

## Community Committee Addresses Drug and Alcohol Issues

Communities across Canada are looking for ways to address concerns about drug and alcohol use. One year ago Strathcona County announced a new strategy to address social issues that can lead people to drink and use drugs. Here's an update of what has happened since the program launched.

The Strathcona County Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy committee—made up of individuals from Capital Health, RCMP, social services organizations, community groups, municipal departments as well as elected officials—has been working to come up with solutions to address the social issues that can lead people to drink and use drugs.

Members of the committee agree that the issues that lead to drug and alcohol abuse are complex, and there isn't one single approach or answer that works for everyone.

Collectively, the committee is using a multi-pronged approach—from educating young people about the consequences of the decision they will make, to providing support to families and individuals who are already experiencing the harmful effects of alcohol and drug abuse. The committee is

also lobbying for a residential treatment facility for youth.

The goal of the strategy is to ensure services and resources are available for youth, adults and seniors. What the committee has come to realize is that most people don't know whom to call or where to get information when they need help. Strathcona County has a wide variety of agencies and organizations that have resources to deal with drug and alcohol issues.

### **Help is available now - New directory lists many resources**

To help people become more aware of these services and resources, the committee has created a directory – a comprehensive list of all services available for prevention, early I intervention, and treatment.

For instance, did you know AADAC has a satellite office in Sherwood Park? They provide a full range of services - education to schools, distributing information packages, assessments, treatment groups, individual and family counselling and formal interventions.

Did you know the RCMP will

be offering DARE at the elementary and the junior high level? The RCMP Community Policing division is also available for community presentations on drug and alcohol awareness.

Did you know that there is a four-week Teen Addiction Prevention Strategy program facilitated by AADAC? This program provides information to youth about alcohol, drug and gambling and offers information to assist youth in making healthy decisions. Parents can also attend a three-week group that gives them information on how to help their child or teen.

The Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy committee continues to work on creating action steps to address new issues and needs. Recently, the committee came together to celebrate its success to date, and identify new issues and service needs.

Strathcona County was one of nine communities across Canada chosen by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, in partnership with the Health and Enforcement in Partnership, to develop a community drug and alcohol strategy.

### **What can we do?**

Learn what signs to watch for. Report suspected illegal activity. Don't pretend a problem doesn't exist. Reach out for help. A coordinated effort by everyone will ensure that we work towards solutions.

This is a first in a series of articles by the Strathcona County Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy Committee addressing providing information about drug and alcohol issues. In the next article: *Learn what you can do as a parent, how you can talk to your kids, and what you can look for.*

The Drug/Alcohol Resource Directory is available at the Strathcona County Health Centre located at 2 Brower Drive or at Strathcona County Family and Community Services 276, 2755 Broadmoor Boulevard (above Smitty's restaurant) in Sherwood Park.

Residents with questions about the strategy can call Strathcona County Family and Community Services at 780-464-4044.