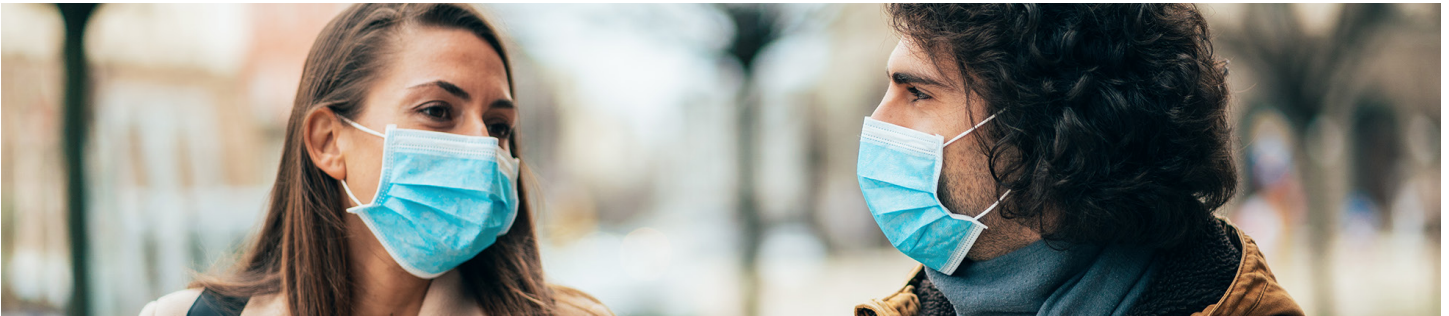


# The Public Health Crisis of Missouri's Colleges and Universities: From COVID-19 planning and response to student well-being and beyond

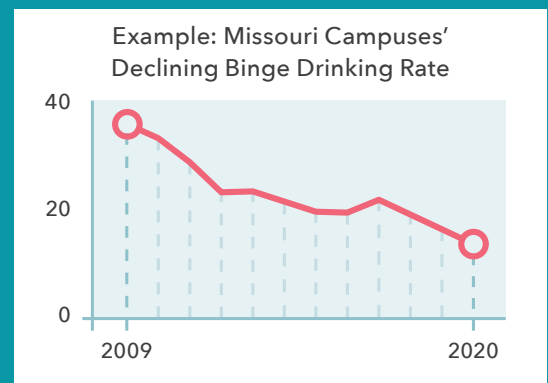
## Guidance for University Leaders



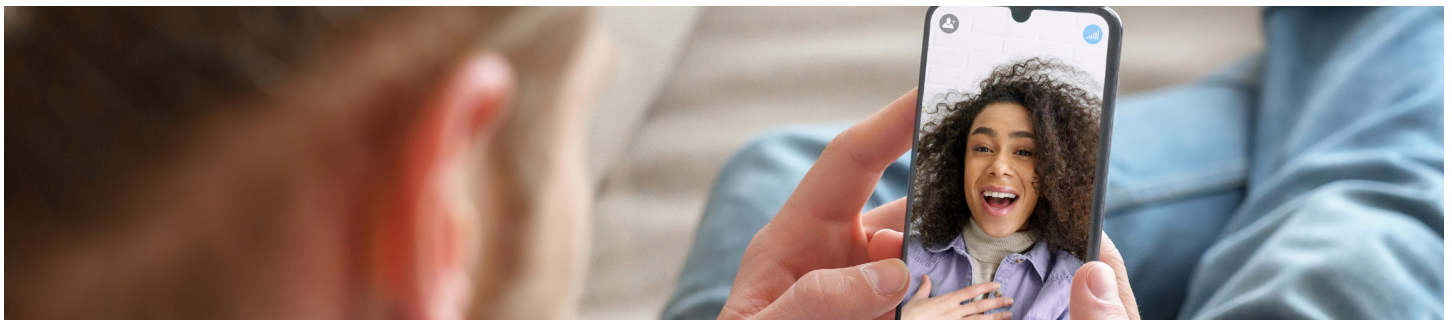
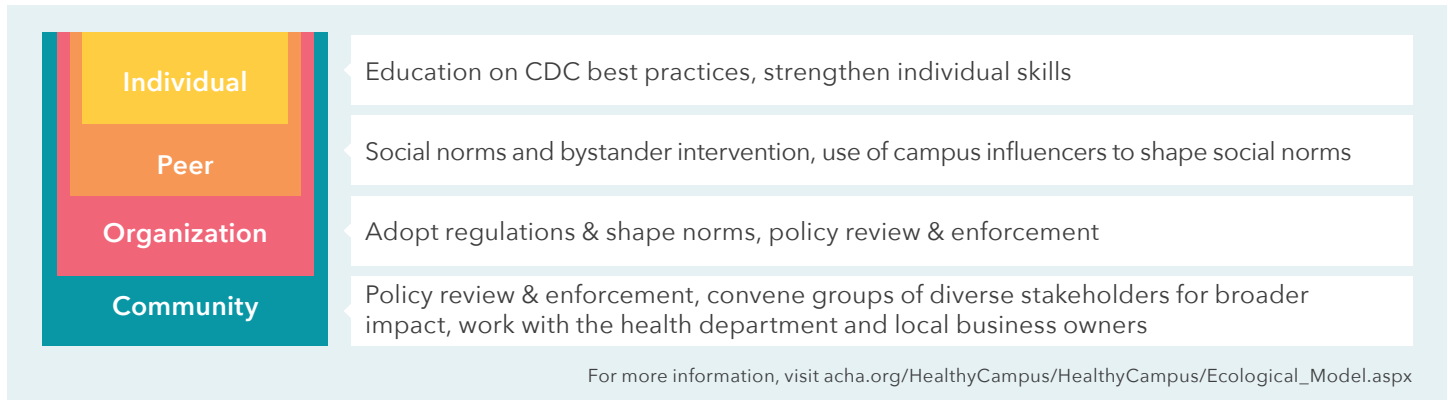
Partners in Prevention is a statewide coalition composed of institutions of higher education in Missouri and relevant state agencies working to collaboratively develop strategies for promoting positive, healthy choices among Missouri's college students. We have a proven track record of using evidence-based, data-driven strategies to address public health concerns on campuses. Based on our successful work, we are sharing this guidance with our university leadership as they address COVID-19.

- Prevention science is a business model. Business is better when prevention science is used. Using evidence-based science will lead to campuses having lower rates of impact and keep campuses open for in-person classes and student engagement throughout the academic year.
- Include preventionists and health professionals in the planning and decision making process for COVID-19 efforts. These are people on campus who know how to implement prevention strategies that have been proven to work for other health crises.
- In our work in PIP, we have seen rates of high risk drinking, underage drinking, and tobacco use decline, but that decline is not due to education alone. When environmental strategies, such as policy, enforcement, and accountability were implemented, rates declined significantly. It is the same in this case as we address COVID-19.
- Individual behavior change must be at the forefront of our work on this issue. If individuals do not comply with CDC best practices, more infections will occur. Individual behavior change is more likely to occur in an environment that supports or facilitates that change, such as campuses with signage and strong, clear policies.

As we address COVID-19 as a community of higher education, prevention/public health professionals need to be involved in campus planning and reliance on personal responsibility is not enough, we must rely on environmental management strategies to achieve healthy outcomes. Missouri PIP campuses have achieved success with addressing binge drinking over the past 13 years by focusing on evidence-based environmental strategies, as evidenced by the chart to the right.



In order to create systemic change on this issue, we must have strategies for different sections of our community. Using the Socio-Ecological Model, here are some suggestions:



## Recommendations for Colleges and Universities:

**Incorporate evidence-based CDC guidelines** on social distancing, mask wearing, and other preventative strategies in your policy.

- Set strong, clear, and consistent policies and avoid mixed messages.
- Start with strong policies that can be rolled back once the semester begins if needed.

**Avoid mixed messages** such as different policies for different settings (classrooms vs. other common areas where students gather).

**Ask your PIP contact to recommend education** and environmental strategies to your COVID leadership team.

- Bystander Intervention is an evidence-based strategy to help students communicate with each other

**Add a public health or prevention professional** to your COVID planning team. These professionals are specialists in promoting behavior change and mobilizing communities to impact health crises.

**Watch for the Partners in Prevention COVID-19 experience survey** this fall and encourage students to participate

**Utilize Partners in Prevention data** to inform action on health disparities among students.

A toolkit for your campus with other resources is located at [pip.missouri.edu/COVID-19.html](https://pip.missouri.edu/COVID-19.html)

### Member Schools

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Saint Louis University | Southeast Missouri State University | State Technical College of Missouri | Truman State University | University of Central Missouri | University of Missouri  
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To learn more about Partners in Prevention, visit [pip.missouri.edu](https://pip.missouri.edu)

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