

the

RED CUP Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

Q What are the laws for bringing a friend to the hospital for alcohol poisoning?

A. You may be referring to medical amnesty and Good Samaritan laws. Medical amnesty creates an exemption from prosecution for minors who voluntarily present themselves at an agency or ER for observation, examination, and treatment of alcohol over-consumption and/or a legitimate health care concern. "Good Samaritan" amnesty laws do the same thing for intoxicated minors who bring another minor to an ER for medical attention. Organizational medical amnesty grants the same protection from prosecution to an institution such as a fraternity or sports club.

The rationale behind medical amnesty is to protect the health and lives of students who over-consume alcohol to the point of needing medical help by assuring them that they, or those who assist them in getting health care, will not be subject to disciplinary actions for obtaining that help.

Though there are 16 states that have medical amnesty laws, Arizona is not one of them.

There is ongoing debate regarding the effectiveness of these policies. Do they promote even riskier drinking behaviors because of the absence of legal consequences or does it have the potential to save lives? This has proven to be a hard question to answer based on the difficulty of measuring the impact of the laws.

When taking a friend to an ER for alcohol poisoning, the following question may arise for some students: Do I risk getting myself, my friend, or my organization in trouble, or do I do what is best to optimize the healthiest outcome?

We believe that helping a friend in need is always the right thing to do. Death always trumps getting in trouble. Regrets and poor decision making are often the result of over-consumption of alcohol and are especially so in cases of alcohol poisoning. Not taking action could seriously hurt a friend and haunt you forever.

Don't let peer pressure or fear of getting in trouble compromise your integrity. Let your moral compass always point you in the right direction.

Wildcats Step Up!



wildfact

Integrity, responsibility, compassion, and forgiveness make up your "moral compass."



Got a question about alcohol?

Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu



www.health.arizona.edu

The Red Cup Q&A is written by Lynn Reyes, LCSW, LISAC, David Salafsky, MPH, Lee Ann Hamilton, MA, CHES, and Spencer Gorin, RN, in the Health Promotion and Preventive Services (HPPS) department of the UA Campus Health Service.