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State, Local Leaders Host Youth Drug Prevention Forum

Parents, educators encouraged to Start Talking! about substance abuse and addiction

MARYSVILLE – When it comes to fighting substance abuse and addiction, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. That old adage has never been truer as Ohio communities embrace Start Talking! -- a new statewide youth drug prevention initiative championed by Gov. John Kasich and First Lady Karen W. Kasich.

State and local officials will preview these new resources and discuss what the state is doing to fight addiction during a community forum at Bunsold Middle School, 14198 State Route 4, Marysville, this Thursday at 6 p.m. Parents, guardians, educators and community leaders are encouraged to attend the free event. Attendees will hear from State Sen. Dave Burke (R-Marysville), Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Director Tracy Plouck, Ohio State Highway Patrol Lt. Molly Harris, Marysville Mayor John Gore, Union County Sheriff Jamie Patton and Marysville Chief of Police.

“This forum is a great opportunity to bring our parents, teachers, school leaders and community together and have an honest conversation about youth drug and alcohol prevention. As a legislator and pharmacist, I have seen firsthand the tragedy that results from alcohol and drug abuse. As a father, I understand the importance of keeping an open line of communication with our children to have these conversations.”

Launched in January, Start Talking! brings together four proven strategies that leverage the parent-child relationship to help prevent youth substance abuse before it starts. The initiative is predicated on national research that shows children whose parents talk about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs are up to 50 percent less likely to use than children who do not have these critical conversations with a trusted adult. Thursday’s forum will include a brief overview of each of the four core program components, remarks from state and local leaders, a brief video and an opportunity for open discussion.

“Under Gov. Kasich’s leadership, Ohio has made attacking the drug problem a priority,” said Director Plouck. “Start Talking! provides the tools needed to start the conversation with youth about the importance of living healthy, drug-free lives. The time to talk is now. Ohio’s future depends on it.”

The Start Talking! program gives communities four separate tools to start the conversation about drug use: *Know!*, *5 Minutes for Life*, *Parents360Rx* and *Building Youth Resiliency*. Learn more at www.StartTalking.ohio.gov and follow the conversation on Facebook www.facebook.com/starttalkingohio and Twitter (use hashtag #StartTalkingOhio).

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