



ReThink Your Drink

Mobile County Launches Statewide Anti-Obesity Campaign

February 24, 2014, Mobile, Alabama – The Mobile County Commission, the Mobile County Health Department and 11 other large institutional employers, healthcare providers, academic and civic organizations stood up today with Live Better Mobile to launch in Mobile County a statewide anti-obesity campaign designed by the Alabama Department of Public Health's experts through the state Obesity Task Force. ***ReThink Your Drink!*** is the 2014 rallying cry of the Task Force that is being rolled out in cities, counties, communities, and organizations all over the state, and today in Mobile County.

The public awareness campaign is focused on how sugar-sweetened beverages can harm your health and about the healthy alternatives that are available. Armed with this knowledge – and reminded constantly by messages in schools, workplaces, homes and places of worship – well over 250,000 Mobilians will be reached by these 13 partners alone and provided the tools they need to make a better choice.

In addition to the Mobile County Commission and the Mobile County Health Department, initial ***ReThink Your Drink!*** partners include:

City of Mobile
Community Foundation of South Alabama
Gulf Coast Exploreum
Infirmary Health
J.L. Bedsole Foundation
Mobile Museum of Art
Mobile United/Leadership Mobile
University of Mobile
University of South Alabama
Via! Health and Fitness
Victory Health Partners

The state Obesity Task Force has provided any individual or organization who wants to make a difference in the battle against obesity with the tools to join in this campaign, and they can be found at:

www.livebettermobile.org or <http://www.adph.org/obesity/>

The four key messages for this year's ***ReThink Your Drink!*** campaign:

- 1) **Choose Water**-Water is critical for hydration and body functions.
- 2) **Watch calories**-There are hidden calories in sugar-sweetened beverages and in alcoholic beverages that add up quickly.
- 3) **Lower sugar intake**-Soft drinks are often targeted as high sugar beverages; however, sweet tea, sports drinks and fruit punches also contain large amounts of sugar. Consuming fruit juices is supported only in small amounts.
- 4) **Drink skim or fat free milk or healthy milk alternatives**-Low fat milk provides important nutrients such as calcium and vitamin D.

A multitude of options exist for any person or organization to join in the ***ReThink Your Drink!*** campaign, including:

- Increasing water served at meetings or functions;
- Displaying posters or flyers on bulletin boards and vending machines;
- Discussing ***ReThink Your Drink!*** as a core message topic at staff meetings, group meetings, and public meetings;
- Providing lunch-and-learn type meetings for peers, organizations;
- Reviewing policies for vending machine beverage choices;
- Reviewing operating plans/policies for food purchased, served, or sold;
- Incorporating the ***ReThink Your Drink!*** message in speeches or presentations given;
- Working with schools to implement the campaign, incorporating messages in classroom settings;
- Utilizing messages on your company and private web pages, Facebook pages, and tweets;
- Writing articles for your newspapers, newsletters, magazines;
- Working with the news media to get the word out and spread the ***ReThink Your Drink!*** message;
- Taking on ***ReThink Your Drink!*** projects in colleges, secondary schools, clubs, or scouts.

Live Better Mobile is an initiative of community networking organization Mobile United that seeks to achieve greater collective impact in Mobile County in our community-wide efforts to 1) achieve a healthy weight, 2) prevent teen pregnancy, and 3) quit tobacco. Using the evidence compiled annually in the County Health Rankings by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, Mobile United's Health Services Task Force and facilitators from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified obesity, teen pregnancy and smoking as Mobile County's greatest chronic health threats. The 2012 data showed that 32% of Mobile County adults are obese (compared with 25% in the U.S. and 33% in Alabama), 61 of every 1,000 teen females aged 15-19 give birth (compared to 22 in the U.S. and 53 in Alabama), and 24% of adults smoke (compared to 14% in the U.S. and 23% in Alabama). Reducing those three occurrences can vastly reduce the majority of chronic illnesses

from which Mobile County residents now suffer and which result in premature death, as well as untold costs in individual and community expense, lost productivity and poor quality of life.

“Live Better Mobile’s efforts are focused on facilitating the access to and connection of our community with evidence-based health and wellness providers working in these areas, as well as those providers to one another, so that we can achieve success. We also look for creative demonstrations with providers to illustrate for our community what can be achieved. We are delighted in the strong partnerships with evidence-based providers in demonstrating that Mobile really can live better,” said Mobile United Executive Director Katherine Pitman.

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About Mobile United

Mobile United is dedicated to building an inclusive and prosperous community by deliberating issues and encouraging action when appropriate. Our community roles are encouraging tolerance and inclusiveness, building a unified network, and developing leadership. Visit us at www.mobileunited.org

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