

State Incentive Grant
Statewide Evaluation Plan

ADDENDUM

September 2006

**OPEN LETTER TO THE
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROGRAMS
FROM SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY**

Regarding San Diego State University's (SDSU) recent correspondence (letter from Dr. Clapp sent to APD on 8/31/06) relating difficulties in completing the telephone survey of 18-25 year olds for the State Incentive Grant (SIG) evaluation, SDSU has, with ADP's approval (email from Ms. Cronin received 9/1/06), terminated that effort. We appreciate ADP's understanding and flexibility on this matter. Designing a viable evaluation plan well after the SIG project had begun, coupled with some of the delays in the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and SDSU Internal Review Board approvals, compounded the unique challenges the SIG evaluation presents.

As a result of the elimination of the telephone survey (Task 4b), we will be unable to report binge drinking outcomes for this young adult population (18-25) as originally outlined in our approved proposal (dated 1/24/06). Please note that any references to Task 4b in the approved SIG Statewide Evaluation Plan are now void. All other tasks detailed in the Statewide Evaluation Plan remain in effect and will be completed by the newly mutually negotiated deadlines detailed in your email of 8/8/06.

Per your request (email from Ms. Cronin 8/27/06), we have prepared the attached Addendum to our evaluation design that is intended to give you more detail concerning the anticipated structure of our reports. Please note that the structure outlined below is, in part, contingent on the availability of extant secondary data and data to be provided by the SIG county evaluators. As we have no direct control over either data source, the outline is our best approximation of what the final products will contain and may not totally reflect the actual final product. We will make every effort to follow this outline using the best (i.e., valid and reliable) data available.

Should you need any additional information or modifications in the SIG Statewide Evaluation Plan, please feel free to detail them in a letter to me. We will do our best to accommodate any requested changes or additions to the plan. Again, thank you for your flexibility and your understanding of this complex, and by necessity, dynamic evaluation.

Sincerely,

John D. Clapp, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Studies and Services
San Diego State University

Attachment

Modifications to the SIG Statewide Evaluation Plan

Background

As discussed in our original evaluation plan, the California SIG is an innovative project that attempts to use a structured planning process to design and implement environmental prevention efforts in thirteen counties. SDSU began work on this project in August of 2005, replacing the original evaluation contractor; the SDSU evaluation contract closes April 2008. As a result of our late start, and the short time between project closure and final reporting, there are several limitations to the data available to us for evaluative purposes:

- Data reflecting the planning processes used by the SIG projects are retrospective, given our start mid-project. Ideally, these processes would have been tracked prospectively.
- Our ability to identify changes in drinking behavior in the target population resulting from the SIG project interventions is limited by: (1) our inability to establish the temporal ordering of pretest measures and interventions (local projects began implementation in October 2005 and will be completed in September of 2007); (2) our inability to collect extant binge drinking data for the entire target population (18-25 year olds) or original data in a scientifically acceptable fashion given the evaluation timeline and budget (i.e., Task 4b); and, (3) ADP's need for a quick turn around of the final report which precludes an adequate time to assess intervention outcomes. Theoretically there would be some lag between interventions and outcomes in an environmental prevention project. For instance, some interventions being implemented require approval of changes in law or regulations. As a result some of these interventions may require a year or more to become fully implemented and enforced. We cannot collect data regarding binge drinking outcomes that might occur as a result of project interventions.

Our approved evaluation plan primarily focused on providing a detailed description of the variations across counties in project context, intervention models, implementation, and short-term outcomes. Although these elements were included in our originally approved evaluation plan, as per your request, we are taking this opportunity to expand on the approved evaluation plan by presenting a framework for our reporting.

Significance

The California SIG represents an opportunity to better understand the nature and function of community-based environmental prevention. Evidence from large

scale research programs indicate that community-based strategies modeled on Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA), Community Trials Intervention to Reduce High Risk Drinking (RHRD), and Challenging College Alcohol Abuse (CCAA) can produce reductions in alcohol-related activities. These models were implemented using strategies of community planning that result in interventions intended to meet the unique needs and resources of each community.

Although there is evidence supporting such approaches, there is little research concerning the application of these approaches within various types of community contexts. Further, the implementation of these models may vary across SIG sites. There is no evidence to suggest how these variations in communities or model implementation relates to binge drinking outcomes. We believe that these questions are critical to future environmental prevention efforts. Therefore our emphasis in data collection and reporting will be on describing variations in characteristics of the thirteen local projects and the relationships of these variations to issues of program implementation and outcomes.

An additional focus of our efforts has been to detail the characteristics of the environmental interventions implemented by the SIG counties. Our review of project documents and discussions with SIG project staff indicate that there are no clear guidelines for the implementation of the strategies being used. Unlike interventions such as school curricula, changing local regulations or implementing media efforts are not well defined. Thus, questions of fidelity to evidence-based models are more difficult to address. To move the prevention field forward in this area, we have focused our efforts on describing the variations in implementation of SIG interventions. Our plan is to both describe various methods of implementing these interventions and to look for relationships between these variations and variations in short-term project outcomes.

A critical difference between traditional prevention efforts and environmental approaches is that while traditional prevention focuses on changing individuals, environmental strategies focus on changing environments. Environmental changes, in turn, should result in changes to individual behavior; the key to the interventions is the environmental change. We have placed an emphasis on measuring changes to environments that result from these interventions. Although methods of evaluating environmental change are not as well developed as individual level measures, we believe that measuring such change is critical to understanding or predicting person level outcomes (such as a reduction in binge drinking).

Given these limitations and the significance of what *we can* evaluate, we have detailed a framework and elements for reporting our findings.

Evaluation Report Elements

The following section outlines the elements of the SIG evaluation reports. The intent is to provide information that both describes what was accomplished and provides information that will be useful to California's prevention field in the future. The report will include several focus areas intended to respond to the issues raised above.

Report Focus 1 – Community Context

The initial focus of our reports is the context in which these projects were developed. This context includes community characteristics, coalition characteristics, and the organizational structure of the local projects. Our reports will describe the variations in these areas across counties.

Report Focus 2 – Interventions

The nature of the interventions is an important component in understanding these programs. For our assessment we will focus on four general types of interventions being used in this project: policy change, media campaigns, training, and enforcement. Based on the data being collected from local programs we will highlight the steps taken to develop and implement these interventions. Additional descriptions will be provided for other unique interventions. In addition, we will look at variations in community contexts related to variations in the interventions chosen and/or implementation issues.

Report Focus 3 – Program Outcomes

The changes that occur as a result of SIG interventions will be reported across the thirteen SIG sites. Outcomes will be reported in three areas: (1) immediate outcomes, (2) intermediate outcomes, and, (3) impacts (Note: 2 and 3 will be documented wherever possible). Information for immediate and intermediate outcomes will be obtained from local evaluations. Information concerning impacts will be available only for the adolescent cohort through the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS).

Report Focus 4 – Lessons Learned Statewide

A final focus of our reports will be to describe ways in which these programs might inform future efforts. Depending upon the availability of data across counties, statewide evaluation reports will focus on:

- **Accomplishments.** We will list accomplishments by counties related to the SIG grants.

- **Sustainability.** We will provide descriptions of the local institutions established through SIG interventions and the probable sustainability of projects after the close of the SIG grants (e.g., whether funding was located to continue SIG programs, etc.).
- **Support/Opposition.** SDSU will answer the following questions: If there was local support during the SIG project, where did such support originate? If there was opposition to the SIG interventions, where did it originate? What was the nature of the support and opposition? What measures can be taken to strengthen local support and reduce opposition?
- **Methods and Tools.** We will list the most effective SIG environmental prevention practices, as shown through evaluation results, which other California counties can use in the future.
- **Tools for Evaluation.** We will provide suggestions for conducting environmental prevention evaluation on future projects related to alcohol and a list of “Best Practices” in local evaluation for each intervention, based upon SIG county successes.
- **Tools for Programs.** We will provide suggestions for the next phase of binge drinking reduction intervention work needed statewide.
- **ADP Support.** We will address ways that ADP might support sound environmental prevention and evaluation practices in the future.

SIG Statewide Evaluation Report Availability

SDSU’s final draft report will be delivered to ADP by January of 2008, and made available for peer review, prior to becoming final in March 2008. In addition, SDSU will deliver interim reports on the SIG statewide evaluation, also available for peer review.

Appendix

Outline for SIG Statewide Evaluation Reports

REPORT FOCUS 1-3: *Community Context, Interventions, and Program Outcomes in Each SIG County*

1. Community Characteristics
2. Coalition Characteristics
 - Sectors represented
 - Environmental focus
 - Active participation
 - Control of resources
 - Advisory/Developmental
3. Program Organization
 - Public agency/private contractor
 - % time committed
 - Sectors represented in funded activities
4. Interventions - Model Programs (CMCA, CT, CCAA)
 - Policy development
 - Media
 - Training
 - Enforcement
 - Others
5. Implementation
 - Fidelity checklists
 - # of actions
 - # served
6. Immediate Outcomes (varies by intervention)
 - Knowledge gain
 - Intent to use techniques
 - # of arrests during enforcement actions
 - # of media placements

7. Intermediate Outcomes
 - Changes to environments
 - Retail sales environments and business practices
 - Social settings and social norms
 - Public settings
 - Changes on (targeted) high school campuses
 - Changes on (targeted) college campuses
 - Perceptions of risk
8. Alcohol-Related Impacts
 - Rates of binge drinking per CHKS for 12-17 cohort
 - Arrests
 - Car crashes
 - ER Visits
9. Descriptions of the gaps that remain in each county's environmental binge drinking prevention efforts.
10. Discussions about what is needed for future environmental binge drinking prevention success in each county.

REPORT FOCUS 4: Lessons Learned Statewide

1. Accomplishments
2. Sustainability
3. Support/Opposition
4. Methods and Tools
5. Tools for Evaluation
6. Tools for Programs
7. ADP Support