



STATE OF MICHIGAN

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Excessive Drinking Costs Michigan \$8.2 Billion
MDCH Working to Address Underage Binge Drinking

LANSING – Excessive alcohol use cost Michigan \$8.2 billion in 2006, or about \$2.16 a drink, according to a new study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Binge drinking, which is defined as consuming five or more drinks on an occasion for men or four or more drinks on an occasion for women, was responsible for 74.2 percent of excessive alcohol use related costs.

The cost estimates were based on a CDC study that found that excessive drinking cost the United States \$223.5 billion in 2006. Costs were assessed across 26 categories using data from several sources. Researchers believe that the study's findings are underestimated because it did not consider a number of other costs, such as those due to pain and suffering by the excessive drinker or others who were affected by the drinking. Excessive alcohol consumption is responsible for an average of 2,700 deaths and 79,000 years of potential life lost in Michigan each year.

“Binge drinking is a very serious public health issue in Michigan -- for adolescents and for adults alike. Binge drinking results in many serious health problems, including acute alcohol poisoning, alcohol-related car crashes, and physical or sexual assaults. It is all too common to see alcohol-associated injuries in our emergency rooms, and we are working tirelessly to reduce events like these in Michigan,” said Dr. Matthew Davis, Chief Medical Executive with the MDCH.

About 18 percent of Michigan high school youth report binge drinking in the past 30 days, which is equivalent to the percent of adults who binge drink nationally. The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) is working to prevent underage drinking through partnerships with community coalitions, universities, and local law enforcement to ensure that alcohol is not being sold to minors. MDCH is also working with the Michigan Department of Education's school and adolescent programs on underage drinking and preventable efforts to reduce alcohol-related harms among Michigan youth.

Nationwide, the total cost of excessive drinking ranged from \$420 million in North Dakota to \$32 billion in California. The cost is equivalent to \$814 per person living in Michigan. State, local, and federal governments paid 42.7 percent or \$3.5 billion, of the total costs. Study authors also found that costs due to excessive drinking in Michigan largely resulted from losses in workplace productivity (74.3 percent), health care expenses (11.5 percent), and other costs due to a combination of criminal justice expenses, motor vehicle crash costs, and property damage.

The CDC's study is available online at www.ajpmonline.org, and will be included in the October 2013 online issue of the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. For more information about the prevention of excessive alcohol use in Michigan, visit www.michigan.gov/mdch-bsaas or www.michigan.gov/substanceabuseepi.

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