

Remarks from Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman Nebraska Collegiate Consortium to Reduce High-Risk Drinking News Conference

Wednesday, March 01, 2006 – 1:00 p.m.

Embassy Suites, Chancellor's Room 3, Lincoln

Good afternoon. I'm delighted to be here today to be part of this important announcement...

And want to first express my appreciation to the institutions taking the initiative to address high-risk drinking on Nebraska's college campuses.

The twelve, state-funded colleges and universities launching this effort constitute nearly 80 percent of Nebraska's college student population.

With just this *first step* to organize and coordinate efforts we have the potential to reach a very significant portion of our student population.

In addition to offering my congratulations to Nebraska's six community colleges, the University of Nebraska and our three state colleges...

I want to express the appreciation of all those involved for the support of the U.S. Department of Education and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in this effort.

The 100-thousand dollars in grant funding provided by the education department will be used to expand the work of an already successful program...

Creating a statewide network that can share resources in the fight to create campuses that encourage students to make better decisions when it comes to alcohol consumption.

This coalition builds on the success already taking place on the UNL campus, thanks to the work of NU Directions and the Nebraska Prevention Center for Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

Since the program began here in Lincoln, reported binge-drinking has decreased by more than 20 percent, and many students know more about the dangers of high-risk drinking as a result of their outreach.

I'm very pleased to see this experience being put to use to help other campuses tackle this issue...

Particularly because this coalition provides an excellent opportunity to connect education at the college-level with the work being done at K-12 schools and through community groups across the state.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services already works with community-based coalitions to secure funding and develop programs aimed at prevention in our school-aged children and youth.

By coordinating with the Nebraska Partners in Prevention Network and the community programs receiving federal funding through the State Incentive Partnership Agreement or SICA...

We now have an opportunity to reach-out to students and encourage healthy behaviors from the time they enter school, all the way through to their college graduation in this state.

This is an important first step, and I again want to commend all those involved in this effort.

As Governor, I have a vested interest in the success of our state-funded colleges and universities.

We know that these institutions already provide an excellent education to thousands of students each year.

This is an opportunity to find new ways of creating a safe environment for that education to take place.

I look forward to receiving updates on your progress.

Thank you.