

## Advisory Board

**Thomas Bills**  
Exhibits Director  
HealthSpace Cleveland  
Cleveland, Ohio

**Jeff DaMetz**  
Principal  
Inman Junior/  
Senior High School  
Inman, Kansas

**Laura Hack**  
Teacher  
Smith Elementary  
Columbus, Indiana

**Neil Izenberg, MD**  
Founder and CEO  
Nemours Center for  
Children's Health Media  
Editor-in-Chief  
KidsHealth  
Wilmington, Delaware

**D'Arcy Lyness, PhD**  
Child and Adolescent  
Psychologist  
Behavioral Health Editor  
KidsHealth  
Wilmington, Delaware

**Colleen Sweeney**  
Education Director  
Health Works! Kids'  
Museum  
South Bend, Indiana

**Susan K. Telljohann,**  
HSD, CHES  
Professor  
University of Toledo  
Department of  
Public Health and  
Rehabilitative Services  
Toledo, Ohio

**Sharon Templeton**  
Parent  
Hockessin, Delaware

**Katherine Wilbur**  
Comprehensive School  
Health Coordinator  
Maine Department  
of Education  
Augusta, Maine

**Student Advisers**  
9- to 13-year olds  
throughout the  
United States

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeffrey Santoro  
[KidsPoll@KidsHealth.org](mailto:KidsPoll@KidsHealth.org)  
(302) 651-4106 – phone

### NEW SURVEY REVEALS OVER ONE-QUARTER OF KIDS AGES 9 TO 13 HAVE BEEN OFFERED ALCOHOL

*Kids who frequently drink alcohol cite the desire “to be cool” and  
“boredom” as main reasons kids try alcohol.*

Milwaukee, WI, and Wilmington, DE, May 11, 2004 – In a new KidsHealth® KidsPoll survey of 9- to 13-year-olds, 29% of respondents reported that they had been offered alcohol at least once. Of those kids who said they had been offered alcohol, 34% said it was offered by “adults I know” and 29% said it was offered by “older kids.” Three percent (3%) of respondents said they drink alcohol every week, another 3% said they drink at least every month, and 4% of kids surveyed said they drink once in a while, but not every month. Seventy-two percent (72%) of kids surveyed said they have never tried alcohol and 18% said they tried it once.

Although 86% of the total kids surveyed said teens who drink alcohol are “very un-cool,” 42% of respondents who said they drink every week said teens who drink are “very cool.” Only 3% of respondents who have never consumed alcohol thought teens who drink are “very cool.” Further, 50% of kids who said they drink every week believe that drinking alcohol at “my age” is always OK or OK most of the time versus 2% of non-drinkers.

Approximately 700 children ages 9 to 13 participated in the KidsHealth KidsPoll on alcohol at 6 member sites of the National Association of Health Education Centers throughout the United States. The study was conducted by researchers from the Department of Health Education and Recreation, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

The survey found interesting variations of beliefs and attitudes among kids who drink alcohol at least every week (“frequent drinkers”) and those who have never tried alcohol (“non-drinkers”). These variations could provide important guidelines for programs designed to stop children who have already begun consuming alcohol from drinking.

The KidsHealth KidsPoll revealed that the main reason all respondents think kids try alcohol is “they think it will make them cool.” There is, however, a major shift in beliefs between frequent drinkers and non-drinkers when it comes to the second most-popular reason kids try alcohol. Thirty-five percent (35%) of frequent drinkers say it’s because “they have nothing better to do” compared to only 2% of non-drinkers. Non-drinkers’ second most-popular reason, with a 17% response, was “other kids are doing it” compared to 0% of frequent drinkers.

“Giving kids fun things to do instead” was the most popular response by all kids surveyed when asked: *What is the best way to keep kids from drinking alcohol?* “Let them learn from their own experiences” was the second most common way cited by frequent drinkers (27%). “Have people with alcohol problems talk to them” was the second most common way cited by nondrinkers (21%).

There is also a difference between frequent and non-drinkers in their perceptions of how common drinking is among kids. Those who drink frequently perceive that “almost all the kids my age” have had more than a sip of alcohol (69%) versus non-drinkers (6%).

For complete survey findings and methodology, visit [nahec.org/KidsPoll](http://nahec.org/KidsPoll). For more information on findings or to arrange an interview concerning the KidsHealth KidsPoll, contact Jeffrey Santoro at (302) 651-4106 or [KidsPoll@KidsHealth.org](mailto:KidsPoll@KidsHealth.org).

###

#### **About the KidsHealth® KidsPoll**

A project of the National Association of Health Education Centers (NAHEC), the Nemours Center for Children’s Health Media (creators of KidsHealth.org), and the Department of Health Education and Recreation, Southern Illinois University Carbondale (project researchers), the KidsHealth KidsPoll gives children a national platform to share their views on health-related issues that affect them. Throughout the school year, regular KidsHealth KidsPolls will reveal kids’ opinions on issues such as obesity, bullying, and alcohol use. For more information about the KidsHealth KidsPoll, please visit [nahec.org/KidsPoll](http://nahec.org/KidsPoll).

**About the National Association of Health Education Centers (NAHEC)**

NAHEC is the national association and network of nonprofit health education centers (HECs) and of other organizations that support children's health education and provide products and services to HECs. NAHEC member centers reached over 3 million children, teachers, and parents in 2003. HECs use life-size exhibits, advanced audio-visual technology, and specialized, interactive instructional techniques not generally found in conventional classrooms. The curriculum is designed to support school-mandated areas of study. With programs like "Blood & Guts," Hummers outfitted with removable organs, and playgrounds modeled after anatomy parts, you'll see why former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop proclaimed that health education centers "put pizzazz in prevention." For more information about NAHEC, please visit [nahec.org](http://nahec.org).

**About KidsHealth and the Nemours Center for Children's Health Media**

The Nemours Center for Children's Health Media is a unique physician-led editorial group that specializes in developing age-appropriate online, print, and video educational media for parents, kids, and teens. It creates KidsHealth.org, the most visited website devoted to children's health. In addition to medical information, KidsHealth features articles on emotional, behavioral, and developmental issues of interest to all three audiences. KidsHealth was chosen as the sole U.S. nominee in the e-health category of the 2003 World Summit Award™, which is part of the United Nations' World Summit on the Information Society. Recently, it won the Pirelli Award for *Best Educational Multimedia*. The Nemours Center for Children's Health Media offers the nation's only fellowships in children's health media—providing physicians with the opportunity to learn how to improve family health through effective communications. It is a division of The Nemours Foundation, one of the largest nonprofit organizations devoted to children's health. For more information about KidsHealth, please visit [KidsHealth.org](http://KidsHealth.org).

**About Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Department of Health Education & Recreation**

Researchers from Southern Illinois University Carbondale's Department of Health Education and Recreation conduct the KidsHealth KidsPoll. The research team for this project is led by Stephen L. Brown, PhD, and David Birch, PhD, faculty members in the Department of Health Education and Recreation. The department offers bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in health education and bachelor's and master's degrees in recreation. The health education program is recognized nationally as a leader in school health education and graduate-level teaching and research. Graduates of the program are in health education leadership positions across the country. The department includes 11 health education faculty members and six recreation faculty members. For more information about SIUC, please visit [www.siu.edu](http://www.siu.edu).