



Director Kerlikowske visits the Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center in the Bronx, NY, during the launch of the *Above the Influence* Campaign. Joining him are Executive Director Heidi Hynes, left, along with members of the Center and the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club.

## Director Launches Campaign to Help Keep America's Teens 'Above the Influence'

With visits this month to three cities in just over a week, National Drug Control Policy Director Gil Kerlikowske kicked off the new *Above the Influence* (ATI) Campaign, a nationwide initiative that encourages America's teens to share their thoughts about the positive and negative events that influence their decisions.

The project, sponsored by ONDCP's National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, focuses on the ways teens resist drug use and "stay above" negative influences. The ATI brand, recently refreshed to be more relevant to teens, delivers broad prevention messages at the national level and more targeted efforts at the local community level.

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## U.S. Mayors Applaud Administration's 2010 National Drug Control Strategy

The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) adopted a resolution this month endorsing the Administration's *National Drug Control Strategy*, saying it "reflects a new approach to drug policy, adopting a science-based approach to prevention and treatment, innovations in law enforcement and the wise use of criminal justice resources."

The resolution, adopted at the group's 78<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Oklahoma City, says the policies in the 2010 *Strategy*, released in

May, "should reduce public spending while improving public safety."

The resolution further states: "The Conference of Mayors applauds the *Strategy's* call for strengthening prevention in local communities; endorsing the importance of integrating substance abuse treatment into mainstream healthcare; expanding support for recovery; addressing the cycle of drug use, crime, delinquency and incarceration; and seeking to disrupt domestic drug trafficking and production while strengthening international partnerships."

Director Kerlikowske, who addressed the conference, said he was pleased the mayors "recognized the balanced, comprehensive approach of prevention, treatment, and law enforcement that this Administration will employ to address

drug use and its consequences." He also reiterated his commitment to strong collaboration with the Nation's cities.

The USCM resolution praises the Administration's Fiscal Year 2011 National Drug Control Budget request, which proposes an increase of \$521.1 million over previous levels and includes increases in funding for prevention, treatment, interdiction, and international support.

These expenditures should help reduce the costly consequences of drug use, the resolution says, "including the relationships affected, the crimes generated, the childhoods interrupted, and the neighborhoods blighted."

The Conference of Mayors also praised the new *Strategy* for recognizing drug problems "are most effectively handled at the local community level."

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As part of the Campaign, teens engage in activities that allow them to express themselves with the ATI brand. For example, teens around the country can enter their own influences on a map posted at

[www.AbovetheInfluence.com/heatmap](http://www.AbovetheInfluence.com/heatmap).

The city with the most entries will win a special ATI event in their hometown.

To spearhead and promote the Campaign, Director Kerlikowske visited pilot markets in the Bronx, NY; Portland, OR; and Milwaukee, WI.

In the Bronx, the Director joined community leaders for a visit to the Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center, a tour of a neighborhood hard-hit by drugs and drug-related violence, and a roundtable discussion with local teens.

One young man told about the time his father missed Christmas morning because of a drinking problem. Since then, the boy said, "I've hated alcohol and drugs."

In Portland the following day, Director Kerlikowske met with representatives of Community Action to Reduce Substance Abuse (CARSA), Oregon Partnership, and Boys & Girls Clubs to discuss local prevention efforts and to hear directly from teens about the influences in their lives.

Said one participant: "Drugs have no place in what I want to achieve in my life."

Another teen, responding to a question from the Director, said, "I never realized how much people listen to kids our age."

To complete his tri-city ATI Campaign kickoff tour, Director Kerlikowske traveled to Milwaukee, where he shared the stage at the Don & Sallie Davis Boys & Girls Club with Police Chief Ed Flynn; James Clark, president and CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee; and teens from the local area.

Over the next several months, the ATI Campaign will roll out similar programs in 20 cities across the Nation.

In the five years since the ATI brand's creation, teens have embraced the effort, many of them proudly identifying themselves as "above the influence." Today, new ads run nationally on a variety of platforms, including TV, print, online, posters, and billboards.

## Drug Courts 'Critically Important' in Reducing Drug Abuse and its Consequences, Says Director

Director Kerlikowske addressed a conference of drug court professionals this month, telling the group that these problem-solving courts "play a critically important role in decreasing drug use and its consequences."

Drug courts, he said, are "a proven solution for halting the tragic course of drug abuse and addiction and a critical continuing part" of the Administration's 2010 *National Drug Control Strategy*.

The Director's remarks came during his closing keynote address at the National Association of Drug Court Professionals' 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference, held June 5 in Boston.

Drug courts are a smart investment for State and local governments, he said, because they reduce recidivism, help drug offenders on the road to recovery, and stop the revolving door of arrest, incarceration, release, and re-arrest.

Director Kerlikowske pointed out that the Administration's Fiscal Year 2011 Budget request includes a proposal for \$56.4 million to expand the treatment capacity of existing adult, juvenile, and family drug courts, as well as another \$57 million to help plan, implement, and improve drug, mental health, and

problem-solving courts. "By intervening when there are signs of trouble, drug courts help steer people into recovery," he said.

"These kinds of programs are essential to the goal of reducing drug use and its consequences."



Director Kerlikowske spoke at the National Association of Drug Court Professionals' 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference in Boston.

National Association of Drug Court Professionals

### Opportunities, Challenges for Substance Abuse Professionals

Speaking this month to a group of State alcohol and drug abuse professionals, Director Kerlikowske emphasized the important role States can play in responding to changes and opportunities created by the 2010 *National Drug Control Strategy* across the substance abuse spectrum – from prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery to collaborations with law enforcement.

The annual meeting of the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD) in Norfolk, VA, on June 3 drew about 300 participants representing NASADAD, National Treatment Network, National Prevention Network, public interest organizations, and various Federal agencies. The theme of this year's meeting: "Fostering Success in an Evolving Health Care Environment."

In his remarks, Director Kerlikowske addressed issues associated with healthcare reform, including a parity requirement in the recently enacted Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that will help remove a treatment barrier for millions of Americans. The new law reinforces a 2008 act that prohibits insurance plans from providing lower levels of coverage for mental health and substance abuse disorders than for other illnesses.

The Director acknowledged this expansion of benefits may create challenges for State officials, such as enforcement of parity rules, ensuring drug and alcohol services are available to those without health insurance, and providing services not covered under the new healthcare reform law. However, he vowed to work closely with State substance abuse officials to find fair and effective solutions to these and other issues.

## Pro Race Driver Sarah Fisher Joins Director to Raise Red Flag on Drugged Driving

Professional race driver Sarah Fisher joined Director Kerlikowske and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Administrator David Strickland for a news conference June 23 to raise public awareness of drugged driving on the Nation's roadways.

Also taking part in the event were Cathy L. Lanier, Chief of Police in Washington, DC, and Jill Ingrassia of the American Automobile Association.

"Americans are familiar with the terrible consequences of drunk driving and the dangers posed by texting or talking on a cell phone while driving," said Director Kerlikowske. "As we approach the Fourth of July, one of the busiest periods on the Nation's roads, ONDCP is teaming up with public and private-sector partners across the Nation to raise awareness of the dangers of another important public safety issue – drugged driving."

Recent studies have shown that a significant number of drivers have drugs in their systems when they get behind the wheel, said Director Kerlikowske. "But just as we have made progress in addressing drunk driving, we can raise awareness of drugged driving and educate people about the dangers it presents. Drugs negatively affect judgment, reaction time, motor skills, and memory. Those who drive with drugs in their systems put us all at risk."

The most recent Monitoring the Future Study shows that, in 2008, one in ten high school seniors admitted to having driven a vehicle after smoking marijuana in the two weeks prior to the survey.

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, more than 12 percent of 18- to 25-year-olds admitted to driving under the influence of an illicit drug at least once in 2008. And the latest National Roadside Survey by NHTSA shows that one in eight weekend, nighttime drivers tested positive for illegal drugs.

Fisher, who, since the age of 19, has driven in the Indianapolis 500 nine times – more than any other woman in history – addressed her message to young people.



Professional race driver Sarah Fisher joined Director Kerlikowske at a June 23 news conference in Washington to raise public awareness of the dangers of drugged driving.

**“Whether you are driving 20 miles an hour on a city street or 220 miles an hour at the Indy 500 – you don’t want to have impaired judgment or slow reaction time.”**

**– Sarah Fisher,  
professional race driver**

"The drugged driving awareness campaign gives me the opportunity to speak directly to the younger generation of drivers," she said. "Several studies have shown that too many young people get behind the wheel of a car after smoking marijuana or taking drugs. They need to make smarter and safer decisions."

Fisher offered some advice to drivers of all ages: "I have been a professional race driver since I was a teenager, and I can tell you that – whether you are driving 20 miles an hour on a city street or 220 miles an hour at the Indy 500 – you don't want to

have impaired judgment or slow reaction time. To be safe," she said, "you need to be at your best."

The Office of National Drug Control Policy is working to increase the number of States with effective drugged driving laws. Too often, inadequate laws allow people who drive after taking drugs to evade prosecution and avoid responsibility, thus increasing the chances they will continue to be a public safety threat. Per se laws will help in this effort.

ONDCP is also working with NHTSA and other partners to increase training opportunities for law enforcement officers, as well as with other Federal agencies to improve and standardize laboratory testing to detect the presence of drugs in drivers. Establishing lab standards will improve the ability of law enforcement officials to hold drivers accountable and, when necessary, get them into treatment.

To help raise awareness of drugged driving, ONDCP has produced public service announcements featuring Director Kerlikowske with Fisher and other public officials, including Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell, Maryland Attorney General Doug Gansler, and DC's Chief Lanier. The announcements are available online at <http://www.WhiteHouseDrugPolicy.gov/druggeddriving/>