Resolution before the Lewis and Clark City-County Board of Health for Support for Social Host Ordinance to Reduce Underage Alcohol Use in Helena

WHEREAS, consumption of alcoholic beverages by minors and parties where minors consume alcoholic beverages present numerous problems for our community, including public health and safety concerns, and specifically that;

- Montana teens report the highest incidence of binge drinking in the nation (defined as 5 or more drinks in one sitting)
- Lewis and Clark County 12th graders report a binge drinking rate that is even higher than the Montana average
- 666 Minor in Possession violations were issued in Lewis and Clark County in 2006 and one in six 8th grade students reported binge drinking in the two weeks prior to completing the survey
- 71.4% of Lewis and Clark County 8th through 12th grade students report in the 2006 Montana Prevention Needs Assessment that it would be "sort of " or "very" easy to get some beer, wine or hard liquor in our community.

WHEREAS, alcohol use by minors is also linked to several other public health and life issues for our youth including but certainly not limited to sexual assault, DUI related crashes, unprotected sexual activity, teenage pregnancy, STDs, physical assault academic difficulties, and suicide; and,

WHEREAS, the Lewis and Clark City-County Board of Health understands that the purpose of a citywide social host ordinance is to protect public health, safety and general welfare and to reduce the risky health behaviors associated with the consumption of alcohol by minors; and

WHEREAS, according to research by Sloan, Stout, Whetten-Goldstein and Lang (2000) social host ordinances reduce binge drinking and drinking and driving; and according to the National Institute of Health research shows that kids whose parents or friends parents provide alcohol for teen get-togethers are more likely to engage in heavier drinking, to drink more often and to get into traffic crashes; and

WHEREAS, Montana Code Annotated § 7-32-4302, allows the City of Helena to both control disturbances of the peace as well as prevent intoxication and disorderly conduct within the city and within three miles of the limits, which will have an impact on the public health and safety of the Helena and surrounding community.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Lewis and Clark City-County Board of Health supports the passage and approval of a social host ordinance in the City of Helena as one important prevention strategy in our broad, community-wide effort to reduce underage alcohol use in our community and reduce the associated public health risks.

ADOPTED BY THE Lewis and Clark City-County Board of Health on this day, Tuesday April 24, 2008.

Dr. David Krainacker, chair
Lewis & Clark City-County Board of Health