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Colleges Adopt “Good Samaritan” Policies for Drug and Alcohol Emergencies

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The University of Miami is one of a growing number of colleges that have instituted "Good Samaritan" policies to encourage students to call 911 when they are with someone who may be in danger from consuming drugs or alcohol.

The policies state any student who calls campus police or another emergency service to help another student with a drug- or alcohol-related medical issue will not face legal consequences, USA Today reports.

More than 11 states have Good Samaritan laws, the article notes. Colleges are looking to personalize the rules for their own campuses. According to Students for a Sensible Drug Policy, there are more than 240 colleges and universities with some form of a 911 Good Samaritan policy on the books. More than half of these policies cover situations involving all substances, while the rest cover only those involving alcohol.

Schools that have recently passed Good Samaritan policies include the College of William & Mary, Franklin Pierce University, University of Connecticut, University of Maryland, Ithaca College, Columbia University and University of Georgia.

According to Charlie Shreiber, senior and student body president at the University of Miami, there have been 30 reported cases on the campus of overdose or alcohol abuse this semester. "The moment a student picks up the phone to call campus police, this policy is in place," he said. "The fear of retribution is what we need to alleviate." The college newspaper reported three students died as a result of substance abuse in the last year.