and again, and most of us assume we know what they mean. But do we really?”

The 0-0-1-3 policy defines moderate drinking as one alcoholic beverage per hour and no more than three per event, and is based on alcohol impairment charts.

One alcoholic beverage is equal to 12 ounces of beer, 1.25 ounces of 80 proof liquor, or five ounces of table wine. Most people can consume three alcoholic beverages over the course of a three-hour period and remain below the Michigan legal limit of .08 percent blood alcohol concentration. Anything above that constitutes a driving under the influence (DUI).

Members of the Marquette County Coalition for Substance Abuse and Violence endorse the policy for many reasons, including associated reductions in drunk driving. In Marquette County 20 motor vehicle fatalities between 2001 and 2005 involved alcohol.

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Paul Olson, a youth development specialist at the Great Lakes Center for Youth Development, believes the policy is important to positive youth development in Marquette County. “Children watch adult behavior very closely. They’re looking for clues as to what is appropriate and what isn’t. So, apart from safety concerns, many parents avoid community events where alcohol is served because they don’t feel comfortable exposing their children to adults who are intoxicated in public. From this angle, we hope 0-0-1-3 raises attendance at community events by reassuring parents that other adult attendees will behave responsibly.”

The Marquette County Sheriff's Office is responsible for the administration of alcohol licenses for community events in areas in the county without a law enforcement agency. According to Sue Girard-Jackson of the Sheriff's Office, these temporary or "special" alcohol licenses fall under many of the same rules that apply to liquor licenses:

- Alcohol must not sell to minors
- The area where alcohol is sold must be clearly separated from the event with a border such as a rope or fence
- The event must not sell alcohol to intoxicated people

Girard-Jackson agreed the 0-0-1-3 program can go a long way in helping community events avoid problems such as people leaving the event intoxicated.

Nordheim pointed out that the Greeks had a definition for “moderate,” as pointed out in the following lines from an ancient play:

For sensible men I prepare only three kraters (drinks): one for health, which they drink first, the second for love and pleasure, and the third for sleep. After the third one is drained, wise men go home. The fourth krater is not mine---it belongs to bad behavior; the fifth is for shouting; the sixth is for rudeness and insults; the seventh is for fights; the eighth is for breaking the furniture; the ninth is for depression; the tenth is for madness and unconsciousness.

“Some may consider this quote simply a funny line from a play so long ago that it has no relevance in our world today, Nordheim said. “Unfortunately, some people don’t or can’t stop drinking after a few. A community shouldn’t enable this behavior,” she said.

Community resources for the policy include alcohol sales training and wrist bands. For more information on 0-0-1-3 call Jim Harrington, Medical Director of the Marquette County Health Department, at 906-315-2614, or Girard-Jackson at the Marquette County Sheriff, 906-225-8473.

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