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Intoxicated students overwhelm hospital ER

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AMHERST - A dozen people were hospitalized and treated for severe intoxication when they became sick during a dance party at the University of Massachusetts Saturday night into Sunday morning, according to campus officials.

The influx of patients put a strain on Cooley Dickinson Hospital, which was forced to close its emergency room to new patients shortly after midnight, according to staff members.

A hospital spokesperson could not be reached for comment Sunday, but a nursing supervisor confirmed the closure. She said the hospital's emergency room can typically treat 20 to 25 people simultaneously. She did not know the exact number of people who sought treatment Saturday night into Sunday or how many had an alcohol-related illness, but she said the patient total grew to an "excessive amount."

UMass spokesman Edward Blaguszewski said the identity of those who became ill during the event in the Mullins Center was not known. He said he did not know whether they were UMass students or which hospital treated them.

The Mullins Center does not serve alcohol, and the approximately 1,300 people at the event were screened for alcohol and other prohibited items prior to entering the "Turn It Up Party," he said.

Police suspect the 12 who became sick had been drinking before entering the event but did not begin to show signs of intoxication until later, said Blaguszewski. He said they are expected to recover.

Police reported no arrests or property damage at the event, he added.

The dance party, which was open to any college student who showed student identification, was part of the University's "Blackout Weekend," a campus tradition in which UMass students invite other college students for various weekend sporting, food and music events. The name has no connection to the term "blackout," which some use to describe alcohol-induced amnesia.

UMass Amherst Police and Amherst Fire officials who responded with ambulances to aid the 12 intoxicated people were not immediately available to comment on the incident.

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Comments

Mon, 04/26/2010 - 11:29 — fjd

On the bright side....

...12 out of 1300, that's less than 1% in attendance. My guess is those 12 forgot what they learned from the Basics Alcohol Education Program all students participate in. Good thing those other 1288 concert goers remembered its not

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cool to drink to excess!

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Mon, 04/26/2010 - 07:42 — ranger74

University Health Service

Might be wise to change the name of that event because it just may promote excessive alcohol use among the students.

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Mon, 04/26/2010 - 08:43 — Liz

Good Idea?

Yeah, that'll stop 'em. I'm sure that is reason they "pre-gamed".

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