



Underage Drinking Support 21

Major Progress Has Been Made Since The Drinking Age Was Raised In 1984:¹

- Among 12th graders, the percentage who have never had alcohol in their lifetime more than tripled, from 7.8% in 1985 to 27.8% in 2007.
- Among 12th graders, the percentage who have never been drunk increased from 34.6% in 1991 (which was the first year the question was asked) to 44.9% in 2007.

More Still Needs to Be Done:

- Alcohol is still the number one drug of choice among youth.
- 39.2% of 12th graders do not perceive drinking 4 or 5 alcoholic beverages nearly every day to be a great risk.
- 92.2% of 12th graders say that alcohol is “fairly easy” or “very easy” to get.

Costs of Underage Drinking...

Youth who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence as an adult than those who wait until age 21.²

If not prevented, the estimated economic costs of alcohol abuse in the United States are as follows:³

Health care expenditures : \$26,338,000,000

Productivity impacts : \$134,206,000,000

Other impacts on society (crashes, crime, etc.) : \$24,093,000,000

Total: \$184,637,000,000

Consequences of Underage Drinking...

DEATH. Each year, underage drinking is involved in the following:

2121 fatal car accidents⁴

1600 homicides⁵

300 suicides⁶

DATE RAPE AND ASSAULT. Each year, among college students, underage drinking is involved in the following:⁹

50,000 incidents of alcohol related date rape

430,000 assaults by students who were drinking

DECLINING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- Youth who are alcohol dependant may remember 10% less of what they have learned than those who don't drink.⁷
- About 25 percent of college students report academic consequences of their drinking including missing class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams or papers, and receiving lower grades overall.⁸

DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS.

- Scientists now believe that alcohol problems are best characterized as developmental disorders, with consequences that play out over the lifespan.¹⁰

What You Can Do...

- Engage local colleges in environmental strategies.
- Meet with college presidents.
- Write letters to college presidents and your state Governor.
- Submit op-eds to local papers .

Meeting With Your Local College Presidents To Support 21

It's important to engage your local college president because what happens on campus has a profound effect on the community at large. Here are some examples of how to engage that dialogue:

- Who you represent in the community, who the coalition members are, what your coalition does
- What your local data says about underage drinking in your community generally, and college related underage drinking specifically
- Examples of your work on underage drinking
- What you can offer the college president
- What types of environmental strategies you are working on to address underage access to alcohol
- What you need from the college president
- How you can work together

¹Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M. & Bachman, J.G. (2007). Monitoring the future: National survey results on drug use, overview of key findings. University of Michigan News and Information Services: Ann Arbor. Available at: www.monitoringthefuture.org.

²Grant, B. F. (1998). The impact of a family history of alcoholism on the relationship between age at onset of alcohol use and DSM-IV alcohol dependence: Results from the national longitudinal alcohol epidemiologic survey. *Alcohol Health and Research World*, Volume 22.

³National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (1998). *The economic costs of drug abuse in the United States, 1992-1998*. Bethesda: NIAAA. <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/Resources/DatabaseResources/QuickFacts/EconomicData/cost8.htm>

⁴U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2007). *2006 Fatality Analysis Reporting System*. Washington: DC.

⁵Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2003). Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/default.htm>.

⁶Smith, G.S., Branas, C.C. & Miller, T.R. (1999 June). Fatal nontraffic injuries involving alcohol: A metaanalysis. *Analysis of emergency medicine*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health Center for Injury Research and Policy.

⁷Brown, S.A., Tapert, S.F., Granholm, E., et al. (2000). Neurocognitive functioning of adolescents: Effects of protracted alcohol use. *Alcoholism: Clinical and experimental research*, (24)(2).

⁸Wechsler H, Lee JE, Kuo M, Seibring M, Nelson TF, Lee HP. (2002) Trends in college binge drinking during a period of increased prevention efforts: Findings from four Harvard School of Public Health study surveys, 1993-2001. *Journal of American College Health* 50(5):203-217.

⁹Hingson, R.; Heeren, T.; Winter, M.; and Wechsler, H. (2005) Magnitude of alcohol-related mortality and morbidity among U.S. college students ages 18-24: Changes from 1998 to 2001. *Annual Review of Public Health* 26:259-279.

¹⁰National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (2005). *Understanding underage drinking*. Bethesda: NIAAA. Available at <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/factsheet.htm#1>.

