

Reducing Excessive Alcohol Use to BUILD HEALTHIER NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITIES

Excessive alcohol use is a
LEADING PREVENTABLE CAUSE
OF DEATH IN NORTH CAROLINA.



Excessive alcohol use increases the risk of:

INJURIES

Motor vehicle crashes
Overdoses
Drownings
Falls
Burns

VIOLENCE

Child maltreatment
Domestic violence
Sexual assault
Homicide
Suicide

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

At least 7 cancers (e.g. colon and breast)
High blood pressure
Heart disease
Liver disease
Stroke

Excessive drinking cost the state ABOUT \$14.6 BILLION IN 2024,

with nearly half of those costs being paid by North Carolina state and local governments. Because of hard-working community organizations, state and local leaders, and policymakers, North Carolina already has core alcohol policies that protect public health. See page two for more information about core alcohol policies in North Carolina.

EVERY DAY, North Carolina experiences:



15 DEATHS

due to alcohol use

(Over 5,600 per year)

2024 State Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics, Death Certificate Data



186 ALCOHOL-RELATED
emergency department visits

(Over 68,000 per year)

2024 North Carolina Disease Event Tracking and Epidemiologic Collection Tool, Emergency Department Data



A LOSS OF \$40.1 MILLION
due to excessive alcohol use

(\$14.6 billion per year)

Estimates based on methods from 2022 Gora Combs et al.. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35504714/>

What is Excessive Alcohol Use?



BINGE DRINKING

4+ drinks per occasion for women

5+ drinks per occasion for men



4 million NC adults drink alcohol. Among those who drink, 1.2 million adults, or 1 in 4, binge drink.

2024 NC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System



HEAVY DRINKING

8+ drinks per week for women

15+ drinks per week for men



4 million NC adults drink alcohol. Among those who drink, 370,000 adults, or 1 in 10, drink heavily.

2024 NC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System



UNDERAGE DRINKING

Any alcohol use by those under the age of 21



108,000 NC high school students, or 1 in 5, drink alcohol.



Among those who drink, 55,000 high school students, or 1 in 2, binge drink.

2021 NC Youth Risk Behavior Survey



PREGNANT DRINKING

Any alcohol use during pregnancy



Among those who drink alcohol before pregnancy, 1 in 8 continued to drink during pregnancy.

2020 Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System

For more information and references, please see The Community Guide (<https://www.thecommunityguide.org/topics/excessive-alcohol-consumption.html>) and the North Carolina Alcohol Data Dashboard (<https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/north-carolina-alcohol-data>) This fact sheet is partially supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$166,667. The contents are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

Evidence-Based Policies That Reduce Excessive Alcohol Use to **BUILD HEALTHIER NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITIES**

GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF ALCOHOL SALES

In North Carolina (NC), the sale of liquor is limited to ABC stores where price is controlled by the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Commission and advertising/promotion is limited. Government control of alcohol sales limits excessive availability and exposure to alcohol, which in turn reduces excessive alcohol use and related injury, illness, and death. Laws that privatize alcohol sales by removing government control increase the number of places that sell alcohol, which increases excessive alcohol use and alcohol-related harms such as child maltreatment and neglect, domestic violence, motor vehicle crashes, and chronic diseases.



LIMITS ON DAYS AND HOURS OF SALE



NC limits the sale of alcohol to particular hours and days of the week and prohibits sales on certain holidays. Maintaining existing hours and days of alcohol sales helps control excessive alcohol use and negative health outcomes. Laws that increase hours and days of sale lead to increases in motor vehicle injuries, as well as alcohol-related assaults and other injuries.

ALCOHOL TAXES



An excise tax is levied on alcoholic beverages sold in and/or shipped into NC. Tax increases raise the price of alcohol, which decreases excessive alcohol use and related harms – and increases revenue too. Laws that decrease alcohol excise taxes lead to increases in motor vehicle crash deaths, violence, and lower revenue.

LIMITS ON ALCOHOL ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONS



NC places limits on the promotion of alcohol with rules on point-of-sale advertising material, novelties, brand signs, coupons and rebates, indoor and outdoor signage and price promotions, among other things. Limiting these promotions protects health through reducing excessive alcohol use and negative health outcomes. Laws that allow for increases in advertising promotions lead to increases in underage drinking, alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes, and violence.

REGULATING NUMBER OF PLACES SELLING ALCOHOL AND DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM



Alcohol outlet density is the number of places (such as bars, gas stations, restaurants, and ABC stores) that sell alcohol in an area or based on population size. NC law allows the ABC Commission to approve or deny permits to sell alcohol, weighing impact on zoning laws, the number of places already holding ABC permits within the neighborhood, types of businesses already in the neighborhood, and whether the establishment is located near a church or school. Regulating the number of places selling alcohol and the distance between them limits excessive access to alcohol. This lowers excessive alcohol use, improves health, and increases quality of life. Having more places that sell alcohol leads to increases in disorderly conduct, property damage, crime, and other community disruptions.

For more information and references, please see The Community Guide (<https://www.thecommunityguide.org/topics/excessive-alcohol-consumption.html>) and the North Carolina Alcohol Data Dashboard (http://bit.ly/NCDHHS_AlcoholResources)

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