



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Mental Health Distributes Official Inhalant List to Increase Public Awareness for Businesses and Communities

The tragedies of inhalant use have impacted the Guam community and have devastated many families. As a community, we can take steps to address and prevent potential inhalant use.

As required by Guam Public Law (PL) 28-25, *Relative to Regulating the Sale of Butane, Propane and Other Inhalants to Minors*, the Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse (DMHSA), has published the attached “*Official List of Known Inhalants with Potential for Abuse*” on both departmental websites at www.peaceguam.org and www.healthychoicesguam.org.

This List is also being widely distributed to the community to increase public awareness and to encourage the community to take action in preventing inhalant use, especially among children and youth.

Guam PL 28-25 also states that it is a misdemeanor for any person or business to sell, or transfer propane gas, butane gas or butane lighters, or butane in any other form to any person under the age of eighteen (18).

According to Guam’s statistics, the 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey reports that current inhalant use among high school student on Guam (6.3%) is higher than the United States (3.9%) and surpassed the nationwide rates in 2001 and 2003.

The Guam Police Department’s Juvenile Investigation Section reports that approximately 20% of inhalant use cases have been reported and are pending investigation.

Inhalants are one of the most common substances being abused among court-involved youth as reported by the Department of Youth Affairs (DYA). In 2005, approximately 25% (or one in four of DYA's youth) reported experimenting with inhalants.

The use of inhalants can cause severe, long term damages to the brain, liver and kidneys. Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome can result from first time use of an inhalant even by a healthy young person. Although, DMHSA will continue to provide educational awareness outreach for Guam's schools, the community's help is needed to keep Guam's children and youth safe.

For more information about Inhalants Prevention, visit the websites listed above or contact the DMHSA Prevention and Training Branch at (671) 477-9079 thru 83.

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