October is Substance Use Prevention month, and the goal is to lift up the conversation about prevention and showcase prevention’s positive effects on communities across the state and country. Prevention creates an environment that promotes the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, which prevents problems before they occur. Not only does prevention save lives, but it is also cost-effective; saving $64 for every $1 invested (on average).

The need for prevention has never been greater. Studies show that the earlier in life a young person starts using alcohol or other drugs, the greater their lifetime risk of misuse or addiction. Prevention works best when it addresses risk and protective factors, operates at the individual, relationship, community and society levels, is tailored to the unique needs of individuals and communities and is sustainable.

[OPTION TO ADD SOME CURRENT COMMUNITY EFFORTS/COMMUNITY PREVENTION OUTCOMES]

“We invite anyone in the community to our community coalition meetings where we connect and plan for comprehensive prevention efforts.”

Each one of us can all play a role in preventing substance use in our community. Here are some ways to get involved:

* Parents can be a positive role model and have ongoing conversations with their children. Visit parentslead.org for useful information, tools and resources.
* Schools can review policies surrounding substance use and integrate curriculums on building resiliency.
* Business can identify and share local prevention, intervention, and treatment resources with employees.
* Law enforcement can implement evidence-based enforcement efforts including bar walk-throughs, compliance checks or shoulder tap operations.
* Healthcare providers can incorporate screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT) into daily practice.