

**Daniel P. Reardon, D.D.S.**

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I would prefer not being here today to discuss the issues of binge drinking on college campus. I would prefer that my son, Daniel, be alive and that he be finishing up his examinations at the University of Maryland and that he and I would be discussing his plans for the summer and for next year and for his future. For him there are no future plans and for his mother and me there remains a future without our son. He died on Valentine's Day. His cause of death was acute alcoholic poisoning. This occurred in a fraternity sanctioned by the University of Maryland during an initiation into the fraternity. These events occurred as the national media, press, magazines and television, were beginning to report on studies delineating the extent of the problem of binge drinking on campuses was impacting our youth.

My son's death appears to have occurred as a direct result of a hazing by the fraternity to which he was pledging. So the circumstances of his death do not fall directly under the rubric of "binge drinking", however his death occurred in the widespread culture of alcohol consumption on college campuses. Fraternities are a subculture of that culture. It is to the larger issues of alcohol consumption amongst our youth to that I want to discuss.

Since the death of Daniel, five parents in this similar group of friends have come up to me to share with me their brushes with acute alcoholic poisoning and the potential deaths of their sons. To learn so quickly after Daniel's death that so many families have had experience with excessive alcohol ingestion and came so close to a pain that is unimaginable is disturbing. I am just a parent. I am not an expert in these issues. However, those who are experts in this field have been sharing with me their statistics as to how rampant this problem is with our youth. I have come to learn that fraternities have been aware of these risks for too many years, and they have done very little about it. This has been for me equally disturbing.

So, I am pleased that light is being shed on this problem; that universities must move out of their denial of the extent of these problems on their campuses, and that the United States Government must fully investigate this phenomenon since too many children are dying or suffering permanent injury and that the best of our youth, on all of the campuses across the United States are rendering themselves – by conservative estimates 40% to 50% - blind drunk once a week.

This is a chilling statistic.

This social phenomenon is not something that is happening to the disenfranchised – it is happening to the best of our youth from families that desire the best for their children and have the resources to provide it.

Something is very wrong.

I am not an expert on these issues. I am only an expert on the anguish of sleeping on the floor of an ICU unit for six days while my son lay dying, but my sons' death, which is every parents' nightmare, was preventable.

Thus, as a parent, and not as an expert, I feel the following:

- Ø Universities and fraternities need to recognize that binge drinking is a severe problem
- Ø Universities and fraternities need to control the environments they create.
- Ø The role of fraternities and sororities need to be seriously evaluated as to how they foster any educational role on university campuses, and why, after so many years of knowing about this problem, they have done so little to prevent these tragedies.
- Ø The Federal Government will need to look at its role in supporting universities through the funding of student assistance programs.
- Ø The Federal Government will need to look at the use of television to sponsor liquor advertisements that are

directed towards youth.

Parents do not send their children to college to die. The pain that Danny's Mom and I have suffered is unimaginable to anyone who has not lost a child.

Last year, Daniel traveled through Europe and he visited 15 countries. Upon his return, he stated to me how he noticed how European peers seemed to have a handle on alcohol and that everything was so crazy back in the United States. I remember telling him that this was an issue he would have to deal with. The irony is that he is now dealing with this through his death. It is my hope that his death will serve a larger purpose and that no parent will ever have to go through what Danny's Mom and I have gone through. It is my hope that Danny's death will bring about a much higher awareness of the extent of this problem, and that Universities and fraternities will institute concrete changes to prevent this tragedy from ever destroying a young child's life again.