



COUNTY OF ORANGE HEALTH CARE AGENCY

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

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Orange County Joins Unique National Effort to Prevent Substance Abuse Among Children and Teens

(Santa Ana) – The Prevention Coalitions of Orange County (PCOC) and the Orange County Health Care Agency are joining forces with the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University in an annual celebration of *Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children™* on Sept. 28 as part of the continuing effort to prevent substance abuse among children and teens.

Launched in 2001, *Family Day* is a movement that encourages parents to frequently eat dinner with their kids and be involved in their children's lives. It is also a day that helps to remind busy families of the invaluable role that parental involvement plays in steering children and teens away from cigarettes, drugs and alcohol. Research conducted by CASA consistently shows that the more often children eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs.

"We hope that families will embrace *Family Day* and will continue having regular family dinners throughout the year," said David Souleles, Public Health Services Deputy Agency Director for the Health Care Agency. "The conversations we have with our children over the dinner table open lines of communication that truly can make a difference in their lives and help them make healthier choices along the way."

According to the CASA report entitled *The Importance of Family Dinners III*, compared to kids who have fewer than three family dinners per week, children and teens who have frequent family dinners (five or more per week) are at 70 percent lower risk for substance abuse, are half as likely to try cigarettes or marijuana, are one third less likely to try alcohol, and are 40 percent likelier to say future drug use will never happen.

The Prevention Coalitions of Orange County (PCOC) consists of several local organizations and agencies that share in the mission to strengthen Orange County's capacity to provide coordinated alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention services and resources that promote safe neighborhoods and healthy lifestyles. PCOC believes that celebrating *Family Day* is an important first step in helping to achieve a substance abuse free life for America's children and teens.

For more information on local *Family Day* activities, contact Pauline Stauder, Program Supervisor for the Orange County Health Care Agency Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team (ADEPT), at (714) 834-2094, or for more information on the national observance of *Family Day*, visit www.CASAFamilyDay.org.