

Connecticut Colleges Recommit to Curb Substance Abuse

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Article Audio

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Nearly a quarter of full-time college students meet the criteria of substance abuse addiction. That sobering statistic was presented at the Connecticut Statewide Healthy Campus Initiative Key Leadership awards.

College presidents and state officials met at Wesleyan University to reaffirm their commitment to tackling campus substance abuse. Some of these same leaders met two years ago when more than two dozen college leaders signed an agreement to address high-risk drinking among their student bodies.

The event's keynote speaker, Joseph Califano says that he was impressed by Connecticut's efforts to curb the problem, but a lot has to be done to change cultural attitudes.

"We go into national mourning when 32 kids die in Virginia Tech from a crazy kid with a gun, and yet every year 1700 college students die from alcohol poisoning and alcohol-related incidents. We just kind of gloss over it. I think what's happening here in Connecticut is a good example for the rest of the country."

Deputy Commissioner of the State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Peter Rockholz says screening processes at student health centers is key in reducing alcohol abuse. But he stresses that parents also have a major role in preventing substance abuse in their children.