I. CASCO BAY REGION COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS & RESOURCES FOR YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION: Overview/Summary Statement

Youth substance use is a serious concern in the Casco Bay region, as it is in many other communities in Maine. What follows is a brief history, mission, and an assessment of the substance use prevention needs and resources of the Casco Bay CAN Coalition, a group formed to reduce youth substance use in the Casco Bay community.

Casco Bay CAN Coalition History: In the spring of 2007, the Healthy Casco Bay Coalition was created to develop a community-wide prevention movement. At the request of Healthy Casco Bay, the 21 Reasons Coalition of Portland mentored the group while they formed their own multi-sector Coalition, with the support of a Drug-Free Communities mentee grant. During this time, the newly formed Coalition conducted an assessment of youth substance use in Casco Bay. In 2008, this new group chose the name Casco Bay CAN- Create Awareness Now (To Reduce Youth Substance Use). We developed a strong identity around youth substance use prevention and in 2010 we were awarded our own Drug-Free Communities (DFC) grant for five years to support our prevention efforts.

Casco Bay CAN is a regional, multi-sector Coalition, comprised of representatives from the region’s schools, law enforcement, parent groups, youth organizations, treatment agencies, faith organizations, businesses, and more.

Casco Bay CAN Community Overview: Located in Cumberland County, the Casco Bay region includes the towns of Cumberland, Falmouth, Freeport, Yarmouth, Pownal, and North Yarmouth and in November 2014 Casco Bay CAN expanded to include the towns of Gray and New Gloucester. The Casco Bay region is one of four Healthy Maine Partnership regions as defined by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and is one of three DFC Coalitions in Cumberland County. The Casco Bay region can be categorized as largely suburban with populations ranging from 1,474 in Pownal, to 14,551 in Falmouth. While some of the towns, such as Falmouth, border on the city of Portland, the region stretches over 20 miles to the north and west away from the state’s economic hub.

There is very little racial diversity, with 97% of the population White according to the 2010 Census data. The socioeconomic status of towns within this region can be summarized as stable. Falmouth, Yarmouth and Cumberland have median household incomes well above the Maine state average of $48,219 and the Cumberland County average of $57,159, while the towns of Pownal, Freeport, Gray, New Gloucester and North Yarmouth are more closely aligned with the state averages. The Casco Bay region includes five school districts and six private schools.

Casco Bay CAN Mission: Mobilize citizen involvement and multi-sector collaboration to foster a healthy community environment with norms, policies, and practices that work together to promote positive, drug and alcohol-free development for all Casco Bay youth.

Casco Bay CAN Vision: Casco Bay CAN envisions safe and healthy communities where our youth are free of substance use and abuse.
II. 2014 CASCO BAY REGION COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS & RESOURCES FOR YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION: *Key Findings*

1. **Sources**

Data sources include archival quantitative and qualitative data such as:

- Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) for youth substance use data from 2009, 2011, and 2013 accessed through a confidentiality agreement between school districts and the State of Maine
- Law enforcement data on youth alcohol and drug violations from 2010 thru 2014 accessed through Coalition involvement agreement
- Casco Bay Parent Phone Survey on parental behavior and attitude from a 2012 and 2014 Survey (administered by an independent marketing agency, an average of 250 respondents with a margin of error +/- 6.2%)
- Online parent survey, sent out via Survey Monkey, August 2014, 177 respondents
- Maine Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, Community Epidemiology Surveillance Network (CESN)
- Discussion notes from regional meetings, interview notes from one-on-one meetings with Key Informants, notes from youth panel discussions and *Table Talk* sessions (a local initiative to help parents network with other parents around underage drinking and drug use prevention and notes from other community presentations)

2. **Casco Bay Resources/Assets**

*Effective collaborations:* The Casco Bay CAN Coalition is fortunate to have strong collaborations with multiple key partners in each of the region’s towns. Each partner benefits from participating in our Coalition through information sharing and networking, while CAN benefits from their partnership in a number of ways. Our collaborators with one example of many of their contributions include:

- Five local school systems (provides CAN student data from MIYHS)
- Multi-jurisdictional law enforcement agencies including Cumberland County Sheriff’s Office and Freeport, Yarmouth, Falmouth and Cumberland Police Departments (provides CAN youth violation data)
- Cumberland County District Attorney’s Offices (provides CAN with youth violations data)
- Maine Department of Corrections, Juvenile Community Corrections Offices (provides CAN with youth violations data)
- PORT Teen Center (assists CAN in analyzing root causes of substance use problems in the community)
- YMCA of Southern Maine (assists CAN in analyzing root causes of substance use problems in the community)
- H.O.P.E. Counseling Services (assists CAN in analyzing root causes of substance use problems in the community)
- First Congregational Church, New Gloucester (assists CAN in analyzing root causes of substance use problems in the community)
• MaryBeth Bachman, Falmouth High School Nurse (assists CAN in analyzing root causes of substance use problems in the community)
• Morel Communications (assists CAN in analyzing root causes of substance use problems in the community)
• Bow Street Distributing (assists CAN in promoting seller-server trainings)
• Freeport, Falmouth, Yarmouth and Cumberland Cable TV stations (assists CAN in promoting messages throughout service area)
• Andrea Connor, Parent (assists CAN in analyzing root causes of substance use problems in the community)
• Eric McKeone, Youth (assists the Coalition in analyzing root causes of substance use problems in the community)
• Cumberland County Government (fiscal representative who sponsors the Drug-Free Communities and Healthy Maine Partnership grants)

A multi-jurisdictional Law Enforcement Subcommittee has been established with representatives from each of the four police departments, Sheriff’s office, Juvenile Corrections, and a representative from the District Attorney’s office. Meetings are held regularly to discuss best-practices and priorities, analyze data and help guide the Coalition’s prevention work. Schools (both public and private) in all five districts collaborate to promote parent education campaigns and host community forums. Businesses, such as alcohol retailers and servers partner with law enforcement and receive training in responsible beverage server-seller practices and participate in Project Sticker Shock twice a year with area youth. Many Faith leaders have joined our efforts and for the past several years have attended an annual forum on addressing substance use in the Casco Bay region.

The Enforcing of Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) Taskforce for Cumberland County works with various law enforcement agencies throughout the region to support underage drinking prevention and reduction efforts. All Casco Bay law enforcement agencies have agreed to join the EUDL taskforce and work with other departments to provide party patrols and compliance checks. Additionally, the Casco Bay multi-jurisdictional Law Enforcement Subcommittee has agreed to collaborate on inter-agency support for party patrols and compliance checks.

The Casco Bay community also has local prevention, intervention and treatment resources available for youth and their families, however they are somewhat limited. Within the Casco Bay region eight Substance Abuse Counselors with a specialized focus in treating youth are available, mostly in private practice settings. Often, these counselors are not able to take on any additional clients due to their capacity limitations. Some towns have diversion programs, such as the Student Intervention and Reintegration Program (SIRP) and Youth Court (Youth MOVE Maine), which work with first-time offenders to prevent teens from going through the court system, but these resources do not address the level of need.

School districts in the Casco Bay region have varying Codes-of-Conduct, but each of these has its limits. Many of the policies do not include a standard set of consequences when a youth is found to be in the presence of drugs and/or alcohol. The Coalition has advised school districts in the Casco Bay area on Codes-of-Conduct policies and provided sample best-practice Codes-of-Conduct and other support materials to review when the school districts are assessing their policies. The Coalition has provided school districts with clarification on Maine marijuana laws as they pertain to schools.
Additionally, school-based Substance Abuse Counselors are present in three out of five High Schools in the Casco Bay region and of those, two are employed as full-time Substance Abuse Counselors with other counseling duties and one is a part-time Substance Abuse Counselor and none are present in the middle schools in our five school districts, creating additional gaps.

In order to create sustainable prevention practices, the Coalition encourages an integration of resources, and the coordination and collaborations of community entities. Coalition members effectively utilize their networks and personal relationships to create a sense of unity and shared mission in the community and build lasting relationships.

Regional collaborations that address behavioral health are also vital to the Casco Bay communities and include:

- Other Drug-Free Community projects in Cumberland County (joined efforts and implemented a three-year parent campaign called Back Each Other Up)
- Regional Superintendents (provides student survey data - MIYHS)
- Maine Alliance to Prevent Substance Abuse (provides a unified statewide voice for substance use prevention)
- Smart Approaches to Marijuana (provides a unified statewide voice rejecting legalization of marijuana)
- Healthy Cumberland County Advisory Board (provides a unified county-wide voice for substance use prevention, health and wellness)
- City of Portland and Healthy Casco Bay (works to reduce tobacco use, increase physical activity, encourage healthy nutrition and supports CAN to address substance use prevention with funding support)

**Partners/systems supporting positive youth development:** Responses from town hall meetings, Key Informant interviews, and our Parent Phone Survey clearly show that the Casco Bay region is rich with community assets, which can act as protective factors against youth substance use. For example:

- The Casco Bay region is made up of many dedicated, hard-working youth and adults who are committed to developing a community that really cares about its members. The towns within this region are tight-knit communities full of small businesses, local organizations, schools, libraries, and outdoor public spaces.
- The small size of each Casco Bay town allows for close relationships between adults and youth (e.g. parents and kids, mentors and youth, coaches and athletes, teachers and students, or others). Key Informants note that most Casco Bay parents are often very involved in their children's lives.
- Many adults and youth list the area’s high-quality schools, extracurricular activities, and school-based resources as strong protectors against youth substance use. Community members cite teachers and coaches, sports, in-school activities, and other extracurricular activities as school-based strengths. One-on-one meetings with Key Informants suggested that the majority of Casco Bay youth participate in one or more after-school/extracurricular activities. Additionally, youth in two school districts participate in clubs (Natural Helpers and BOLD) that promote drug-and-alcohol-free choices.
**Community volunteers:** In addition to the many professionals who serve on the Coalition as organizational representatives, Casco Bay CAN has some very dedicated local parents that serve on (and chair) its Steering Committee and volunteer their time outside of meetings. Various professionals such as nurses and Substance Abuse Counselors have presented at *Table Talks* and other community forums on youth substance use. Many community members have given their time by attending community forums, tabling at various community fairs and festivals, and sharing resources with their co-workers, friends and family. Casco Bay CAN Coalition members donate their time and sometimes printing costs, outside of meeting time to distribute materials throughout the community—such as to faith groups, at youth sports events, or by putting up flyers in local businesses.

The Coalition has also succeeded in engaging youth volunteers, primarily through the schools. To better understand the youth perspective, the Coalition annually hosts a youth-led discussion panel made up of students from all five school districts. Coalition members and others working in the substance use prevention field are the intended and invited audience members. Additionally, youth volunteers, in collaboration with local alcohol retail businesses and law enforcement, join efforts to promote *Project Sticker Shock* in December during the holiday season and again in May for prom and graduation season. High school youth put awareness stickers on alcohol packs that cite the state law and penalties for providing alcohol to a minor. Middle school youth further expanded the project to include local restaurants where they put stickers on pizza box toppers that cite the state laws and encourage adults by messaging “Because You Care About Teens, Don’t Provide the Means.”

**Financial resources:** In addition to donated time, many Casco Bay organizations and individuals generously offer meeting space and/or other in-kind donations. Town Halls, schools, law enforcement departments, the Freeport Community Center and YMCA offer a meeting room for Steering Committee and Law Enforcement Subcommittee meetings, large community forums, alcohol retailer seller-server trainings, and *Table Talk* presentations.

Cumberland County Government is the fiscal agent for the Coalition’s federal and state grants and further sponsors the project by providing human resources and financial management support. The Coalition is in its fourth year of a five year grant totaling $625K from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Coalition also receives annual state funding support from the City of Portland, Department of Health and Human Services as part of Healthy Casco Bay. The state funding varies from year-to-year and ranges from $3,000 to upwards of $5,500.

Schools and law enforcement agencies frequently provide in-kind printing of parental monitoring materials or information about upcoming events. Towns, schools, law enforcement agencies and parent blogs provide this same information on their websites, or in a newsletter that is sent out to community members. They also post the Coalition’s “Prevention Tip of the Month” on their websites and local community television channel every month. Several schools are also sending out our weekly “Life of a Student Athlete” tip which promotes healthy choices to student athletes during the school year. Local newspapers consistently promote our events or notices in their weekly papers at no-cost. Organizations have also offered to waive tabling fees for events and presentations where Coalition members distribute brochures and resources to the community. In addition, all those involved donate their travel time and mileage to the effort which, in a large geographic area, adds up to a considerable amount of travel.
YOUTH USE RATES:
We collected youth substance use data through the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS), administered by the Maine Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHS) in schools across the state. Presented here is aggregate data combined from the following towns that comprise the Casco Bay region: Falmouth, Cumberland, North Yarmouth, Yarmouth, Freeport, Gray, New Gloucester and Pownal.

Overall, usage rates for alcohol and prescription drugs have decreased since 2011. The past 30-day use of marijuana for students in grades 7-12 in 2011 was 16% and decreased slightly in 2013 to 14%. While 7-12 grade use rates of alcohol and other substances in the Casco Bay region appear comparable to the rest of the state, a difference is evident when we examine rates among 12th grade students. By the time students in the Casco Bay region reach senior year, their use rates of alcohol, marijuana and prescription drug misuse are above the statewide 12th grade average. In 2013, 42% of Casco Bay 12th graders reported using alcohol (statewide at 37%), 31% reported using marijuana (statewide at 29%) and 8% misused prescription drugs (statewide at 7%).

The 2013 MIYHS data shows a significant increase in substance use between 8th and 9th grades (when many students move from middle school to high school). Students who reported that they used alcohol or marijuana in the past 30-days: 8th grade alcohol use at 5% increased to 12% in 9th grade and 8th grade marijuana use at 4% increased to 8% in 9th grade. Additionally, 47% of Casco Bay students reported that before they were 11 years old they had their first drink of alcohol other than a few sips while the state average is at 35%. This suggests that youth in Casco Bay are participating in higher-risk drinking practices earlier than the state average.

According to the 2013 MIYHS data, high school students who have used substances in the past 30-days primarily used alcohol at 27%, marijuana at 19% and prescription drugs at 5%. Middle school students also reported their past 30-day consumption in the 2013 MIYHS and 5% primarily used alcohol, 3% used marijuana and 2% misused prescription drugs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIYHS 2013 Past 30-Day Summary</th>
<th>Casco Bay Schools (CBS) v. Maine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS</td>
<td>ME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th-8th grade *CBS only 8th grade</td>
<td>5% (1 in 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th-12th grade</td>
<td>27% (1 in 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Not prescribed by your doctor. The MIYHS question lists examples of misused prescription drugs in Maine such as Vicodin, OxyContin, Percocet, Adderall, Ritalin, Valium, and Xanax.

According to the Maine Office of Substance Abuse Treatment Data System (TDS) from July 2013 through June 2014 in Cumberland County, 60 adolescents ages 13-18 were admitted with marijuana as their
“primary presenting problem used inappropriately.” Used inappropriately can be defined as the use of drugs that should be entirely avoided, should be avoided at excessive dosages and should not be used for excessive durations. A drug is deemed inappropriate if its potential for harm is greater than its potential for benefit.

Of the 60 adolescents that were admitted, 18 required an evaluation and 42 were evaluated and recommended for treatment of substance use. All admitted patients were placed in either an adolescent outpatient facility or an adolescent residential rehabilitation transitional facility, with the majority placed in an adolescent outpatient facility. Additionally, 15 of the 60 admitted were females and 45 were males. The table below reflects the age of those treated or evaluated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Substance Use Treatment</th>
<th>Evaluation Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 year old</td>
<td>&lt;5*</td>
<td>&lt;5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 year old</td>
<td>&lt;5*</td>
<td>&lt;5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 year old</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 year old</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 year old</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 year old</td>
<td>&lt;5*</td>
<td>&lt;5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Values less than 5 aren’t defined in the TDS Reporting System to protect confidentiality

**KEY FOCUS AREAS**
There are generally four key areas in a community which have influence over youth use rates. Those areas are Community Norms, Parental Monitoring, Youth Access to Drugs and Alcohol, and Enforcement. We will look at the strengths and weaknesses of each of these influences in order to help us identify and prioritize focus areas for our Coalition. We have also identified the medical care community as vital partners in environmental prevention practices.

In addition, based on data analyses of our Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, known risks in the community, and responses from Parent Phone Survey and internet based opinion survey, the following substances have been identified as either highly used or are the primary concern to members of the Casco Bay community: alcohol, prescription drugs, and marijuana. Because of this analysis, those are the substances on which our Coalition will focus its prevention efforts.

**COMMUNITY NORMS**
According to the 2013 MIYHS, 53% of Casco Bay students feel like they matter to other people in their community, compared to 51% of Maine students. Types of organizations that were mentioned in both the Parent Phone Survey and in Key Informant conversations include: the Casco Bay and New Gloucester YMCA, local teen center (the PORT, in Freeport), the GNG Patriot Parents, youth-specific organizations (Girls on the Run, Little Leagues, Casco Bay Youth Hockey Association), faith groups and other places for youth to hang out after school. The 2013 MIYHS results (average of 8th thru 12th grade responses) show 51% of Casco Bay students have opportunities to engage in pro-social activities in the community and engage with adults, compared to 48% of Maine students.

The 2013 MIYHS shows the perception of harm decreases as a student gets older: 90% of Casco Bay students in 8th grade believe that there is a risk of harm in drinking alcohol while 77% of 12th graders believe there is a risk of harm. Seventy-four percent of students in 8th grade perceive there is a risk of
harm using marijuana and 32% of 12th graders perceive risk of harm. Complicating matters, the legalization of marijuana movement that has recently arrived in Maine promotes it as harmless, therefore putting teens at risk from exposure to conflicting messages.

In addition, over the past few years, Maine has enacted legislation which increases access to and threatens our community norms around alcohol availability. Retailers can now hold up to 36 taste-testing events for beer, wine and malt liquor, golf carts can now sell malt liquor on the golf course and convenience stores are now permitted to sell liquor in addition to beer, wine and malt liquor. Convenience stores and grocery stores alike see a lot of their revenues from the sale of alcoholic beverages, making it difficult to refuse business as some rely on these profits to succeed.

Law enforcement Coalition members describe how difficult it can be to work against the prevailing community norms that underage drinking and marijuana use is okay. Law enforcement officers who provide citations for such illegal actions say that they have received legal threats and backlash from parents protecting their kids. This can lead to frustration among police, who feel as though their underage drinking enforcement efforts are futile, as parents and their kids will find a way to get out of their citations. Additionally, parents may not want to call law enforcement if they believe harsh consequences, rather than corrective actions to prevent future violations will occur. Law enforcement can encourage parents to reach out if alternatives such as Youth Court or Student Intervention and Reintegration Program (SIRP) are offered for first time youth offenders.

**PARENTAL MONITORING AND MESSAGING:**
Consistently Key Informant interviews and Table Talk events have confirmed parents would like to receive educational information regarding alcohol and drug use earlier in their children’s lives. School districts in the Casco Bay region provide information and tips from Casco Bay CAN for parenting young children so they may achieve optimal behavioral, social, and emotional health, providing them with resiliency as they age.

Additionally, Key Informant interviews and Table Talk attendees also tell us that in order to increase parental monitoring and enforcement around youth substance use, there is a critical need for parental networking opportunities. By empowering parents with the skills and knowledge to talk to their teen, they will be able to establish rules around substance use and enforce and monitor their teen's behavior.

Our 2014 Parent Phone Survey found that parents are most concerned about youth prescription drug misuse (99%), then alcohol use (90%) and to a lesser extent, marijuana (82%) use.

There were increases in the percentage of parents who labeled alcohol and prescription drugs as extremely dangerous, yet a decrease in parents who labeled marijuana as such. The data corresponds with national trends as well as the local legalization movement which promotes marijuana as harmless.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents who believe that it is extremely dangerous for their teen to:</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drink Alcohol</strong></td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>90%  ↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smoke Marijuana</strong></td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>82%  ↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Misuse Prescription Drugs</strong></td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>99%  ↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While quantitative social indicator data has been difficult to collect for this region, responses to our
2014 Parent Phone Survey show that community members are highly concerned about problems associated with youth substance use. Key Informant interviews with community members reveal a high level of concern with effects on brain development, school failure and sexual assault. Parents reported they are most concerned that if their teen drinks alcohol they will:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Concerns for Youth’s Use of Alcohol (of youth in grades 7-12)</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drink in excess</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May move on to other drugs</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May affect brain development</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades might slip</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead to depression or suicide</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data suggests that as teens get older, they perceive underage drinking as more of a norm; that sentiment is further emphasized by the 35% of parents in Casco Bay who believe that it is inevitable that teens will drink alcohol. Comparing responses from the Parent Phone Survey of middle school parents to high school parents, we see that these patterns in parental attitudes may take root as youth transition from middle school to high school. This may illustrate a natural shift which occurs as teens move through high school, often gaining drivers’ licenses, jobs, and increased independence.

While the data shows parental increases in knowledge of risks and attitudes favorable towards prevention of underage drinking and other drugs, there is a drop in prevention behaviors. For instance, there is a decrease in parents who call to see if parents or other responsible / supervising adult will be at a party, not allow their teen to attend an event with alcohol or talk with other parents about rules and consequences.

As for parental monitoring, there was a decrease in parents who regularly talk to their teen about the dangers of drinking alcohol, a slight increase in parents who said it was okay for their teen to drink, and no statistically significant movement in the percentage of parents of who believe they have the ability to influence their teens choice not to drink.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Of the 35% of Parents who answered “it is inevitable that teens will try alcohol”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7TH</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8TH</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9TH</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10TH</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11TH</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12TH</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Of the 16% of parents who said it was okay for their teen to drink alcohol in 2014:

- 25% said it was okay to drink in any location or occasion
- 23% said it was okay at dinner or during the weekend at someone else’s house
- 14% said it was okay during the weekend at my house
Key Informant interviews, youth panelists, and Table Talk attendees also revealed that youth in Casco Bay are immersed in a culture that allows young people’s use of alcohol. The data show that these community norms are promoted by parents who believe their children should be exposed to alcohol early on so they can learn how to drink “responsibly” before they are of legal age. They also report that it is common practice for parents to allow their children and their children’s friends to drink alcohol in their home, rationalizing that if they take away youths’ car keys, they are keeping their teens safe. These pervasive myths and mixed messages may be contributing to the binge drinking rates of (one in seven) high school students in Casco Bay.

According to the 2013 MIYHS, Casco Bay youth believe that their parents would disapprove of them drinking alcohol or using marijuana. However, when we compare alcohol use disapproval by parents, 9th graders reported 96% of their parents would disapprove while 92% of 12th graders report that their parents would disapprove and 93% of 9th graders believe their parents would disapprove of them using marijuana while 82% of 12th graders feel this way. This change as teens grow older illustrates that parents may not be sending clear, consistent messages around alcohol and marijuana use to youth, especially as they reach the later teenage years.

The 2013 MIYHS results show that 49% of Casco Bay youth in grades 9-12 believe that if they drank alcohol without their parents’ permission, they would be caught by their parents. This is higher than the 2010 state rate of 47%.

According to the 2014 Parent Phone Survey, 58% of parents believe they would catch their teen if they drank alcohol, (down 5% from 2012 Parent Phone Survey), 45% of parents believe they would catch their teen using marijuana, (down 3% from 2012 Parent Phone Survey), and 34% of parents feel they would catch their teen for misusing prescription drugs, (also down 5% from the 2012 Parent Phone Survey). Despite the positive movement in youth perceptions of being caught, parents are feeling less confident that they will catch their youth if they are using.

Our online survey of parents in Casco Bay reveals that 58% are very likely to check up on their teen for signs of alcohol and/or drug use, while 41% of parents report they never, do so. Also, there is a disconnect between what parents report they are likely to do what they are actually doing when it comes to talking to their teen. The same survey shows that 81% of parents are very likely to talk to their teens about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, however 58% actually did talk to their teen: 30% had talked in the last week, 10% in the past 2 weeks, 13% in the past month, and 5% in the past year. With 41% responding they had never talked to their teen.

**YOUTH ACCESS TO ALCOHOL, PRESCRIPTION DRUGS AND MARIJUANA:**
According to the 2013 MIYHS, Maine teens who think that alcohol is easy to get are three times as likely to drink alcohol as teens who think alcohol is hard to obtain.

In the Casco Bay region, the 2013 MIYHS data shows an increase of 2% in high school students who report alcohol is easy to access, from 73% in 2011 to 75% in 2013. Additionally, high school students who reported marijuana is easy to access decreased from 60% in 2011 to 54% in 2013. While this trend is positive, the MIYHS data and the Parent Phone Survey show that Casco Bay youth still have a high perceived availability of alcohol and marijuana. The Statewide 2013 MIYHS reports that 56% of high

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1 Source: Maine Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services analysis of statewide MIYHS results, 2013
school youth believe that marijuana is easy to access, compared to the 54% of Casco Bay region high school students. Even though the Casco Bay rate is slightly lower than the State, qualitative data clearly shows that parents are very concerned about youth marijuana use and feel it is both easily accessible and frequently used by Casco Bay youth.

The 2013 MIYHS data shows a statistically significant increase in substance use between middle school and high school and there is an increased perception of ease of access to alcohol and marijuana during this time. The 2013 MIYHS data indicates 62% of middle-school students believed it was “very hard” to access alcohol while 25% of high school students believed it was “very hard” to access. Eighty-eight percent of middle school students believed it was “very hard” to access marijuana and 46% of high school students believed it was “very hard” to access. As students move through high school they perceive that both alcohol and marijuana become easier to access.

Social access appears to be the primary way underage youth obtain alcohol. Of the students in grades 9-12 who reported in the 2011 and 2013 MIYHS that they drank alcohol in the past 30-days, 42% of Casco Bay high school students answered “Someone gave it to me,” an increase from the 2011 MIYHS at 38%.

Qualitative data from law enforcement, youth panelists and one-one-one interviews shows that alcohol retailers continue to be an access point for youth to acquire alcohol. There are a total of 127 alcohol retailers (seller-server businesses) spread out across the eight towns, or one for every 471 persons. Youth can get alcohol by stealing it from the store, pouring alcohol into other containers (such as water bottles) in the store, purchasing the alcohol with fake IDs, or getting the alcohol from an adult (usually a sibling or older friend) who buys the alcohol for them at the store and furnishes it to them afterwards.

While the legislature did pass a law allowing municipalities to hold their local liquor licensees accountable through seller-server training requirements, currently there are no town ordinances across our eight communities that compel an alcohol retailer who fails a compliance check to attend Responsible Beverage Seller-Server (RBS) training. Creating town ordinances to require trained staff to attend RBS training and to compel consequential actions related to failing compliance checks need to become a practice and not an infrequent occurrence. It will remain a constant problem for the Casco Bay community to control increased access to alcohol and the hope is through RBS trainings and ongoing compliance checks this will further encourage and create awareness to licensees, therefore reducing youth access to alcohol.

Alcohol retail policies and practices were highlighted as a priority issue by Coalition members because the State Bureau of Liquor Enforcement was disbanded in 2003. This has left a void in site visits to managers of off-premise establishments and retail compliance checks. In addition, there is a lack of enforcement officials and retailers with the institutional knowledge of Maine’s Liquor Laws. In order to help reduce the risk of illegal alcohol sales, Responsible Seller-Server Training for off- or on-premise licensees is needed. While the responsibility has shifted to local departments, there are few to no resources available for trainings specific to Maine Liquor Laws, Administrative rules, and identifying false identification—which is also a factor for increased fraud.

Community members have expressed their concerns that marijuana is too prevalent in Casco Bay. Maine allows for medical marijuana use and has dispensaries located across the state. There are also Primary Caregivers who can grow medicinal marijuana for up to five individuals because they have medical approval from the state. There are over 286 Primary Caregivers in Cumberland County and
1,431 statewide. The Casco Bay community is at risk for diversion of medical marijuana and its accompanying edibles. These edibles are often packaged and marketed in a way that is attractive to teens. In addition, Caregivers and dispensaries have marijuana products with high THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) levels for their patients and these will become increasingly available to teens. Teens will likely not be aware of the dangers these present, as the messages about marijuana are that it is a harmless drug.

As the prevalence of marijuana rises throughout the state and Casco Bay region, there will be a need for statewide mandated compliance checks for marijuana caregivers and dispensaries, similar to those conducted by law enforcement on alcohol seller-server businesses. Medical marijuana is regulated by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services. Due to limited funding and staffing regulating marijuana dispensaries, cultivation operations, edibles, manufacturers and Primary Caregivers is an ongoing need. Compliance checks and retail trainings have not been developed for the medical marijuana licensees. Maine’s system to allow medical providers to write notes for medicinal use of marijuana is complicated, not easily understood or regulated, and has made enforcement challenging when responding officers cannot easily distinguish between allowable and illegal possession in the field.

According to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and their ‘Substance Abuse Trends in Maine State Epidemiological Profile 2014’, more than one out of ten high school students reported misusing a prescription drug in their lifetime. The access to prescription drugs can be partially attributed to Maine’s elder population. Maine has a higher overall elder population, of individuals 65 years of age and older, at 17% and Cumberland County at 16% compared to the US population at 14%. Maine and Cumberland County also have a high population of those under 18 years of age at 20%. Elder’s tend to have an increased number of prescription drugs, some of which may not be regularly secured and therefore readily accessible to youth. Often times elders are the primary caregiver to youth (grandchildren) during summer months or after-school hours and this provides youth with easy access, often times without the knowledge of the elder.

Overall, community members believe, and the data shows, that substances are easy for youth to access in their community.

**ENFORCEMENT OF UNDERAGE DRINKING, PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE, AND MARIJUANA USE:**

We know from the statewide Maine MIYHS data that these risk factors are critical: Teens are two times as likely to drink alcohol when they believe they will not be caught by police, and three times as likely to drink when they believe they will not be caught by their parents. Both the MIYHS and Parent Phone Survey demonstrate that the Casco Bay community is high in community climate risk factors relating to a need for enhanced enforcement—including both law enforcement and parental enforcement.

The School Resource Officers (SRO) are essential to enforcing rules, regulating the presence of illegal drugs and providing support and guidance to youth. However, there is a gap in coverage due to restricted budgets from area police departments and school districts to support SRO’s in both middle and high schools in the Casco Bay region.
Drug Impairment Training for Educational Professionals (DITEP) is hosted by CAN biennially for the Casco Bay region and it is facilitated by specialized law enforcement drug recognition officers for school staff, teachers, and administrators. Problems arise when many who are tasked with implementing the assessment of potentially impaired youth at their school find it difficult to reach a conclusive result. Additionally, law enforcement is rarely contacted to assist the school in their individual assessment. To address this concern, conversations need to take place in regards to DITEP assessment collaboration between schools and law enforcement.

In the chart below, the total number of violations in each town over the past four years is shown for the four Casco Bay towns with municipal police departments (Falmouth, Cumberland, Yarmouth and Freeport) and the County Sheriff’s Office for the towns of Pownal, Gray, New Gloucester and North Yarmouth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Casco Bay Alcohol Violations 2011-2014</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of minors in possession of alcohol</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of furnishing alcohol to minors or a place to consume alcohol</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of illegal transportation of alcohol</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casco Bay Youth In Possession of Drug Paraphernalia (i.e. pipe, roach clip)2013</td>
<td>Not assessed</td>
<td>Not assessed</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the chart above indicates, the trend for violations for the number of minors in possession of alcohol and number of furnishing alcohol to minors or providing a place to consume alcohol decreased significantly in 2014. This may be a reflection of increased community awareness of the enforcement efforts by law enforcement officials. The number of alcohol violations shown above is a measure of enforcement levels rather than a measure of the problem itself, which we know to be much higher than the chart shows, with one in four high school students reporting that they drank alcohol in the past 30 days, according to the 2013 MIYHS.

When we look at the six towns CAN has been influencing for the past five years we see a significant increase in the number of high school students who believe they would be caught by police if they drank alcohol to 18% in the 2013 MIYHS up from 12% in 2009. However, when we include our newest towns Gray and New Gloucester, along with the other six towns, we see a significant drop according to the 2013 MIYHS to 13% of high school students who feel they would be caught by police if they drank alcohol. This is primarily due to the lack of a police presence since neither Gray nor New Gloucester has a municipal police department and rely on coverage from the County Sheriff’s Office and Maine State Police. As a result, response to youth substance use violations in Gray and New Gloucester is limited and not always consistent or coordinated across the two agencies. While the overall percentage of students reporting they would be caught by police if they drank alcohol has increased in six of the towns in our service area, much work still needs to be done overall and especially in the towns of Gray and New Gloucester.
HEALTHCARE RESPONSE TO YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE:
According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, family physicians are a powerful member of the community prevention team. This is largely due to the public’s perception that pediatricians are a trusted resource for family health. Because of this, the Casco Bay CAN Coalition has identified the importance of working with pediatricians and family practice physicians to increase their substance abuse prevention practices and increase the likelihood every child in the community is screened for substance abuse risk. In primary care practices, there is a lack of consistency throughout the state of Maine with the implementation of an SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment). One such tool, the CRAFFT (a mnemonic acronym for the first letters of key words in the six screening questions: Car, Relax, Alone, Forget, Friends, Trouble) has been endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics in their Pediatrics Policy Statement-Alcohol Use by Youth and Adolescents: A Pediatric Concern, April 2010. The screening tool asks relatable questions to youth about different aspects of their life. CRAFFT is an effective way to assess whether a more in-depth conversation with youth is needed about their use, frequency, and other risks and consequences of alcohol and drug use is warranted and/or referral is needed.

As Maine starts to recommend SBIRT tools such as CRAFFT into primary care practices across the state, we will have a better understanding of how many youth are obtaining or misusing prescription drugs and other substances such as alcohol. Additionally, the screening tools will be an indicator to determine the number of youth at risk for developing substance use.

Maine also has a Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) but there are gaps in the overall system therefore leaving room for improvement. The PMP is a tool created to prevent and detect drug misuse and diversion, and improve patient care through better coordination of services. The program is beneficial; however it is not regularly updated. As of 2009 it is a requirement that Pharmacies submit data within one week of the controlled substance being dispensed. And while pharmacies are encouraged to submit data more often than required they are not mandated to do so. Additionally, family practices do not have policies requiring physicians to cross-check patients in the PMP database who will be prescribed a controlled substance.

IN CONCLUSION:
We now know that to effectively address substance use in our communities those working in the healthcare and mental health field, substance use treatment providers and prevention specialists, judicial personnel and others need to more effectively collaborate with each other to strengthen their communal efforts. While more agencies are finding common ground, it will take years for the whole-health continuum to take hold in the Casco Bay region. However, cuts in funding sources for all entities may be the impetus for coordination to take hold.