



*Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse, Inc.*  
*SCoSA promotes Substance Abuse Free Environments (SAFE)*

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## Press Release

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### FREE COMMUNITY SERVICE "PROJECT AIM" – ARE YOU A RESPONSIBLE VENDOR?

The Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse (SCoSA) is currently scheduling Responsible Vendor Training programs called Project AIM (Alcohol Impairment Measure) as a free community service to Sarasota County businesses in an effort to prevent and combat underage drinking. The Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation (the entity responsible for monitoring the sale and distribution of alcohol for the State of Florida) encourages businesses that serve or sell alcohol to "protect their asset by becoming a responsible vendor under the Florida Responsible Vendors Act."

In addition, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has partnered with the Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation in conducting Underage Alcohol Sales Operations targeting underage alcohol sales by random store clerks. During the latest operations held April 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 37 stores were visited and alcohol was purchased at 5 of these locations using undercover operatives.

"The free workshop is AIMed at responsibility, not prohibition with hope that we can reduce injuries related to alcohol and protect our local businesses at the same time. Any business that engages in the sale of alcohol should absolutely have the employees trained, especially while there is a grant covering the expenses." states Curt Lavarello, Executive Director for the Coalition. The Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey found that alcohol continues to be the most commonly used drug among Florida's public school students. And the 2007 Florida Youth Risk Behavior Survey showed that 31% of high school students either bought alcohol in a store, a restaurant, bar or club, at a public event or gave someone else money to buy it.

This community service is funded through the U.S. Department of Education's SMART (Sarasota Mobilizes Alcohol Reduction for Teens) grant in partnership with the School Board of Sarasota County, Office of Safe & Drug Free Schools. For more information and to schedule the training for your place of business, please contact SCoSA by calling 377-7736 or [www.scosa.org](http://www.scosa.org). Times and dates can be customized to accommodate the schedule of the participants including evenings and weekends.