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This Memorial Day do not Become a Memory! Drunk Driving Increases over the Long Holiday Weekend

The University of Southern California (USC) is reporting that alcohol sales have surged since the COVID-19 pandemic began, raising concerns among USC experts and others that the bottoms-up binge could come with a social cost.

As family and friends break free from shelter in place orders and begin to plan their Memorial Day celebration, we encourage you to plan while you can and designate a sober ride. Impairment begins with the first drink. Texas law enforcement officers will be out in force during the Memorial Day weekend looking for impaired drivers. Failing to drive sober immensely increases the chance of being arrested for a DWI.

“We want all the citizens of Jim Hogg County to make it home safely this weekend. No one wins when you drink and drive or use impairing drugs and drive,” said Cosme G. Rubalcaba, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agent for Jim Hogg County.

Not only could you become a memory in someone’s life, you could also cost someone their life, or cause serious, lifelong injuries. The financial burden of getting a DWI can run as high as \$17,000 — not to mention the emotional costs associated with a DWI.

Plan ahead by using a non-drinking driver or a taxi/rideshare service to get home safely. If that is not an option, sleep at a friend’s house. Planning ahead can make this Memorial Day a memorable weekend — while not planning ahead might turn it into a nightmare.

For information on free alcohol awareness programs available through the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, *Watch UR BAC* program in College Station, visit: watchurbac.tamu.edu, or call: 979-862-1911.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service’s *Watch UR BAC* program is funded by TxDOT and is provided at no charge to promote alcohol awareness, the dangers of impaired driving, and friends watching out for friends. Contact: Nancy Winn, nancy.winn@ag.tamu.edu, for booking information.