

Alcohol Awareness Day

INFORMATIONAL LETTER: 30

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TO: All Superintendents of Schools, Public and Private Secondary and Elementary School Principals, Safe and Drug Free Schools Contact Persons

FROM: Susan Gendron, Commissioner, Department of Education

Guy Cousins, Director, Office of Substance Abuse, Department of Health and Human Services

DATE: September 23, 2009

SUBJECT: Alcohol Awareness Day

Alcohol Awareness Day, the first Monday in December, shall be observed by studying, for at least 45 minutes, a constructive approach toward the use of alcohol and the problems and dangers of alcohol abuse upon the individual, the family, and the society. The Commissioner shall prepare appropriate materials for this observation. MRSA Title 20-A, Section 4803, Sub-section 5

Alcohol Awareness Day will be December 7, 2009 as part of Maine's Alcohol Awareness Week, December 7-11, 2009. Many civic groups and alcohol service agencies, along with schools, will be sponsoring Alcohol Awareness Week activities. Through this law, the state of Maine recognizes the need for schools and community organizations to address alcohol issues.

Teachers seeking assistance in planning an Alcohol Awareness Day activity may contact the Maine Office of Substance Abuse, Information and Resource Center (IRC), Department of Health and Human Services at 1-800-499-0027, or 287-8900, TTY 1-800-606-0215 or Email at osa.ircosa@maine.gov. Age-appropriate materials which can be duplicated for classroom use are available upon request. Using a video, followed by a class discussion, is another way to address Alcohol Awareness Day. Reserve your materials now to ensure availability. The IRC staff have videos available for loan (they suggest reserving a video at least 3 weeks prior to the event). All titles are online in a searchable database at www.maineosa.org/irc. The IRC has also created a web site with an array of materials for alcohol awareness day activities at: www.maineosa.org/irc/alcoholawareness.htm

Beyond observing Alcohol Awareness Day, it is essential that Maine students be provided with education and awareness about alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, abuse and dependence. The Department of Education and the Office of Substance Abuse encourage the establishment of comprehensive, ongoing programs for Kindergarten through Grade 12 students. This type of program will produce the greatest impact in the area of tobacco use prevention, and other drug prevention and education. For more information, see the coordinated school health guidelines at <http://www.maineoshp.com>.

For questions or more information, contact the Office of Substance Abuse Information & Resource Center at 1-800-499-0027.