



Save a life from alcohol poisoning.

## **MEDICAL AMNESTY/GOOD SAMARITAN LAW**

### **Make the call. Save a life.**

Medical Amnesty, also known as the 911 Lifeline or 911 Good Samaritan Law, are statewide laws which grants intoxicated minors a limited legal immunity when they seek help for themselves or another individual who is in need of immediate medical attention.

Despite the seriousness of an alcohol overdose, young people drinking underage (or drinking where they're not supposed to i.e. campus residence halls) are afraid to call for help due to fear of consequences from campus conduct and/or the legal system.

Having Medical Amnesty/Good Samaritan policies in place at the state (and campus) level makes it clear that saving the lives of our young people is more important than handing down punishments for underage drinking violations.

### **Reasons to support Medical Amnesty Laws and Policies:**

- Alcohol-related unintentional injuries are a leading cause of death among young people in the United States.
- Young people are reluctant to seek help in such alcohol related emergencies because of potential judicial consequences. One of the most common reasons minors cite for not calling 911 for help when they witness an emergency is fear of police involvement.
- A Cornell University study concluded that while 19% of college students have said they have been in a situation where 911 should have been called for a highly intoxicated individual, only 4% actually made the call.
- Other studies show the number of alcohol-related EMS calls increasing by almost 700% in a one year period following the implementation of one Medical Amnesty policy.
- Studies also show that while 911 calls have increased and fear of judicial repercussion decreased, drinking levels stayed the same or dropped suggesting that the presence of the policy has not encouraged drinking.
- 68% of those under 21 report they fear getting in trouble and being cited by law enforcement when they drink.
- In Indiana alone, over 50 lives have been saved due to their state's Medical Amnesty law.

**These important protections can help save lives, but many states and universities have yet to adopt them.**

*The following states do not have a medical amnesty law: Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Tennessee, Wyoming.*

- [See a comprehensive list of state Medical Amnesty laws here.](#)
- [See a comprehensive list of campus Medical Amnesty Policies here.](#)

**Your state or campus missing? Take action!**

[Use this Advocacy Letter and Petition template](#) to advocate for this life-saving initiative in your state, on your campus, and within your organizations.

**In advocating for campus policies, consider these [guidelines for a comprehensive Good Samaritan Policy](#) by [Students for Sensible Drug Policy \(SSDP\)](#).**

A comprehensive GSP Includes:

- A clearly worded, easily accessible, effectively enforced policy which is well known among the student body, campus administration, and campus public safety officers. GSPs are only effective if they guarantee amnesty in writing (usually in the student code of conduct) and the policy is widely publicized. If a school has the unwritten practice of excusing students from punitive consequences during emergency situations, but students don't know about it, then it is like having no such policy at all.
- Amnesty from disciplinary actions for the person experiencing the medical emergency, the person(s) who notify authorities, and any other bystanders, as a maximum effort to promote fast action responses. Policies that do not cover all students are ineffective, it is important that protection be given to everyone.
- Amnesty from disciplinary action for all violation of all substance policies, not just alcohol policy violations. A GSP that only grants amnesty for alcohol-related emergencies is incomplete as it does not address medical emergencies related to other substances.
- Applies educational sanctions vs. disciplinary sanctions. Students are less reluctant to call for medical assistance as they aren't fearing expulsion or suspension. In addition, educational sanctions may provide students with the information they need to avoid medical emergencies in the future and to share this information with their peers as a peer educator.