

Collaboration Provides Park and Recreation Profession with Resources to Address Substance Misuse Among Youth

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Ashburn, Va. (June 18, 2020) — The [National Recreation and Park Association](#) (NRPA), the [Afterschool Alliance](#) and the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) (Healthier Generation) announce their continued collaboration for providing out-of-school time (OST) administrators and park and recreation leaders with the resources they need to address substance misuse among youth. The AmerisourceBergen Foundation, the not-for-profit charitable giving arm of AmerisourceBergen, provides ongoing funding to develop these resources.

Through this collaboration, NRPA, the Afterschool Alliance and Healthier Generation will continue building upon an existing suite of professional development resources to equip park and recreation professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to help prevent substance misuse, promote positive mental health and address related stigmas. The partners will also work to build the capacity for parks and recreation to address substance use and play a role in prevention, education and recovery efforts. Together, the three partners will:

- Develop **two online learning opportunities** focused on the stigma of substance use and mental health.
- Develop and disseminate a **policy issue brief** describing the importance of addressing stigma.
- Develop and disseminate a **guide** focused on prevention through parks and recreation.
- Work directly with **four park and recreation agencies to better understand their needs** in this space and have them provide input and feedback on these deliverables.

“Park and recreation professionals serve critical roles as providers of community health services nationwide, which include responding to substance use,” said Kristine Stratton, NRPA president and CEO. “NRPA is proud to partner with the Afterschool Alliance and Alliance for a Healthier Generation, with support from the AmerisourceBergen Foundation, to equip these providers with the information and resources they need to contribute to local prevention, education and recovery.”

“Afterschool and summer learning programs provide critical experiences that help young people succeed in school and in life,” added Jodi Grant, executive director of the Afterschool Alliance. “Students build strong relationships with caring adults during the

out-of-school time hours, and when those adults know how to recognize signs of substance misuse or other mental health problems and are empowered to intervene and help, students, families and communities benefit. The Afterschool Alliance applauds the AmerisourceBergen Foundation for providing essential resources to this project. We are proud to partner with the National Recreation and Park Association and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation to help equip afterschool and summer learning providers with resources that will help them do even more to help youth in need.”

“From increasing access to nutritious foods to providing safe places for children to play, parks and recreation professionals are essential partners in addressing the deep inequalities that our communities face,” said Kathy Higgins, chief executive officer at the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. “Healthier Generation is proud to build on our long-standing relationship with NRPA and the Afterschool Alliance to further support the physical and social-emotional health of children.”

The AmerisourceBergen Foundation awarded this grant through its Opioid Resource Grant Program, which enables the Foundation to support and advance ideas from innovative nonprofits, at the local and national level, to fight against opioid misuse.

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About the National Recreation and Park Association

The National Recreation and Park Association is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that all people have access to parks and recreation for health, conservation and social equity. Through its network of 60,000 recreation and park professionals and advocates, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space. For more information, visit www.nrpa.org. For digital access to NRPA’s flagship publication, *Parks & Recreation*, visit www.parksandrecreation.org.

About the Afterschool Alliance

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.AfterschoolAlliance.org.

About the Alliance for a Healthier Generation

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation believes every child deserves a healthy future. For over a decade, Healthier Generation has empowered kids to develop lifelong healthy habits by ensuring the environments that surround them provide and promote good health. Driven by our passion that all young people deserve a chance to live healthier lives, our work, in total, has reached up to 28 million kids across the country. To learn more and help make a difference, visit HealthierGeneration.org and join us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).