



ACTIVITIES IN MONTANA

A Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Program and Citizenship Program for Montana High School Students

The Program

AIM HIGHER consists of several steps:

1. Personnel from the Montana High School Association staff are trained, along with other school personnel, to conduct educational workshops on tobacco, alcohol and other drug use, as well as the promotion of good citizenship/sporting behavior.
2. Workshops are conducted to reach Montana coaches, students, school administrators and activity supervisors so that they are prepared to go back to their schools and work directly with students and parents. A major component of the workshops is the implementation of mentoring programs whereby high school students will interact with middle and elementary school students in regard to substance use issues as well as citizenship/sporting behavior issues.
3. A library of publications and video materials, a speakers' bureau, and other citizenship information has been developed and is maintained by the Montana High School Association, for use all across the state in the schools.

AIM HIGHER is not planned as simply a one-time project. The program will be an ongoing one in Montana.

Why Students Involved in Extracurricular Activities?

It used to be believed that students involved in school activities would not be involved in tobacco, alcohol and other drug problems. We now know that is not necessarily the case. Students in school activities face the same pressures as others — and even more. They need alternatives to tobacco, alcohol and drug use too.

What is true about students involved in school activities, like athletics, speech and drama, music and others, is that they are often the leaders in the schools. Peer pressure is important and when students have problems, they turn to other students. By reaching high school students involved in extra-curricular activities there is a better chance to reach more students.

By involving coaches and other activity supervisors as well as parents in AIM HIGHER, the people who often have a unique positive relationship with students will be involved. Coaches, students and parents will form a strong triangle of support and concern to attack the problems of tobacco, alcohol and other drug abuse and poor sporting behavior.

AIM Higher is more than "Just Say No"

While the popular "Just Say No" campaign has called much attention to the alcohol and drug problem and has provided a way for students to turn down tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, more is needed.

Students need more than just saying "No." They need substantive education and positive alternatives to tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. They need real strategies of coping with pressure from peers.

AIM Higher is more than merely a slogan for another alcohol and drug program. AIM stands for "Activities in Montana," in which the campaign will be directed toward the more than 27,000 Montana high school students who participate in Montana High School Association-sanctioned activities. This includes athletic events, speech and drama, music and others. Working with these students

are more than 2,500 coaches and activity supervisors, more than 300 superintendents and principals, and many others who are concerned and interested.

The Role of the School

AIM Higher is designed to supplement any other school alcohol and drug programs in Montana schools. School officials and others have expressed a need for more assistance in citizenship and tobacco, alcohol and other drug education and prevention programs. AIM Higher is a response to that need.

The Montana High School Association believes in Montana youth and is concerned with youth developing healthy lifestyles. Tobacco, alcohol and other drug use is not part of a healthy life style and neither is poor citizenship or lack of respect at our sporting events.

The Montana High School Association also believes that when youth are provided with factual educational information on tobacco, alcohol and other drug use, coupled with a positive and supportive program to not use tobacco, alcohol and drugs, the students will make the right decisions. We believe the same will happen regarding citizenship issues.

Steroid Use

The following statement on the use of steroids has been adopted by the MHSA Executive Board.

Anabolic androgenic steroid use at the high school level is of grave concern. Steroids are used by some athletes in sports, and the seriousness of the problem has been well documented recently.

A recent study indicates that more than six percent of high school seniors use steroids. About two-thirds of these seniors tried steroids before the age 16.

High school coaches may not be able to prevent the use of steroids altogether, but they can clearly and forcefully discourage their use. Coaches should take a proactive role. First, they should learn about steroids, what they do and what they will not do. Then they should provide this information for their athletes. Steroids can, with proper diet and with training, increase muscle development; however, as is typical with most get-rich-quick schemes, steroid use has serious short-and-long term consequences that must be addressed.

Normal and equal musculature development can occur without steroid use. Although the natural process takes longer, muscle tone will last longer and does not carry the harmful side effects of steroids.

Most coaches would not promote steroid use intentionally. Total silence by coaches, however, condones use in some young people's minds. Even though steroids may not be mentioned when it is suggested to an athlete that his/her success is limited only by a lack of weight and/or strength, without a disclaimer the statement can be a motivation to use steroids. The pervasiveness of the drugs that allow for development of increased weight under the aforementioned circumstances is a coercive power that is difficult for the individual to resist without knowing what the side effects of the drugs may be.

The issue goes beyond protecting the integrity of your sport. The use of steroids in sports is considered to be cheating. We stand

opposed to the use of steroids by athletes and all members of the student body because of health and ethical concerns.

Promotion of Citizenship and Positive Sporting Behavior

The major objectives of this component of AIM Higher are to promote citizenship and positive sporting behavior and to bring an awareness of the problems caused by lack of good behavior in this area. The other major objective is to encourage students to consider taking leadership positions on sporting issues and to be active in their schools in this arena. The two units the workshop will focus on are: respect and positive values, and positive sporting behavior and the importance of perspective.

AIM HIGHER AWARD

This award was initiated in 1995 by the MHS A Executive Board and is presented annually to one school in recognition of their support for the AIM Higher program and its ideals.

1995 Sidney High School
1996 Butte High School
1997 Broadwater High School (Townsend)
1998 Helena High School/Capital High School
1999 Glasgow High School
2000 Sweet Grass County High School (Big Timber)
2001 Dawson County High School (Glendive)
2002 Scobey High School
2003 C.M. Russell High School (Great Falls)
2004 Cut Bank High School
2005 Custer County High School (Miles City)
2006 Shelby High School
2007 Power High School
2008 Missoula Sentinel High School
2009 Wibaux County High School
2010 Choteau High School
2011 Sidney High School
2012 Butte High School
2013 Loyola Sacred Heart High School (Missoula)
2014 Darby High School
2015 Powell County High School (Deer Lodge)

AIM HIGHER CONTRIBUTOR AWARD

In the 2009-10 school year the MHS A Executive Board instituted a recognition of individuals who have made extraordinary efforts in expanding the AIM Higher Program. The AIM Higher Contributor Award is presented to individuals for notable support and promotion of this student-based leadership program.

2010 Bruce Clausen, Administrator – Dawson County High School (Glendive)
Jill Flynn, Facilitator – Broadwater High School (Townsend)
Richy Powell, Facilitator – Dawson County High School (Glendive)
2011 Kip Ryan, Facilitator – Sweet Grass County High School (Big Timber)
2012 Connie Wittak, Facilitator – Scobey High School
2013 Randy Gramm, Facilitator – Choteau High School
2014 [no award presented]
2015 Randy Shipman – Beaverhead County High School (Dillon)