MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

Dear Millis High School Parent or Guardian:

Our team of clinicians and scientists from the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and Harvard Medical School are partnering with schools across Massachusetts to evaluate the effectiveness of a new substance use diversion and education program called iDECIDE (**D**rug **E**ducation **C**urriculum: **I**ntervention, **D**iversion, and **E**mpowerment) that will be implemented at Millis High School as well as nearly 100 schools across the entire state of Massachusetts. We can't accomplish this mission without the help of you and your child!

Why is the evaluation of iDECIDE so important? In recent years, substance use at school has increased due to the widespread availability of devices that make it easy to conceal substances from peers, parents, and school staff. Students who use substances at school or school sanctioned events are both violating school substance use policies and at a heightened risk for negative health effects. Millis High School has committed to launching an exciting new program (iDECIDE) that was developed in collaboration between MGH, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and the Institute for Health and Recovery. iDECIDE aims to provide students experimenting with substances and/or who got caught using substances at school the knowledge, skills and motivation necessary to make healthier decisions.

When a new program like iDECIDE is launched in schools, it is important to monitor effectiveness and compare outcomes during times when schools do not have the program to times when the program is fully launched. This information is critical in making improvements to the program in order to best support students and the overarching school community. Before and after staff at Millis High School implement the program, our team at MGH will be working to evaluate changes in student outcomes as well as the effectiveness of iDECIDE itself. We are interested in how iDECIDE impacts attitudes of school staff, prevalence of substance use across the school, as well as the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors of individual students. The information your child provides will be invaluable in helping our team develop a more effective response to substance use infractions to help students and families. Previous program participants have found these types of studies to be an informative, interesting, and rewarding experience that provides unique insight on real applications of science and their own behaviors.

What does our evaluation program involve? Our program includes individual referral to the MGH evaluation team. We will explain this in more detail below:

Individual Referral to MGH Research Team:

- ✔ Students will be referred to the MGH study staff by a school staff member if they received a substance use-related infraction at school or a school-sanctioned event.
- ✔ All information that the MGH evaluation team receives will be kept **secure and confidential.**
- ✔ Referral does **NOT** mean that your child will be enrolled in a study. In order to enroll, the MGH team will reach out to explain the study, answer any questions, and obtain **written parental consent** (if under 18) **and written student assent/consent** (if age 18 or older). Regardless of whether you or your child provides consent for the MGH evaluation program, Millis High School is free to use iDECIDE or any other disciplinary response they have available and deem best.
- ✔ In the unlikely event that your child meets criteria to be referred to the MGH team (e.g., has a substance use-related infraction at school or a school-sanctioned event) and you do NOT want your child to be

referred to the MGH research team, you must fill out this survey [https://redcap.link/iDECIDEoptout] by January 14. There will be no penalty or consequence to you or your child for opting out of the referral process. If the study staff does not hear from you by January 14, it will be assumed that you consent to your child being referred to the MGH study staff if determined appropriate by school staff.

What about privacy and confidentiality? We ensure that all information provided to us remains confidential. All contact information will be stored on secure computers that only authorized MGH study staff will have access to. None of the information your child provides will be available to anyone, including school officials or personnel. If we have serious concerns for your child's safety, we will meet with you to review our concerns and make referrals as clinically indicated.

How do I find out more information? If you would like to learn more about our program, please reach out to Dr. Randi Schuster at (617) 643-6673 or Rschuster@mgh.harvard.edu. If you would like to opt out your student from individual referrals, please fill out this survey: [https://redcap.link/iDECIDEoptout] by January 14.

We look forward to partnering with you!

Sincerely,

Randi M. Schuster, Ph.D. and the iDECIDE Evaluation Team
Center for Addiction Medicine
Psychiatry Department
Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School