



A Department of Ventura County Health Care Agency

HEALTH, RECOVERY & WELLNESS

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### “BlowB.A.C. BOOTH” Offers First-of-Its-Kind DUI Prevention

Downtown patrons can take their own alcohol breath test before heading to parking lot

[Ventura] -- In an effort to give patrons of bars and restaurants the opportunity to ‘make good choices,’ the County Behavioral Health Department will debut the “BlowBAC Booth” in Ventura this Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m., near the parking structure at California and Santa Clara streets, offering a free, confidential, self-administered breath test in a convenient, private setting. Friday is the start of the Memorial Day weekend, and the traditional beginning of the summer months when nightlife in Ventura picks up.

The BlowBAC Booth is a “pop up” portable design, with an informative video message, and a self-use breath-testing device similar to a Breathalyzer. Free and easy to use, the County plans for booths to be set up periodically for special events, weekends and holidays, supporting enhanced public awareness near drinking settings. With focus on the settings and locations that frequently lead to impaired driving incidents, the BlowBAC Booth is the brain child of County contractor and ad agency CEO, Simon Dixon.

“It’s my belief that most people like to make smart decisions, but how are people to know when they are at point zero eight or beyond?,” said Dixon. “And the more one drinks, the less likely they are to make a good educated guess. The BlowBAC Booth allows people to go from making bad guesses to making good choices about their drinking. And underscores the fact that there is no ‘safe amount of alcohol’ when driving a vehicle.”

“This is simply a logical extension of our ongoing prevention efforts,” said Patrick Zarate, Division Manager for the County’s Alcohol and Drug Programs. “Drinking and driving is a significant personal and public safety risk. We know that Downtown Ventura is the entertainment epicenter for much of Ventura County, and this collaboration is aimed at supporting businesses and patrons to play it safe this summer. When you think about, a \$15 cab fare is nothing compared to a \$10,000 DUI arrest,” said Zarate.

Initially funded with a grant award from the California Office of Traffic Safety, this first-of-its-kind effort aims to inform those who are drinking *before* they get behind the wheel. This strategy is in addition to other recent efforts advanced by the Health Care Agency, which include the designated driver program, alternate transportation options, safe alcohol service training for bar staff, and security training for bouncers of local establishments.

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