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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**“Rethink Drinks” campaign asks adults to reconsider alcohol consumption**

GRAND RAPIDS — The Kent County Health Department in partnership with Network180 is working again to prevent adult heavy drinking. This is the fourth year of the campaign that is designed to inform adults about the health effects of excessive alcohol consumption.

The 2015 campaign puts the message in front of adults in places where they are likely to be consuming alcohol. *Johnny Ads* have been placed in restrooms of bars and restaurants across Kent County. Through a partnership with the West Michigan Whitecaps, baseball fans will see the “Rethink Drinks” message via the video scoreboard at the beginning of home games. A message will encourage them to take part in the designated driver program.

“Alcohol abuse has been associated with serious health problems such as cirrhosis of the liver, high blood pressure, stroke, and some types of cancer,” said Adam London, Health Officer at the department. “Encouraging healthy behaviors in places where we know alcohol is consumed helps us reach those who are most at risk.”

Billboards, bus ads and community outreach will supplement the message that will continue until late summer in Kent County. The website [rethinkdrinks.com](http://rethinkdrinks.com) includes educational information and tools to help gauge and monitor alcohol intake.

According to the 2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Study conducted by KCHD the rate of heavy drinking (defined as consuming at least two drinks every day for men and one drink for women) among Kent County residents has fallen significantly since 2008, yet it remains a major public health concern. In the same time period, binge drinking (defined as consuming five or more drinks per occasion for men, 4 or more for women, at least once in the past month) has risen dramatically as more than 17 percent of those surveyed admitted to binge behavior.

“Many people don’t realize the harm that they are doing to their bodies through these behaviors. Our hope is that the Rethink Drinks Campaign causes people to do just that; rethink their drinking behaviors and reconsider the health impact that drinking can have on oneself and others.”

The partnership between KCHD and Network180 is supported by a grant from the Behavioral Health and Departmental Disabilities Administration/Bureau of Substances Abuse & Addiction Services and the Office of Recovery Oriented Systems of Care.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 265 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).

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