

# **FAST Underage Drinking FACTS in New Mexico**

## **A Costly Problem**

- Underage drinking cost the citizens of New Mexico \$243 million in 2005. These costs include medical care and work loss but NOT pain and suffering associated with the multiple problems resulting from the use of alcohol by youth. This translates to a cost of \$1,168 per year for each youth in the state.<sup>1</sup>
- New Mexico is #3 in the nation for the cost per youth of underage drinking.<sup>1</sup>

## **Drinking Patterns**

- Young people who begin drinking before age 15 (*early onset* drinking) are five times as likely to develop alcohol dependence and over twice as likely to become abusers of alcohol as those who begin drinking at age 21.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2005, 42.3% of 9-12th graders reported current alcohol use in New Mexico (defined as having had at least one drink in the last 30 days).<sup>3</sup>

### **Underage Drinking Costs New Mexicans**

**\$243 million**  
not including costs of  
pain and suffering.

**This is an average of  
\$1,168 per youth in  
New Mexico alone.**

- New Mexican youth in 2005 reported their most common alcoholic drink of choice was hard liquor-- possibly because it is more palatable to youthful drinkers when concealed in soft drinks.<sup>5</sup>

**Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking at 21**

## **Deadly Consequences**

- Alcohol consumption is a major contributor to the three leading causes of death among young people-- motor vehicle crash, suicide, and homicide. Youth alcohol use is strongly associated with many other life-altering risk behaviors such as unplanned pregnancy, academic failure, and DWI.<sup>4</sup>

In New Mexico it is a **FELONY** to provide alcohol to someone who is under 21— making it one of the nation's toughest laws.

Section 60-7B-1A and F, New Mexico Statutes



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Alcohol consumption is a major contributor to the three leading causes of death among New Mexican youth— motor vehicle crashes, suicide and homicide.

## Binge Drinking

- Binge drinking (drinking five or more drinks on a single occasion) is especially strongly associated with risky behaviors. Prevention of binge drinking should be a primary focus of our efforts to reduce harms associated with underage drinking.<sup>6</sup>
- Increasing the cost and reducing the physical availability of alcohol are effective, evidence-based strategies for reducing alcohol-related harm.
- Reducing binge drinking would significantly reduce the three leading causes of death among our youth in NM which are motor vehicle crashes, suicide and homicide.

Prevention of binge drinking should drive our efforts to reduce harms associated with underage drinking

## Alcohol Advertising

Americans are subjected to \$4 billion of alcohol marketing each year-- in the form of alcohol advertising and product placements on youth-oriented television, radio shows, internet sites and billboards.

To limit the impact of alcohol advertising on youth, national experts recommend that states adopt legislation that:

- Restricts outdoor alcohol advertising in locations where children are likely to be present; and<sup>7</sup>
- Restricts alcohol industry sponsorship of civic events, particularly events held on state property.<sup>7</sup>



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## Parental Involvement Is Crucial

- Provide a variety of after-school and alternative activities for youth using a mix of dedicated funding and volunteer efforts.
- Parents are encouraged to stay involved in their children's lives and model responsible behavior. Intoxicated parents who get behind the wheel send the worst kind of message to their kids.
- Parents should discuss the false promises of alcohol advertising -- i.e. fame, status, beauty, success, popularity-- with their children.
- 65% of underage youth who drink obtain alcohol from older friends or brothers/sisters, not directly buying with fake ID cards.<sup>8</sup>

**Footnotes** - For copies of these reports (where available) go to <http://ipl.unm.edu/traf/uad-sources.html>

1. *Underage Drinking In New Mexico, The Facts*, published by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE).
2. *The NSDUH Report: Alcohol Dependence or Abuse and Age at First Use* -- SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use & Health
3. *New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRRS): 2005 Report of State Results*. New Mexico Departments of Health & Public Education; Santa Fe, NM, Green, D., Peñaloza, L.J., Chrisp, E., Dillon, M., Cassell, C.M., Tsinajinnie, E. Rinehart, J. & Ortega, W. (2006)
4. Miller JW, Naimi TS, Brewer RD, Jones SE. Binge drinking and associated health risk behaviors among high school students. *Pediatrics*. 2007 Jan;119(1):76-85.
5. *Types of Alcoholic Beverages Usually Consumed by Students in 9th--12th Grades --- Four States*, 2005, MMWR, 56(29):737-740). Centers for Disease Control, July 27, 2007
6. *Drinking in America: Myths, Realities, and Prevention Policy*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and PIRE, Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation.
7. *Alcohol Advertising: Next Steps for New Mexico, House Joint Memorial 64 Report*, November 14, 2007, New Mexico Alcohol and Gaming Division
8. *Are You Doing Your Part? 65% of Underage Youth Who Drink Get Alcohol From Family and Friends*, The Century Council, [http://centurycouncil.org/underage/65\\_percent.html](http://centurycouncil.org/underage/65_percent.html)

### For more information:

- The US Surgeon General's *Call to Action To Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking 2007*, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/underagedrinking/>
- *Drinking Underage Maims the Brain-- Top 10 Things Parents Can Do*, AMA Website, [http://www.alcoholpolicymd.com/alcohol\\_and\\_health/underage\\_brain.htm](http://www.alcoholpolicymd.com/alcohol_and_health/underage_brain.htm)
- *Effects of Minimum Drinking Age Laws: Review and Analysis of the Literature from 1960 to 2000*. Wagenaar AC, Toomey TL. *J Stud Alcohol Suppl*. 2002, 14: 206-25

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