

**Reading Coalition for Prevention & Support, formerly Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse (RCASA):**

The Reading Coalition for Prevention & Support mobilizes community partners, residents and youth to build collaborative approaches and reduce youth substance abuse. Learn more at [www.reading.k12.ma.us/community/readingcoalition](http://www.reading.k12.ma.us/community/readingcoalition)

The Coalition falls under the Detective Division of the Police Department and works closely with police, town and school liaisons to carry out their work. The Coalition Director and Outreach Coordinator are the primary staff and work closely with a 24-member Advisory Board.

The Reading Coalition Advisory Board meets monthly to:

- Exchange and share information that will enhance our community approach to substance abuse prevention and mental health promotion.
- Supply Reading Coalition staff with feedback on activities, projects and emerging initiatives.
- Spread the word about coalition resources and events

The coalition is guided by two major goals. Progress on each goal is tracked annually and in benchmark increments of five years.

- **Goal 1:** Establish and strengthen collaboration among the Reading Coalition's partner organizations in support of the community's effort to prevent and reduce youth substance use
- **Goal 2:** Reduce substance misuse among youth in Reading, MA, and, over time, reduce substance abuse among adults by addressing the issues in our community that increase the risk of substance abuse and promoting the factors that minimize the risk of substance abuse.

Outlined are a number of activities the Reading Coalition was involved in for 2020:

- Programs coordinated by the Coalition within the Police Department include the Crisis Intervention Steering Committee (CIT) and Team Follow-Up Program, Interface Referral Service (operated by William James College), Tip411/Anonymous Text a Tip Program (operated by Citizen Observer) and Rx Round Up for medication collection. The Rx Round Up program was temporarily suspended from March 2020-December 2020 due to the pandemic. Covanta, the facility responsible for medication disposal was unable to accept medications. The program will resume in February of 2021. The Reading Coalition procured medication dissolving packets for residents to self-dispose of medications as well as promoted the state program. Through the MA Med Project, residents can easily request a free, pre-paid mail-back envelope sent directly to their home for safe and secure disposal of unwanted medications. Learn more at <https://med-project.org/locations/massachusetts/>
- Assistance provided to the local School District included referral consultation, program coordination and guest presentations. Major initiatives include the Youth Mental Health First Aid Training for staff, RMHS Chemical Health Student Education Program, Health Education Classroom presentations, and staff collaboration on action teams and committees. Additional presentations and support provided to Austin Prep in coordination with their wellness team.

## Reading Coalition- Annual Report for 2020

- Virtual programming was quickly introduced by coalition staff via Zoom in the spring of 2020 to adapt to the pandemic. We joined with Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition (Medford, Malden, Melrose, Reading, Stoneham, Wakefield and Winchester) to offer the Connect&Cope campaign on social media in the spring of 2020. The campaign included weekly social media messages, Dear Mysty advice column, uplifting posts, and a webinar on coping during the pandemic.
- New or updated resources developed in 2020 included the Substance Misuse Coalition Resource List, Mental Health Coalition Resource List and Helpful Services During the Pandemic Guide for Reading.
- The Coalition adopted use of the Apricot Cloud Based Software program in June of 2020, administered by Social Solutions, to track their coalition activities, meetings, and case management.
- The Coalition was trained to use the Critical Incident Management System (CIMS) system to join in the Middlesex County effort to track follow-ups for mental health and overdoses. CIMS is a software product developed by Kelley Research Associates to support countywide police led programs intending to document all overdose incidents within county jurisdictions and facilitate the transition of those experiencing drug overdoses to treatment. Coalition staff is responsible for data entry and follow-up for relevant cases.

**Committees/Action Teams that involved coalition staff included:** Reading Coalition Advisory Board, Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition (Coordinators meetings, Pandemic projects and regional grant development), RPD Crisis Intervention Team Steering Committee, Medford Regional HUB Crisis Team, RPS Portrait of a Graduate, RPS Data Action Team and the RPS District Support Team.

Coalition Output =

- 3130 individuals reached through outreach programming (in person and virtual)
  - Austin Prep "The First Day" Chris Herren Film Screening
  - Austin Prep Middle School Vaping Education Classes
  - Crisis Intervention Team/SRO Presentation for RPS Clinical Support Staff
  - Coolidge Middle School 8th Grade Vaping Education
  - Chemical Health Education Programming for RMHS
  - Junior Wellness Class Vaping Presentations for RMHS
  - Maternal Substance Misuse for Child Development Class at RMHS
  - Recovery Month Lawn Sign and Narcan Distribution
  - Reading Public School Nurses Narcan Training
  - Substance Use Disorder & Domestic Violence Trainings for the Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition, Wakefield and Winchester Coalitions.
  - Supporting Health Teen Dating Webinar with RESPOND Inc.
  - Vaping Game Show Parker Middle School
  - Vaping Trends and Cessation Support Webinar
  - Vaping Webinar for Beth Israel Hospital System
  - Virtual Health Impacts of Vaping Q&A
  - Virtual Vaping 101 Q&A for 9th Grade Wellness Class
  - Virtual Vaping Legislation Q&A

## Reading Coalition- Annual Report for 2020

- Coalition Overview for the Reading Select Board
- Coalition Resources for the Reading Board of Health
- 240 Crisis Intervention Team Follow-ups provided by Outreach Coordinator related to Mental Health/Substance Use.
- 74 residents used the Interface Referral Service from January through November of 2020 which confidentially matched Reading callers with licensed mental health providers from an extensive database. Each referral met the location, insurance and specialty needs of the caller. Telehealth was more widely available in the spring of 2020 due to the pandemic and increased mental health access for callers.
- 27 new Reading Public School teachers trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid.
- 3686 Facebook users and 4,868 Twitter impressions engaging Reading residents made via the social media campaign (Connect&Cope with the Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition)

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