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Wilbur-Creston joins statewide initiative to prevent underage use of alcohol and other drugs

SPOKANE, WA – The communities of Wilbur-Creston have received a state grant of \$90,000 to reduce youth alcohol, marijuana and other drug use, and work with community members to support youth in making healthy choices. The grant, awarded by the Washington Health Care Authority's (HCA), Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR), includes funding for training, technical assistance, and community and school-based prevention services.

Wilbur-Creston is one of 100 communities statewide participating in DBHR's Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI). The Initiative supports new or existing coalitions in partnering with parents, youth, educators, health professionals, law enforcement, faith leaders and local government. Coalitions identify their highest prevention needs, plan and implement evidence-based strategies, leverage local resources and evaluate the impact of selected programs.

"Extending these resources to local communities means greater reductions in risky behavior including substance abuse and the harm it causes to people and their families," said Michael Langer, acting assistant director of the Washington State Health Care Authority's Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery. "Community leaders can use this grant to help young people make healthy choices and succeed."

CPWI's primary goals are to reduce underage use of alcohol and marijuana, improve academic performance, and reduce juvenile crime. An evaluation by Washington State University shows that 95% of CPWI programs implemented between July 2015 and June 2016 resulted in delaying the first use of alcohol or other drugs, reducing use and reducing risk factors. In addition, the Washington State Healthy Youth Survey shows that underage drinking in among 10th graders in Spokane County has decreased from 33% in 2008 to 21% in 2018.

"A number of factors were considered in selecting Wilbur-Creston for services," said Brittany Campbell, director of Student Support Services for NorthEast Washington Educational Service District (NEWESD) 101. "These included the increase of at-risk youth, vaping, mental health and suicide risks for Wilbur-Creston students and families, much of which has been amplified by COVID-19, as well as successes in the region's five community coalitions currently operating across Spokane County."

Additional information about CPWI can be found at TheAthenaForum.org. State and county Healthy Youth Survey data is available at www.AskHYS.net. Prevention tips for parents can be found at www.StartTalkingNow.org.

For information about joining the Wilbur-Creston community coalition, contact Brittany Campbell, bcampbell@esd101.net, or Billie Wheeler, bwheeler@esd101.net.