



State of North Carolina  
Office of the Governor

*Michael F. Easley*  
Governor

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**FIRST LADY MARY EASLEY ANNOUNCES UNDERAGE DRINKING  
PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR NORTH CAROLINA MIDDLE SCHOOL  
STUDENTS**

***Program Answers Surgeon General's National Call to Action on Underage  
Drinking***

**Raleigh** - First Lady Mary Easley today was joined by Acting U.S. Surgeon General Rear Admiral Kenneth P. Moritsugu, M.D., M.P.H., to announce that "Media Ready," a new 10-lesson media literacy substance abuse prevention program developed in North Carolina will be taught in middle schools across the state beginning next year. The curriculum was developed by innovation, Research and Training, a research and training firm in Durham, with funds from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS.) Media Ready has already been successfully implemented by teachers in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools and Chatham County Schools. As a result of a partnership between DHHS, the State Board of Education, the N.C. Department of Public Instruction and the N.C. Teacher Academy, the curriculum will now be shared with educators from across the state in a training scheduled in January 2008.

"In 10 lessons, Media Ready teaches students how to analyze and deconstruct media messages and gives them critical thinking skills that are so important in the 21st century," said Easley. "This curriculum will empower middle school students across the state to become media savvy consumers whose opinions and decisions about alcohol are less likely to be influenced by advertisements."

To share the Media Ready curriculum with hundreds of middle schools in the state, the N.C. Teacher Academy, which is the professional development arm of the State Board of Education, will hold a series of two-day workshops to train Governor Easley's 200 middle school literacy coaches and a Safe and Drug Free Schools coordinator from each school district in the Media Ready curriculum. The workshops will be incorporated into the Teacher Academy's existing year-long schedule of training required for the literacy coaches and will be held in multiple locations across North Carolina in January 2008.

After the literacy coaches and the Safe and Drug Free Schools coordinators receive the training, they will return to their middle schools and their school districts to train teachers to implement the Media Ready curriculum in their middle school classrooms.

"This curriculum is effective in reducing underage drinking because it was developed by leading child clinical and developmental psychologists who are also substance abuse prevention scientists and experienced educators," Easley said. "They made sure Media Ready would fit perfectly into the state's teaching objectives for health education and language arts and complement the State Board of Education's guiding mission to prepare every student for life in the 21st century."

Acting U.S. Surgeon General Rear Admiral Kenneth P. Moritsugu also spoke at the press announcement and praised North Carolina for working together to answer his "Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking" by sharing Media Ready with middle schools across the state.

As part of her work as a co-chair of the national Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free, the First Lady joined Dr. Moritsugu in March when he released this call to action in Washington D.C. In the Call to Action, which is available at [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov), the Acting Surgeon General asks every American to do more to stop the nation's 11 million current underage drinkers from using alcohol, and to keep other young people from starting. He has spent the summer visiting states across the country to talk about this Call to Action.

In addition to speaking at the press conference, Dr. Moritsugu will also meet with state legislators, policy makers, education leaders and representatives from the Governor's Office, the judicial system, law enforcement, and health and substance abuse prevention organizations that work on the state and local levels to address underage drinking in North Carolina. He will also speak about his Call to Action at N.C. State University's Millennium Seminar at 2:30 p.m. in Stewart Theatre. The Seminar is open to the public and more information about the event can be found [www.ncsu.edu/millenniumseminars](http://www.ncsu.edu/millenniumseminars).

Results from the 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey administered to North Carolina high school students by the Centers for Disease Control found that 35 percent of middle school students reported having a drink of alcohol, other than a few sips, at least once in their lives. Twenty-one percent of high school students reported having their first drink of alcohol before age 13 and 42 percent of these students reported drinking alcohol at least once in the past month.

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