

OMAHA COALITION MEETING
Wednesday, January 22, 2025
9 a.m.

Please use to sign-in:



A G E N D A

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Review of the December 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes
(please contact PEM staff with corrections)
- III. 2025 Legislative Session (through Day 9)
 - a. Motor Vehicle Homicide of an Unborn Child ([LB 124](#))
 - b. Mandatory Server Training ([LB 178](#))
 - c. Alcohol Sales Taxes ([LB 330](#))
 - d. Bills Going Against Best Practices
 - i. [LB 33](#) removes 'near beer' from the definition of beer
 - ii. [LB 97](#) changes CDL license statutes as they pertain to deferred judgment and interlock device eligibility
 - iii. [LB 113](#) doubles the number of physical locations a licensee can operate and increases self-distribution cap for micro distilleries
 - iv. [LB 186](#) changes food service requirements of entertainment districts
- IV. Focus Area Updates
 - a. Local
 - i. Retail Alcohol Data Project – seeking volunteers!
 - ii. Krush Ultra Lounge
 - b. Policy
 - i. US Surgeon General & Cancer
 - ii. Dietary Guidelines Comments
 - iii. LCC Rule Changes
 - c. Youth
 - i. Leadership Network – Next meeting: January 27th at 7 p.m.
 - d. Awareness
 - i. January Research Summary available at www.projectextramile.org
- V. Additional Discussion/Announcements
- VI. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date: **February 12th, 9 a.m.**
UNO's Community Engagement Center, Room 201

PROJECT EXTRA MILE

OMAHA METRO AREA COALITION MEETING MINUTES December 11, 2024

- I. Call to Order: Chris Wagner called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
- II. Welcome and Introductions: Coalition members and speakers in attendance: Sharona Ernst, Palistene Gray-Moore, Heike Langdon, Derek Schwartz, Tom Safranek, Russ Zeeb, Carey Pomykata, Ashley Pick, Nicholas Sauma, Ashley Meyers, Alvin McCruel, Jim Timm, Zack Hicks, Delainie Johnson, Natalie Wallace, and Chris Foster. Staff members: Chris Wagner and Liene Topko.
- III. Looking Back at 2024: Chris Wagner thanked coalition members for being there and supporting the organization throughout the year. He invited attendees to review the December newsletter on PEM's website for detailed achievements regarding the organization's policy, enforcement, youth and awareness initiatives.

Russ Zeeb invited attendees to attend the December 20th Wet Lab event which will kick off the additional impaired driving enforcement efforts for the holiday season.

- IV. Additional Discussion/Announcements: N/A
- V. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date: The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

PROJECT EXTRA MILE
2025 Legislative Bill Tracking

Bill #	Sponsor(s)	Description	Bill Status	Additional Information
LB16	Cavanaugh, J Judiciary Conrad name added	Adopt the Nebraska Consumable Hemp Control Act	<i>Introduced</i> 1/9/25	Creates the Nebraska Consumable Hemp Control Commission using the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission (LCC) commissioners and executive director. Requires monthly meetings to be held. Establishes the licensing and regulatory system as a part of the Nebraska Consumable Hemp Control Act. Designates the Commission to create its rules and regulations.
LB33 <i>Oppose</i>	Hunt General Affairs	Remove nonalcoholic beer from regulation under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act	<i>Introduced</i> 1/9/25	Removes 'near beer' from the definition of beer and specifies that beer does not include nonalcoholic beer, which would allow children to purchase beer with less than 0.5% ABV. It could also be consumed while driving.
LB97 <i>Oppose</i>	Fredrickson Transportation & Telecommunications	Change provisions relating to deferred judgments, the State Boat Act, the Motor Vehicle Certificate of Title Act, the Motor Vehicle Registration Act, the Motor Vehicle Operator's License Act, the Nebraska Rules of the Road, the Department of Motor Vehicles Cash Fund, the Uniform Motor Vehicle Records Disclosure Act, the Motor Carrier Services Division Distributive Fund, and the State Treasurer	<i>Introduced</i> 1/10/25	Sec. 1: Allows deferred judgment for CDL or CDL-permit as long as it would not mask a conviction and lead to noncompliance with federal laws leading to possible loss of federal money. Sec. 22: Expands interlock to CDL classes
LB113 <i>Oppose</i>	Quick General Affairs	Change provisions relating to licensees under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act	<i>Introduced</i> 1/10/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases physical location allotment for holders of a manufacturer's, craft brewery, and micro distillery license from five to ten Allows Nebraska micro distilleries to annually self-distribute up to 5,000 gallons (instead of 500) of their product
LB124 <i>Support</i>	Holdcroft Judiciary	Change penalties for motor vehicle homicide of an unborn child	<i>Hearing</i> 1/23/25	Changes penalties for a motor vehicle homicide of an unborn child as a result of impaired driving to equal those of manslaughter of an unborn child.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhances the penalty from a Class IIIA felony to a Class IIA felony when death results from an impaired driving crash (maximum changes from 3 years to 20 years). Enhances the penalty from a Class IIA felony to a Class II felony when death results from an impaired driving crash with a repeat offender (changes from 0-20 years to minimum 1 year and maximum 50 years).
LB178 Support	Clouse General Affairs	Require mandatory server training under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act	Introduced 1/13/25	Requires a mandatory server alcohol training course as a part of the liquor licensing process and allows the LCC to promulgate the rules and regulations governing those programs. Individuals engaged in the sale, service, or mixture of alcoholic liquor, in providing security, or in verifying customers' ages will need a certificate of completion that must be submitted to the LCC within 90 days of the start of employment. The training fee may not exceed \$30. Businesses that do not keep documentation on premises of an employee's certificate or their employment records may have their license suspended, cancelled, or revoked.
LB186+ Oppose	Dover General Affairs Raybould name added	Change provisions relating to entertainment districts under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act	Introduced 1/13/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes the food service requirement for alcohol consumption in the commons area of an entertainment district to allow consumption as long as at least one holder of an entertainment district (E) license is serving food. Adds language to relax restrictions for entertainment districts located in cities of the first and second class, counties, and/or villages to allow pedestrians to cross an open street or highway while carrying open containers of alcohol as long as those pedestrians are traveling between two businesses that hold an entertainment district license.
LB330 Support	Juarez Revenue	Change provisions relating to the sales tax rate and create the Alcohol Addiction Prevention and Treatment Fund	Introduced 1/16/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets the sales tax at five percent pursuant to section 77-2703 except for transactions that occur withing a good life district, then the sales tax is two and three-quarters percent of the transaction. Sets sales tax on alcoholic liquor at fifteen and one-half percent. Requires proceeds of the sales tax from alcoholic liquor to be distributed 50% to the Alcohol Addiction Prevention and Treatment Fund and 50% to the Education Future Fund.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates the Alcohol Addiction Prevention and Treatment Fund which will be administered by the Department of Health and Human Services to fund prevention and treatment of alcohol addiction.
LB478	General Affairs Committee	Provide for an auction permit and a wholesalers shipping license and change other provisions of the Nebraska Liquor Control Act	<i>Introduced 1/21/25</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates an auction permit for auction houses to be allowed to sell alcoholic products; requires auction houses to notify the LCC of all auctions and provide inventories of products to be sold. • Creates a wholesale shipping license to allow wholesalers outside of Nebraska to obtain a Nebraska shipping license to ship product only to a Nebraska wholesale license holder. • Removes fees for the issuance of a duplicate airline, special party bus, pedal pub vehicle, and railroad license. • Clarifies that public notice of a liquor license hearings may be published in a legal newspaper in statewide or general circulation in a city, village, or county. • Sets the annual brand registration renewal fee to be no more than \$30. • Exempts retailers who hold a shipping license for products outside of Nebraska and ship directly to consumers from filing a brand registration report.

* Testimony provided by Project Extra Mile
+ Emergency clause included

MEDIA RELEASE



For more information, contact:
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 Papillion Police Department
 (402) 597-2035

Chris Wagner, Executive Director
 Project Extra Mile
 (402) 516-5765

For Immediate Release

Fri., December 6, 2024

23 Omaha Area Businesses Sold Alcohol to Minors *Agencies working overtime to prevent underage drinking*

OMAHA, NEB -- As youth are gearing up to celebrate the end of their first semester and the holiday season, local and state law enforcement agencies conducted compliance checks on December 4th and 5th in Douglas and Sarpy counties to ensure that retailers continue to refuse the sale of alcohol to minors.

"I was kind of shocked about how easy it was to buy the alcohol. They asked for my ID and about ten seconds later I had a beer in front of me," said one youth that helped conduct the checks.

Other youths were met with more scrutiny. One business had multiple employees triple check the ID and despite the business's ID scanner indicating that the youth was too young to purchase alcohol, they sold to the minor anyway.

"Law enforcement understands that minors attempt to get their hands on alcohol as their winter break approaches," said Lt. Jason Sharp with the Papillion Police Department. "Compliance checks help remind retailers to check and verify IDs and refuse the sale of alcohol to minors. We all need to do our part to keep kids safe."

Overall, 23 (9%) out of 249 businesses checked in Douglas and Sarpy counties were cited for selling alcohol to minors. A summary sheet of the enforcement results and a full list of businesses checked are available [here](#). One of the businesses cited is facing enhanced penalties due to a prior sale to minor within the last four years -- the time frame used by the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission (LCC) to assess penalties:

- **Kwik Shop, 5929 N 72nd St, Omaha (5/23).**

Kwik Shop was cited for its **second sale to minor in the two years**. As a result, the business is facing up to 2 days of mandatory closure (no alcohol sales allowed) and 40 days of suspension (can be paid off as a fine of \$100 per day), according to the [Liquor Control Commission's penalty guidelines](#).

The other 22 businesses are facing their first sale to a minor violation within the last four years. If found guilty by the LCC, these businesses could receive 15-25 days of suspension that they could choose to pay off as a fine at \$50 per day in lieu of suspension. The businesses listed below had a previous sale to minor violation, but it fell outside of the four-year window that the LCC uses for determining progressive penalties:

- **Hamilton Convenient Foodmart, 4901 Hamilton St, Omaha (9/15);**
- **Hy-Vee Food Store, 11650 S 73rd St, Papillion (12/14).**

40 officers from the Bellevue, La Vista, Omaha, Papillion, and Ralston Police Departments; Douglas and Sarpy County Sheriff's Offices; and the Nebraska State Patrol participated in the enhanced underage drinking enforcement effort.

To report underage drinking or adults providing alcohol to minors, call the statewide tip line at 1-866-Must-B-21 (687-8221). It's anonymous, and it's the right call. Individuals are urged to call 911 to report an underage drinking party in progress.

Heightened enforcements are supported by the Nebraska Department of Transportation - Highway Safety Office as well as the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant and the Partnerships for Success Grant from SAMHSA through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare. NDOT-HSO also funds the tip line. Project Extra Mile helped to coordinate the enforcement efforts.

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Mission: Advocating for evidence-based policies and practices to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms.

Project Extra Mile, 6001 Dodge Street, CEC 228B, Omaha, NE 68182-0600



Project Extra Mile | 6001 Dodge Street CEC 228B | Omaha, NE 68182-0600 US

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Summary

Alcohol Compliance Checks for sales to minors

Conducted on December 4 & 5, 2024

Location: Douglas & Sarpy Counties in Nebraska

Participating Agencies:

Bellevue Police Department
Douglas County Sheriff's Office
La Vista Police Department
Nebraska State Patrol
Omaha Police Department
Papillion Police Department
Ralston Police Department
Sarpy County Sheriff's Office

Results:

<u># of checks</u>	<u>Not in Compliance (n/c)</u>	<u>n/c: Did not Check ID</u>	<u>n/c: Checked ID</u>
249	23 (9%)	11 (48%)	12 (52%)

*Compliance checks coordinated by Project Extra Mile.
For additional information, call our office at 402-963-9047.*

Project Extra Mile – Alcohol Compliance Checks

Conducted on December 4 & 5, 2024 in Douglas & Sarpy Counties

249 Businesses Checked, 23 Cited for Selling Alcohol to a Minor (9%)

The following businesses were **non-compliant** (cited for selling alcohol to a minor):

Class	License #	Business	Location	City	Zip	Non-Comp	Check ID
I	124886	AGAVE AZTECA	5170 S 72ND ST	RALSTON	68127	X	
D	084590	ANDERSON CONVENIENCE MARKET 145	9501 S 145TH ST	GRETNA	68138	X	X
D	109282	CASEYS 3334	5920 F ST	OMAHA	68117	X	
D	122911	CASEYS 3821	2540 N 90 ST	OMAHA	68134	X	
I	086130	CHILI'S GRILL & BAR	3202 S 143RD PLZ	OMAHA	68144	X	
I	087991	CHINA BUFFET	2903 SAMSON WAY	BELLEVUE	68123	X	X
C	125604	CORNER KITCHEN	4218 S 50TH ST	OMAHA	68117	X	X
D	095848	CVS/PHARMACY 5714	4840 DODGE ST	OMAHA	68132	X	X
C	099125	FAMILY FARE 795	7402 N 30TH ST	OMAHA	68112	X	X
D	079820	HAMILTON CONVENIENT FOODMART	4901 HAMILTON ST	OMAHA	68132	X	
CK	075738	HY-VEE FOOD STORE	11650 S 73RD ST	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
D	084641	KWIK SHOP 653	5929 N 72ND ST	OMAHA	68134	X	
D	106676	KWIK SHOP 664	6910 S 108TH ST	LA VISTA	68128	X	
C	124523	MAS CHINGON	7902 TOWN CENTER PKWY	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
D	122929	MEGA SAVER	2505 ABBOTT PLZ	OMAHA	68110	X	X
C	015297	MY WAY LOUNGE	2425 N 84TH ST	OMAHA	68134	X	
C	119830	OLLIE & HOBBS	310 E GOLD COAST RD	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
C	010690	ROMEO'S	405 GALVIN RD N	BELLEVUE	68005	X	
L	123631	SITE 1 BREWING	2566 FARNAM ST	OMAHA	68131	X	X
I	107573	SPIN NEAPOLITAN PIZZA	248 OLSON DR	PAPILLION	68046	X	
C	124562	WALL TO WALL WINE & SPIRITS	7651 TOWNE CENTER PKWY	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
I	125546	WILD CHICKEN GRILL	3604 TWIN CREEK DR	BELLEVUE	68123	X	X
C	122580	WINCHESTER	7002 Q ST	OMAHA	68117	X	

Project Extra Mile – Alcohol Compliance Checks

Conducted on December 4 & 5, 2024 in Douglas & Sarpy Counties

249 Businesses Checked, 23 Cited for Selling Alcohol to a Minor (9%)

The following businesses were **compliant** (did not sell alcohol to a minor):

Business	Address	City	Zip	Compliant	Checked ID
5 THIRTY-ONE PIZZA & PHILLIES	16918 MORGAN AVE	GRETNA	68028	X	X
AB'S 66	4926 UNDERWOOD AVE	OMAHA	68132	X	X
AFOMA CORNER STORE	5522 S 30TH ST	OMAHA	68107	X	X
AHI SUSHI	12411 W CENTER RD	OMAHA	68144	X	X
ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE CINEMA	12750 WESTPORT PKWY	LA VISTA	68138	X	X
ALDI 42	13215 W CENTER RD	OMAHA	68144	X	X
ALLEY, THE	601 CHATEAU DR	BELLEVUE	68005	X	X
ALPINE INN	10405 CALHOUN RD	OMAHA	68112	X	X
AMERICAN LEGION POST 216	11690 S 216TH ST	GRETNA	68028	X	X
ANDERSON CONVENIENCE MARKET 144	14403 FRONTIER RD	GRETNA	68028	X	X
APPLEBEE'S NEIGHBORHOOD GRILL & BAR	10402 S 15TH ST	BELLEVUE	68123	X	X
APPLEBEE'S NEIGHBORHOOD GRILL & BAR	1202 N WASHINGTON ST	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
ASIAN FAMILY SUPERMARKET	5916 AMES AVE	OMAHA	68104	X	X
AVOLI OSTERIA	5013 UNDERWOOD AVE	OMAHA	68132	X	X
AZTECA FAMILY MEXICAN RESTAURANT	9429 S 142ND ST	GRETNA	68138	X	X
B & D PITSTOP	14111 PLATTEVIEW RD	SPRINGFIELD	68059	X	X
B5 BREWING COMPANY	6115 MAPLE ST	OMAHA	68104	X	X
BAKER'S SUPERMARKET 300	3614 TWIN CREEK DR	BELLEVUE	68123	X	X
BAKER'S SUPERMARKET 302	12025 W CENTER RD	OMAHA	68144	X	X
BAKER'S SUPERMARKET 316	7312 N 30TH ST	OMAHA	68112	X	X
BAR 39	3916 FARNAM ST	OMAHA	68131	X	X
BEER CITY	4147 L ST	OMAHA	68107	X	X
BEERCADE / ST ANDREWS PUB	6102-6104 MAPLE ST	OMAHA	68104	X	X
BENSON BREWERY	6059 MAPLE ST	OMAHA	68104	X	X
BEYOND GOLF	12040 MCDERMOTT PLZ	LA VISTA	68128	X	X
BLIND PIG	169 MAIN ST	SPRINGFIELD	68059	X	X
BOMB TACO	120 OLSON DR	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
BRAG 'N RIGHTS	115 N MC KENNA AVE	GRETNA	68028	X	X
BROTHER SEBASTIAN'S STEAKHOUSE	1350 S 119TH ST	OMAHA	68144	X	X
BROWNIES BAR & GRILL	125 E 2ND ST	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
BUFFALO WILD WINGS 212	11651 S 73RD ST	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
BUSHWACKERS DANCE HALL SALOON	7401 MAIN ST	RALSTON	68127	X	X
CABIN BAR & GRILL	9226 MORMON BRIDGE RD	OMAHA	68152	X	X
CADDY SHACK	7007 S 181ST ST	OMAHA	68136	X	X
CALIFORNIA BAR	510 N 33RD ST	OMAHA	68131	X	X
CALIFORNIA TACO	3235 CALIFORNIA ST	OMAHA	68131	X	
CASEYS 2853	15811 S 144TH ST	SPRINGFIELD	68059	X	X
CASEYS 3444	18174 EMILINE ST	OMAHA	68136	X	X
CASEYS 3805	8409 S 168TH AVE	OMAHA	68136	X	X
CASEYS 3815	15611 HARRISON ST	OMAHA	68136	X	X

CASEYS 3820	7828 S 123RD PLZ	LA VISTA	68128	X	X
CASEYS 3943	572 HWY 6	GRETNA	68028	X	X
CASEYS 6145	9405 S 144TH ST	GRETNA	68138	X	X
CASEYS 6158	5718 NW RADIAL HWY	OMAHA	68104	X	X
CASEYS 6173	7203 HARRISON ST	LA VISTA	68128	X	X
CENTURY LOUNGE	2109 FRANKLIN ST	BELLEVUE	68005	X	X
CHAM PANG LANES AND GHOST DONKEY	910 HARNEY ST	OMAHA	68102	X	X
CHILI'S GRILL & BAR	8373 BARMETTLER DR	LA VISTA	68128	X	X
CHINGON MAS CHINGON	6207 MAPLE ST	OMAHA	68104	X	X
CITY PUB	7861 MAIN ST	LA VISTA	68128	X	X
CK'S LOUNGE	13075 W CENTER RD	OMAHA	68144	X	X
COPP'S PIZZA CO	7474 TOWNE CENTER PKWY	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
CORKSCREW	3908 FARNAM ST	OMAHA	68131	X	X
COURTYARD MARRIOTT	12560 WESTPORT PKWY	LA VISTA	68128	X	X
CRACKER BARREL 296	9409 S 142ND ST	GRETNA	68138	X	X
CRESCENT MOON ALE HOUSE	3578 FARNAM ST	OMAHA	68131	X	X
CUBBY'S	601 S 13TH ST	OMAHA	68102	X	X
CVS/PHARMACY 2741	6901 S 84TH ST	LA VISTA	68128	X	X
DJ'S DUGOUT	10308 S 23RD ST	BELLEVUE	68123	X	X
DON & MILLIE'S	14321 HARRISON ST	LA VISTA	68138	X	X
DONOHUE'S	3232 L ST	OMAHA	68107	X	X
DR JACK'S DRINKERY	3012 N 102ND ST	OMAHA	68134	X	X
DUAL STOP SORENSON	5920 SORENSON PKWY	OMAHA	68152	X	X
DUNDEE CORK & BOTTLE	614 N 50TH ST	OMAHA	68132	X	X
DUNDEE DELL	5007 UNDERWOOD AVE	OMAHA	68132	X	X
EL 7 MARES	5447 S 24TH ST	OMAHA	68107	X	X
EL MEXICANO 6	4922 S 24TH ST	OMAHA	68107	X	X
EL MUCHACHO ALEGRE	10177 S 168TH AVE	OMAHA	68136	X	X
EL VALLARTA MEXICAN RESTAURANT	11910 STANDING STONE DR	GRETNA	68028	X	X
EL VIEJON RESTAURANTE	5132 L ST	OMAHA	68117	X	X
FAMILY FARE 788	1510 HARLAN DR	BELLEVUE	68005	X	X
FAMILY FARE 797	820 N SADDLE CREEK RD	OMAHA	68132	X	X
FAMILY FARE 799	1230 N WASHINGTON ST	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
FAREWAY STORE 223	604 S HIGHWAY 6	GRETNA	68028	X	X
FAREWAY STORES 43	17070 AUDREY ST	OMAHA	68136	X	X
FINICKY FRANK'S	9520 CALHOUN RD	OMAHA	68112	X	X
FIRST ROUND	3901 FARNAM ST	OMAHA	68131	X	X
FLYING J TRAVEL CENTER 686	15010 S HIGHWAY 31	GRETNA	68028	X	X
FOE AERIE 4029	102 N WASHINGTON ST	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
FOOD & FUELS R US	6912 S 110TH ST	LA VISTA	68128	X	X
FOOD MART	8204 HARRISON ST	RALSTON	68128	X	X
GET DOWN ULTRA LOUNGE	8509 N 30TH ST	OMAHA	68112	X	X
GET REAL SANDWICHES	3901 FARNAM ST	OMAHA	68131	X	X
GODFATHER'S PIZZA	806 VILLAGE SQ	GRETNA	68028	X	X
GOLDEEZ	5502 N 103RD ST	OMAHA	68134	X	X
GOOD LIFE SPORTS BAR & GRILL	10520 S 204TH ST	GRETNA	68028	X	X
GOOD LIFE SPORTS BAR & GRILL	11336 S 96TH ST	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
GRACE PIZZA & SHAKES PAPILLION	136 N JEFFERSON ST	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
GRETNA 66	104 GLENMORE DR	GRETNA	68028	X	X
GRETNA WINE & SPIRITS	216 ENTERPRISE DR	GRETNA	68028	X	X

GUACA MAYA	5002 S 33RD ST	OMAHA	68107	X	
HAVANA GARAGE	1008 HOWARD ST	OMAHA	68102	X	X
HEARTH CIGAR & PIPES	9230 MORMON BRIDGE RD	OMAHA	68152	X	X
HEAVY BREWING	20333 PATTON ST	GRETNA	68028	X	X
HOOTERS	12710 WESTPORT PKWY	LA VISTA	68138	X	X
HURRDAT SPORTS BAR	12744 WESTPORT PKWY	LA VISTA	68138	X	X
HY-VEE	10855 S 191ST ST	GRETNA	68136	X	X
HY-VEE DOLLAR FRESH MARKET	8404 N 30TH ST	OMAHA	68112	X	X
HYVEE FAST AND FRESH	7608 OLSON DR	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
HYVEE FAST AND FRESH EXPRESS	19141 OAKMONT DR	GRETNA	68136	X	X
HY-VEE RESTAURANT	11650 S 73RD ST	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
IKA RAMEN	7902 TOWNE CENTER PKWY	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
JACKSON STREET TAVERN	1125 JACKSON ST	OMAHA	68102	X	X
JAKE'S MINI MART	8320 BLONDO ST	OMAHA	68134	X	X
JAMMER'S PUB	1505 GALVIN RD S	BELLEVUE	68005	X	X
JAMS AMERICAN GRILL OLD MARKET	1101 HARNEY ST	OMAHA	68102	X	X
JINYA RAMEN BAR	7010 DODGE ST	OMAHA	68132	X	X
JOJO'S BENSON	6118 MILITARY AVE	OMAHA	68104	X	X
JUNIOR'S FORGOT STORE BAR & GRILL	11909 CALHOUN RD	OMAHA	68152	X	
KEITH'S AMOCO 1	5220 N 90TH ST	OMAHA	68134	X	X
KO ZEE LOUNGE	5813 N 60TH ST	OMAHA	68104	X	X
KOREA GARDEN	5352 S 72ND ST	RALSTON	68127	X	X
KROS STRAIN DRAFTWORKS	1209 MILLWORK AVE	OMAHA	68102	X	X
KRUG PARK	6205 MAPLE ST	OMAHA	68104	X	X
KUM & GO 360	10025 S 168TH AVE	OMAHA	68136	X	X
KUM & GO 364	8990 BOYD ST	OMAHA	68134	X	X
KUM & GO 370	11205 WICKERSHAM BLVD	GRETNA	68028	X	X
KWIK SHOP 667	4855 L ST	OMAHA	68117	X	X
LA BUVETTE	511 S 11TH ST	OMAHA	68102	X	X
LA ISLA RESTAURANT 3	4835 S 24TH ST	OMAHA	68107	X	X
LA MESA MEXICAN RESTAURANT	1405 FORT CROOK RD S	BELLEVUE	68005	X	X
LA MESA MEXICAN RESTAURANT	829 TARA PLZ	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
LA VISTA MART	9849 GILES RD	LA VISTA	68128	X	X
LANGDONS BAR & GRILL	11855 S 216TH ST	GRETNA	68028	X	X
LANSKY'S	4601 S 50TH ST	OMAHA	68117	X	X
LE BOUILLON HOWARD STREET WINE MERCHANT	1013-15-17 HOWARD ST	OMAHA	68102	X	X
LIGHTHOUSE BAR & GRILL	10215 S 168TH AVE	OMAHA	68136	X	X
LING'S ASIAN CUISINE	6909 S 157TH ST	OMAHA	68136	X	X
LITTLE POLONIA BAR	3804 Q ST	OMAHA	68107	X	X
LOVE'S TRAVEL STOP 730	14375 CORHUSKER RD	OMAHA	68138	X	X
LUX AMERICAN GRILLE	9839 S 96TH ST	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
MAMA'S PIZZA	715 N SADDLE CREEK RD	OMAHA	68132	X	X
MAMA'S PIZZA LA VISTA	8146 S 96TH ST	LA VISTA	68128	X	X
MANTRA BAR & GRILL	6913 MAPLE ST	OMAHA	68104	X	X
MEGA SAVER	10707 BLONDO ST	OMAHA	68134	X	X
MEGA SAVER	8727 MAPLE ST	OMAHA	68134	X	X
MEGA SAVER	1357 NW RADIAL HWY	OMAHA	68132	X	X
MEGA SAVER	5101 S 24TH ST	OMAHA	68107	X	X
MEGA SAVER	4015 S 42ND ST	OMAHA	68107	X	X

MEGA SAVER	7210 HARRISON ST	RALSTON	68128	X	X
MEGA SAVER	16808 AUDREY ST	OMAHA	68136	X	X
MODERN LOVE	3157 FARNAM ST	OMAHA	68131	X	
MORAN'S GRILL	3909 TWIN CREEK DR	BELLEVUE	68123	X	X
NET PAR	17870 OAKMONT DR	OMAHA	68136	X	X
NORTH SHORE TAVERN	10148 MAPLE ST	OMAHA	68134	X	X
NP MART 1	5608 AMES AVE	OMAHA	68104	X	X
NP MART 10	4420 L ST	OMAHA	68107	X	X
NP MART 12	3536 Q ST	OMAHA	68107	X	X
NP MART 2	4219 N 60TH ST	OMAHA	68104	X	X
NP MART 25	5215 N 16TH ST	OMAHA	68110	X	X
OBSERVATORY LOUNGE	14525 W CENTER RD	OMAHA	68144	X	X
OLDE TOWNE TAVERN	107 W MISSION AVE	BELLEVUE	68005	X	X
OLIVE GARDEN ITALIAN REST 6460	7506 OLSON DR	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
OMAHA COUNTRY CLUB	6900 COUNTRY CLUB RD	OMAHA	68152	X	X
ON THE ROCKS LOUNGE	16919 AUDREY ST	OMAHA	68136	X	X
OSAKA STEAKHOUSE AND SUSHI	12746 WESTPORT PKWY	LA VISTA	68138	X	X
PAGETURNERS LOUNGE	5004 DODGE ST	OMAHA	68132	X	X
PAPIO BOWL	204 E LINCOLN ST	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
PASTA AMORE	11027 PRAIRIE BROOK RD	OMAHA	68144	X	X
PAT & WALLY'S	701 GALVIN RD S	BELLEVUE	68005	X	X
PHOENIX 370	11212 RICHLAND DR	OMAHA	68138	X	X
PIT STOP G&C	712 N HIGHWAY 6	GRETNA	68028	X	X
PIT STOP GC WESTMONT	11202 RICHLAND DR	OMAHA	68138	X	X
PITCH COAL-FIRE PIZZERIA	5021 UNDERWOOD AVE	OMAHA	68132	X	X
PUB 134	3015 N 90TH ST	OMAHA	68134	X	X
PUMP & PANTRY 38	14341 S HIGHWAY 31	GRETNA	68028	X	X
QUIKTRIP 578	14405 W CENTER RD	OMAHA	68144	X	X
QUIKTRIP 580	6045 L ST	OMAHA	68117	X	X
QUIKTRIP 598	11105 SAPP BROTHERS DR	GRETNA	68028	X	X
RALSTON KENO	5130 S 72ND ST	RALSTON	68127	X	X
RAMONAS MEXICAN RESTAURANT	8510 N 30TH ST	OMAHA	68112	X	X
RAYS WINGS PIZZA	200 S 31ST AVE	OMAHA	68131	X	X
RED ROBIN AMERICA'S GOURMET BURGERS AND SPIRITS	11675 S 73RD ST	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
REF'S SPORTS BAR & GRILL	9723 GILES RD	LA VISTA	68128	X	X
REF'S SPORTS BAR & GRILL	18920 EDNA ST	OMAHA	68136	X	X
REPORT IN PUB	12100 W CENTER RD	OMAHA	68144	X	X
REVERB LOUNGE	6121 MILITARY AVE	OMAHA	68104	X	X
ROMA ITALIAN RESTAURANT	605 FORT CROOK RD N	BELLEVUE	68005	X	X
ROMEO'S PIZZA	2395 N 90TH ST	OMAHA	68134	X	X
ROXXY	1100 CAPITOL AVE	OMAHA	68102	X	X
SAKAI SUSHI	555 CORNHUSKER RD	BELLEVUE	68005	X	X
SAM MART	4854 Q ST	OMAHA	68117	X	X
SCORZ SPORTS CENTER	7602 MAIN ST	RALSTON	68127	X	X
SHAKEDOWN STREET TAVERN	2735 N 62ND ST	OMAHA	68104	X	X
SHOOTERS POOL & SPORTS BAR	908 FORT CROOK RD S	BELLEVUE	68005	X	X
SHUCKS FISH HOUSE	1911 LEAVENWORTH ST	OMAHA	68102	X	X
SMASH PARK	8121 S 125TH ST	LA VISTA	68128	X	X
SORTIES TAVERN	2871 CAPEHART RD	BELLEVUE	68123	X	X
SPEEDEE MART 2840	431 S HIGHWAY 6	GRETNA	68028	X	X

STAR INDIAN CUISINE	2429 S 132ND ST	OMAHA	68144	X	X
SULLIVAN'S STEAKHOUSE	222 S 15TH ST	OMAHA	68102	X	
SUPERIOR LIQUORS	5936 Q ST	OMAHA	68117	X	X
SYDNEY, THE	5918 MAPLE ST	OMAHA	68104	X	X
TANNER'S BAR & GRILL	7340 HARRISON ST	RALSTON	68128	X	X
TEXAS ROADHOUSE	7302 OLSON DR	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
THIRSTY'S PUB	20588 HIGHWAY 370	GRETNA	68028	X	X
TIGER TOM'S PUB	7103 MILITARY AVE	OMAHA	68104	X	X
TOBACCO HUT 1	5826 MAPLE ST	OMAHA	68104	X	X
TUSSEY'S CASUAL GRILL	9229 MORMON BRIDGE RD	OMAHA	68152	X	X
TWIN CREEK CINEMA	3909 RAYNOR PKWY	BELLEVUE	68123	X	X
TWISTED VINE	123 N WASHINGTON ST	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
UMAMI	1504 GALVIN RD S	BELLEVUE	68005	X	X
UNDERWOOD BAR & GRILL	4918 UNDERWOOD AVE	OMAHA	68132	X	X
VALENTINO'S	7202 GILES RD	LA VISTA	68128	X	X
VARIEDADES SALVADORENAS	3702 Q ST	OMAHA	68107	X	
VARSITY SPORTS CAFE ROMAN COIN PIZZA	3504 SAMSON WAY	BELLEVUE	68123	X	X
VILLAGE BAR	5700 S 77TH ST	RALSTON	68127	X	X
VIVE LE ROCK	12411 W CENTER RD	OMAHA	68144	X	X
VOODOO TACO	21407 NEB CROSSING DR	GRETNA	68028	X	X
WALGREENS 11205	6005 N 72ND ST	OMAHA	68134	X	X
WALGREENS 21446	10819 S 192ND AVE	GRETNA	68028	X	X
WALGREENS 4754	8380 HARRISON ST	RALSTON	68128	X	X
WALGREENS 5143	7151 CASS ST	OMAHA	68132	X	X
WALGREENS 5741	3001 DODGE ST	OMAHA	68131	X	X
WALGREENS 7693	225 N SADDLE CREEK RD	OMAHA	68131	X	X
WALL TO WALL WINE & SPIRITS	12977 W CENTER RD	OMAHA	68144	X	X
WALMART 3172	5051 L ST	OMAHA	68117	X	X
WALMART 4600	11350 WICKERSHAM BLVD	GRETNA	68028	X	X
WALMART MARKET 4139	360 N SADDLE CREEK RD	OMAHA	68131	X	X
WAR HORSE CASINO OMAHA	6303 Q ST	OMAHA	68117	X	X
WATERFALL LOUNGE	10208 S 168TH AVE	OMAHA	68136	X	X
WIN NAILS & SPA	15665 HARRISON ST	OMAHA	68136	X	X
WINE BEER & SPIRITS	1037 JONES ST	OMAHA	68102	X	X
WINE CELLAR 510 WINE BAR & SHOPPE	7474 TOWNE CENTER PKWY	PAPILLION	68046	X	X
ZIO'S PIZZERIA	12997 W CENTER RD	OMAHA	68144	X	X
ZIO'S PIZZERIA	1109 HOWARD ST	OMAHA	68102	X	X

YOUTH LEADERSHIP NETWORK

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT. ADVOCACY. AWARENESS. ACTION

READY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?



Youth in grades 8-12 in the Omaha Metro Area are invited to join Project Extra Mile's Youth Leadership Network. Members will learn about the harms of excessive alcohol use in our community, develop the leadership skills needed to make real change, and put those skills into action!

FOCUSING ON EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO LEAD



Project Extra Mile has been creating community change for over 25 years and we are passionate about reducing alcohol-related harms in our community. In the Youth Leadership Network, we focus on teaching and practicing the skills needed to create change. Youth will receive expert guidance on projects that will utilize media literacy, public speaking, advocacy, problem-solving, and community organizing skills that they'll develop from this initiative.

A YOUTH-LED APPROACH



We're serious about youth leadership, which is why all projects are planned and developed by the youth themselves. Youth projects over the last couple years have included hosting a town hall, meeting with state senators, creating media campaigns to raise awareness, and more!

MEET AND LEARN FROM LOCAL AND STATE POLICYMAKERS

CREATE YOUR OWN MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

LEARN HOW TO USE YOUR INDIVIDUAL LEADERSHIP STYLE

MEET NEW FRIENDS AND DEVELOP SKILLS TO LAST A LIFETIME





GROW YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND MAKE FRIENDSHIPS THAT LAST A LIFETIME

YOUTH LEADERSHIP NETWORK FALL MEETING SCHEDULE

**JANUARY 28, 2025
7-8 P.M.
UNO CEC**

**FEBRUARY 24, 2025
7-8 P.M.
UNO CEC**

**RECOGNITION DINNER
MARCH 12, 2025**

**YOUTH ADVOCACY DAY
AT THE STATE CAPITOL
APRIL 11, 2025**

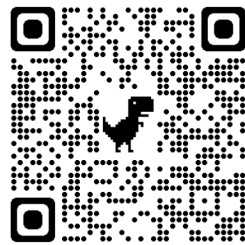
**APRIL 21, 2025
7-8 P.M.
UNO CEC**

**EXTRA MEETINGS
AS NEEDED**

**YOUTH LEADERSHIP
RETREAT
JUNE 3-5, 2025**

HOW TO JOIN

The Youth Leadership Network is open to all Omaha-area youth in grades 8 through 12 who want to grow as leaders and are interested in preventing alcohol-related harms in our community with the skills they develop. To indicate your interest in joining us for our next meeting, please fill out the form using the QR code below. YLN is completely free to join!



Register here!

WHERE WE MEET

The Youth Leadership Network meetings are held once a month at the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center (CEC) on the University of Nebraska-Omaha campus at 6400 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE. Parking is free and food and drinks are provided at each meeting (must register for food).

LEARN MORE!

To learn more about the Youth Leadership Network, please visit www.projectextramile.org/youth or contact us at youth@projectextramile.org or (402) 963-9047

Find us on:





RESEARCH SUMMARY
Date Compiled: January 2025

Key takeaways from included research:

- A new study investigated the trends in alcohol-associated liver disease (ALD), liver cancer from alcohol, and alcohol use disorder (AUD) burdens among older Americans. Researchers reported that in 2021 there were approximately 512,340 cases of AUD, 56,990 cases of ALD, and 4,490 cases of primary liver cancer from alcohol. These rates are higher than age-standardized rates (ASRs) from the Global Burden of Disease study. Specifically, 40 states exhibited a rise in prevalence of ALD rates in older adults.
- A new systematic review examined the link between alcohol consumption and female breast cancer. Researchers found a positive association between alcohol consumption and breast cancer risk, even with small amounts of alcohol increasing the relative risk. They also concluded that alcohol consumption is associated with pre- and post-menopausal breast cancer, further emphasizing the need for guidelines to reduce alcohol-related cancer risks.
- A Finnish study examined changes in alcohol-attributable mortality inequalities during periods of sharply rising alcohol affordability. Researchers found that during periods of rising alcohol affordability, alcohol-attributable mortality increased more rapidly among low-income men compared to high-income men. However, during periods of falling alcohol affordability, mortality decreased more significantly among low-income men, which suggests that alcohol affordability could help reduce socioeconomic inequalities in alcohol-related harm.
- A study aimed to estimate the impact of changes in per capita alcohol consumption on overall cancer mortality rates and specific types of alcohol-related cancers as well as assess whether the associations between cancer and population alcohol consumption is influenced by a country's drinking patterns. The researchers found that a 1-liter per capita increase in alcohol consumption was associated with a 0.9% rise in total cancer mortality among females and a 1.1% increase in males. Overall, they found elevated effects in countries with more harmful drinking patterns.

Millions of Americans hurt by others' drinking, drug use: study

Written by Amy Norton

PISCATAWAY, NJ – The risks of alcohol and other drug consumption to the user are well known, but many Americans--nearly 160 million--say they've been harmed by someone else's substance use, according to a new study in the Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs.

In a national survey of U.S. adults, researchers found that 34% said they'd ever suffered "secondhand harm" from someone else's alcohol use--ranging from marriage and family problems to financial fall-out to being assaulted or injured in a drunk-driving accident. Meanwhile, 14% said they'd been harmed by someone else's use of marijuana, opioids or other drugs.

In sheer numbers, that amounts to 113 million Americans who've suffered consequences from another person's drinking, and 46 million who've been hurt by others' drug use. What's more, there was plenty of "overlap" between those two groups: Of survey respondents reporting secondhand harms from alcohol, 30% said they'd also been impacted by other people's drug use.

"There are more harms than people think," said study co-author William Kerr, Ph.D., of the Alcohol Research Group at the Public Health Institute, in Emeryville, Calif. "They affect families, relationships and communities."

It makes sense that risky drinking and drug use have far-reaching consequences, but it's only in recent years that research has delved into the secondhand harms of alcohol, Kerr said. And little has been known about the secondhand effects of drug use.

The new findings are based on responses from 7,800 U.S. adults who were surveyed between September 2019 and April 2020--before, Kerr noted, the effects of the pandemic on Americans' substance use.

The survey asked people if they'd ever experienced a set of specific harms due to someone else's alcohol or drug use: physical harm, vandalized property, family problems, financial difficulties or involvement in a traffic accident. Far fewer people said they'd been harmed by others' drug use compared with alcohol use--which is likely because both drinking and alcohol use disorders are much more common than drug use and drug use disorders, Kerr said.

But, he added, there could also be additional reasons, including the limits of the survey (which asked about secondhand harms from drug use with a single question). The researchers are now conducting a new survey with more detailed questions on harms related to individual drugs.

In the meantime, the current findings highlight a major public health issue: For every person with a substance use disorder, Kerr said, many more may be harmed in some way, to some degree. That, he added, underscores the need to improve people's access to substance abuse treatment, and the importance of harm reduction efforts--such as preventing people from driving under the influence.

Alcohol Deaths Have More Than Doubled in Two Decades, Study Finds

Written by Roni Caryn Rabin

The number of deaths caused by alcohol-related diseases more than doubled among Americans between 1999 and 2020, according to new research. Alcohol was involved in nearly 50,000 deaths among adults ages 25 to 85 in 2020, up from just under 20,000 in 1999.

The increases were in all age groups. The biggest spike was observed among adults ages 25 to 34, whose fatality rate increased nearly fourfold between 1999 and 2020.

Women are still far less likely than men to die of an illness caused by alcohol, but they also experienced a steep surge, with rates rising 2.5-fold over 20 years.

The new study, published in *The American Journal of Medicine*, drew on data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Deaths related to alcohol included those caused by certain forms of heart disease, liver disease, nerve damage, muscle damage, pancreatitis and alcohol poisoning, as well as related mental and behavioral disorders. The study did not include other deaths influenced by alcohol, such as accidents.

“The totality of the evidence indicates that people who consume moderate to large amounts of alcohol have a markedly increased incidence of premature deaths and disability,” said Dr. Charles Hennekens, a professor of medicine at Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University and one of the study’s authors.

The study is one of several recently that have drawn attention to the toll of rising alcohol consumption, particularly since the Covid pandemic, as Americans faced heightened anxiety, economic uncertainty and social isolation.

Some local jurisdictions also eased restrictions on the sale of alcohol during the pandemic.

The increase at the onset of the pandemic appears to have persisted. Adults reported more heavy drinking and binge drinking in 2022, another recent study found.

Some 48,870 alcohol-related deaths were reported in 2020, up from 19,356 in 1999, the new study found. The mortality rate rose to 21.6 deaths per 100,000 in 2020, an increase from 10.7 deaths per 100,000 in 1999.

Alcohol-related deaths increased in all age groups, with the highest number among those aged 55 to 64. (The increase in deaths among those 85 and over was not significant.)

Deaths increased among all racial and ethnic groups and in all geographic regions, the new study found. But the steepest rises occurred among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, whose death rate increased 2.4-fold.

In the Midwest, the death rate increased 2.5-fold over the two-decade period.

The new study is not the first to confirm disturbing trends in U.S. alcohol consumption. Men still die of alcohol-related disease at the highest rates and numbers, but two groups especially

vulnerable to the health effects of drinking — women and older Americans — are consuming more alcohol than in the past.

Moderate drinking is defined as one drink or less per day for women and two drinks or less for men.

Heavy drinking for women is four standard servings or more a day and eight or more a week; for men, heavy drinking is defined as five servings or more in a day, and 15 per week.

Binge drinking means having four to five drinks in a roughly two-hour period.

Dr. Hennekens and his colleagues hypothesized that rising rates of overweight and obesity may also be playing a role in alcohol-related deaths.

Nearly three-quarters of American adults are overweight or obese, according to a recent study. They are becoming overweight or obese at younger ages than in the past.

Both obesity and heavy drinking are associated with risk factors for cardiovascular disease and with liver disease. The combination of drinking and overweight may accelerate the progression of those illnesses, Dr. Hennekens said.

The authors urged health care providers to be aware that high blood pressure linked to obesity can be worsened by drinking, and to screen patients for alcohol consumption.

“We have a strong message for health care providers and their patients to try to do something about both these issues, alcohol consumption and overweight and obesity,” Dr. Hennekens said.

Survey shows most people don't know that alcohol raises cancer risk

Written by Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania

Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that you can "lower your risk for cancer by drinking less alcohol or not drinking at all," Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) data show that less than half of Americans know that regularly drinking alcohol increases the risk of later developing cancer.

The CDC reports that more than half of U.S. adults drink alcohol, 17% binge drink, and 6% drink heavily. The conclusion that alcohol consumption carries significant health risks is backed by systematic reviews as well as meta-analyses focused on the association between alcohol consumption and the risk of death from any cause.

The survey findings come from APPC's nationally representative Annenberg Science and Public Health (ASAPH) Knowledge survey, which was conducted with a panel of more than 1,700 U.S. adults in September 2024.

Although 40% of survey respondents were aware that regularly consuming alcohol increases the chance of later developing cancer, 40% were not sure whether that is true, and 20% reported inaccurate beliefs (either that it would have no effect or that it would decrease the chance of developing cancer).

"Public health messages about the risks associated with drinking alcohol have to overcome the effects of decades of sophisticated marketing and positive media portrayals," noted Patrick E. Jamieson, who directs APPC's Annenberg Health and Risk Communication Institute.

APPC's Annenberg Science and Public Health knowledge survey

The survey data come from the 21st wave of a nationally representative panel of 1,744 U.S. adults conducted for the Annenberg Public Policy Center by SSRS, an independent market research company. Most have been empaneled since April 2021.

To account for attrition, small replenishment samples have been added over time using a random probability sampling design. The most recent replenishment, in September 2024, added 360 respondents to the sample.

This wave of the Annenberg Science and Public Health Knowledge (ASAPH) survey was fielded Sept. 13–22 and Sept. 26–30, 2024. The margin of sampling error (MOE) is ± 3.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All figures are rounded to the nearest whole number and may not add to 100%. Combined subcategories may not add to totals in the topline and text due to rounding.

The policy center has been tracking the American public's knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors regarding vaccination, COVID-19, flu, RSV, and other consequential health issues through this survey panel over the past three-and-a-half years.

In addition to Patrick E. Jamieson, APPC's team on the survey includes research analysts Laura A. Gibson and Shawn Patterson Jr., Ken Winneg, managing director of survey research, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the policy center.

DUIs at highest levels in years in both Lincoln and Nebraska

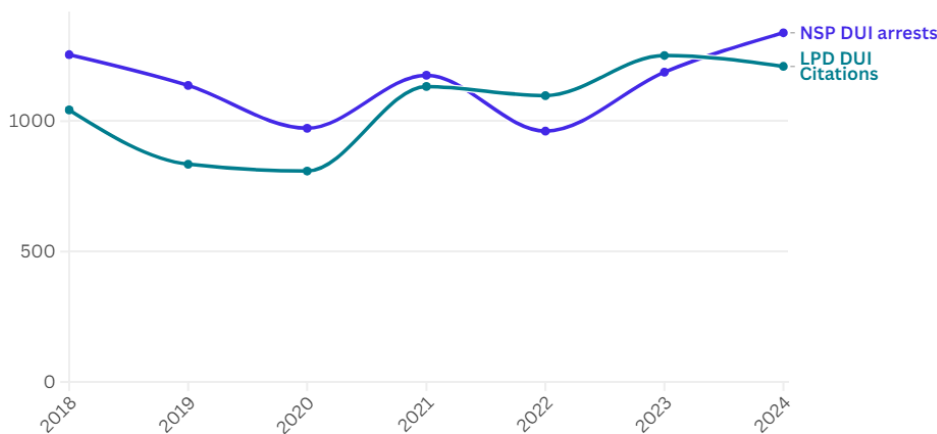
Written by Alex Vargas

People are getting stopped for driving under the influence at rates that haven't been seen for several years.

The Nebraska State Patrol already has made nearly 200 more DUI arrests through early December than all of last year, while the Lincoln Police Department is on track to issue more DUI citations this year than in 2023.

DUIs on the rise

Arrests of people suspected of driving while under the influence are at their highest levels in years. The Nebraska State Patrol has already seen more DUI arrests this year than in any year since at least 2017, while arrests by the Lincoln Police Department are on track to be the highest since at least 2017.



Note: Nebraska State Patrol's 2024 numbers are year to date and Lincoln Police Department's 2024 numbers are through November. Lee Enterprises graphic

In August, LPD handed out 137 DUI citations, the most in a single month in the past 10 years, according to Crime Analysis and Intelligence Unit data.

LPD spokesperson Erika Thomas said an increase in enforcement efforts could be behind the rise in DUIs, which are at their highest levels since at least 2017.

December is National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, and the State Patrol, LPD and other law enforcement agencies have been focusing on finding impaired drivers during this holiday season.

LPD was awarded a grant from the Nebraska Department of Transportation to fund the additional hours needed for police to enforce impaired driving.

Since Dec. 1, LPD has been conducting a specialized project centering on impaired driving that will carry through the end of the year. The project is part of the nationwide "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" campaign.

From Dec. 1-8, LPD issued 38 DUI citations, Thomas shared that there were 38 DUIs, up from 26 during the same span in 2023.

The average number of LPD citations for DUIs in December since 2015 is 88.3.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that more than 4,700 lives were lost in drunk-driving crashes in the month of December between 2018 and 2022 nationally.

"The holidays come with all sorts of celebrations, many involving alcohol," said State Patrol Colonel John Bolduc.

The State Patrol was allocated \$42,886 in grant money from the Nebraska Department of Transportation to focus on impaired driving enforcement.

Officers are taking a zero-tolerance stance to drivers who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, Thomas said, and not just during the holidays.

LPD DUI citations were up 14% in 2023 compared with 2022. And through November of this year, they are up 5% compared with the same 11 months in 2023.

The State Patrol has seen an even bigger increase in the number of DUI arrests in the last two years, with 2023 seeing a 23% increase from 2022.

Troopers made 962 arrests related to DUIs in 2022. The following year, the number jumped to 1,188. Through early December, the State Patrol had already made 1,339 arrests this year.

Getting more impaired drivers off the state's roads can help prevent serious accidents.

Statistics from the National Highway Safety Administration showed that 67 roadway fatalities in Nebraska were alcohol-related in 2022, accounting for 28% of all fatalities that year.

In August, 39-year-old David Warren of Beatrice was found guilty of manslaughter and driving under the influence, causing serious bodily injuries from an October 2023 crash.

Warren was sentenced to 20 years in prison for driving drunk, which led to the death of 53-year-old Bradley Kreifels of Crete.

Deputies with the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office were sent to the crash near Southwest 14th Street and Nebraska 33 on Oct. 28, 2023.

Chief Deputy Ben Houchin, at a press conference after the crash, said an SUV driven by Warren was traveling north on Southwest 14th Street when it collided with the rear of a grain trailer being hauled by a semi. The SUV spun into the southbound lane, crashing into the vehicle Kreifels and a passenger were in.

Deputies discovered a four-vehicle crash in the area. Kreifels was pronounced dead at the scene. A 54-year-old woman suffered serious injuries, while Warren ended up in the bed of Kreifels's pickup truck with a serious leg injury.

According to court documents, multiple 99-proof bottles were found inside Warren's car, and his blood alcohol content was 0.176, more than double the legal limit.

Kreifels' family was in attendance at Warren's sentencing, and they were in tears as Warren asked for their forgiveness. Warren's family was also in attendance, sniffing as they wiped tears after hearing the sentence he received for his actions.

"There are people who aren't even born when crashes happen who live their life impacted by an impaired driver," Mother Against Drunk Driving Mission Operations Director Erin Payton said.

"We work with victims every single day who had their families and lives torn apart (from crashes with an impaired driver)," she said.

Payton said she understands that the holiday season is a time of joy, which may lead to social drinking for some. But she said the key is to have a plan before going out somewhere you know you will be consuming alcohol or drugs.

Ride-sharing apps like Uber or Lyft are great alternatives to driving. Payton and law enforcement also recommend designating a sober driver.

"We know alcohol is part of people's lives. What we ask is before you go out for these celebrations and these fun times with family and friends, before you even leave the house, make a plan," Payton said.

Surgeon General Calls for Cancer Warnings on Alcohol

Written by Roni Caryn Rabin

Alcohol is a leading preventable cause of cancer, and alcoholic beverages should carry a warning label as packs of cigarettes do, the U.S. surgeon general said on Friday.

It is the latest salvo in a fierce debate about the risks and benefits of moderate drinking as the influential U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans are about to be updated. For decades, moderate drinking was said to help prevent heart attacks and strokes.

That perception has been embedded in the dietary advice given to Americans. But growing research has linked drinking, sometimes even within the recommended limits, to various types of cancer.

Labels currently affixed to bottles and cans of alcoholic beverages warn about drinking while pregnant or before driving and operating other machinery, and about general “health risks.”

But alcohol directly contributes to 100,000 cancer cases and 20,000 related deaths each year, the surgeon general, Dr. Vivek Murthy, said.

He called for updating the labels to include a heightened risk of breast cancer, colon cancer and at least five other malignancies now linked by scientific studies to alcohol consumption.

“Many people out there assume that as long as they’re drinking at the limits or below the limits of current guidelines of one a day for women and two for men, that there is no risk to their health or well-being,” Dr. Murthy said in an interview.

“The data does not bear that out for cancer risk.”

Only Congress can mandate new warning labels of the sort Dr. Murthy recommended, and it’s not clear that the incoming administration would support the change.

Still, President-elect Donald J. Trump does not drink, and his choice to head the Health and Human Services Department, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., swore off alcohol and drugs decades ago, and says he regularly attends AA meetings.

There is no question that heavy consumption is harmful. But supporters of moderate drinking — including makers of wine, beer and spirits, and some physicians and scientists — argue that a little alcohol each day may reduce cardiovascular disease, the No. 1 killer in the United States.

Newer scientific studies have criticized the methodology of earlier studies, however, and have challenged that view, which was once a consensus.

While most cancer deaths occur at drinking levels that exceed the current recommended dietary guidelines, the risk for cancers of the breast, the mouth and the throat may rise with consumption of as little as one drink a day, or even less, Dr. Murthy said on Friday.

Overall, one of every six breast cancer cases is attributable to alcohol consumption, Dr. Murthy said. More recent studies have also linked moderate alcohol consumption to certain forms of heart disease, including atrial fibrillation, a heart arrhythmia.

Two scientific reviews will be used to inform the updated recommendations about alcohol consumption in the federal dietary guidelines.

Five years ago, the scientific report that informed the writing of the 2020-2025 dietary guidelines acknowledged that alcohol is a carcinogen and generally unhealthy and suggested “tightening guidelines” by capping the recommendation for men at one standard drink, or 14 grams of alcohol a day.

When the final guidelines were drafted, however, there was no change in the advice that moderate drinking of up to two drinks a day for men was acceptable.

But the government acknowledged emerging evidence indicating that “even drinking within the recommended limits may increase the overall risk of death from various causes, such as from several types of cancer and some forms of cardiovascular disease.”

Since then, even more studies have linked alcoholic beverages to cancer. Yet any attempt to change the warning labels on alcoholic beverages is likely to face an uphill battle.

The current warning label has not been changed since it was adopted in 1988, even though the link between alcohol and breast cancer has been known for decades.

It was first mentioned in the 2000 U.S. Dietary Guidelines. In 2016, the surgeon general's report on alcohol, drugs and health linked alcohol misuse to seven different types of cancer.

More recently, a scientific review of the research on moderate drinking, carried out under the auspices of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, was commissioned by Congress.

That analysis found a link between alcohol consumption and a slight increase in breast cancer, but no clear link to any other cancers. The report also revived the theory that moderate drinking is linked to fewer heart attack and stroke deaths, and fewer deaths overall, compared with never drinking.

The World Health Organization says there is no safe limit for alcohol consumption, however, and 47 nations require warnings on alcoholic beverages. But cancer is rarely mentioned.

To date, only South Korea has a label warning about liver cancer, though manufacturers can choose alternative labels that don't mention cancer. Ireland is currently slated to introduce labels that say there is a “direct link between alcohol and fatal cancers” in 2026.

The industry has a strong history of fighting warning labels that mention cancer, and alcohol-producing nations have also challenged warning labels under international trade law.

Industry opposition led to the premature termination of a federally funded Canadian study of the impact of warning labels that mentioned cancer.

The surgeon general's advisory provided a brief overview of research studies and reviews published in the past two decades, including a global study of 195 countries and territories involving 28 million people.

They all found that higher levels of alcohol consumption were associated with a greater risk of cancer.

Other studies looked at specific cancers, like breast cancer and mouth cancer, finding the risks increased by 10 percent and 40 percent, respectively, for those who had just one drink a day, when compared with those who did not drink.

The report described the biological mechanisms by which alcohol is known to induce cancerous changes at the cellular level.

The most widely accepted theory is that inside the body, alcohol breaks down into acetaldehyde, a metabolite that binds to DNA and damages it, allowing a cell to start growing uncontrollably and creating a malignant tumor.

Animal experiments have shown that rodents whose drinking water was spiked with either ethanol, the alcohol used in alcoholic beverages, or with acetaldehyde developed large numbers of tumors all over their bodies.

Research has shown that alcohol generates oxidative stress, which increases inflammation and can damage DNA.

It also alters levels of hormones like estrogen, which can play a role in breast cancer development, and makes it easier for carcinogens like tobacco smoke particles to be absorbed into the body, increasing susceptibility to cancers of the mouth and the throat.

The surgeon general's report also goes into detail about the increase in risk associated with drinking, differentiating between the increases in absolute risk and in relative risk.

For example, the absolute risk of breast cancer over a woman's life span is about 11.3 percent (11 out of 100) for those who have less than a drink a week.

The risk increases to 13.1 percent (13 of 100 individuals) at one drink a day, and up to 15.3 percent (15 of 100) at two drinks per day.

For men, the absolute risk of developing an alcohol-related cancer increases from about 10 percent (10 of every 100 individuals) for those who consume less than one drink a week to 11.4 percent (11 per 100) for those who have a drink every day on average. It rises to 13 percent (13 of 100 individuals) for those who have two drinks a day on average.

Many Americans don't know there is a link between alcohol and cancer.

Fewer than half of Americans identified alcohol use as a risk factor for cancer, compared with 89 percent who recognized tobacco as a carcinogen, according to a 2019 survey of U.S. adults aged 18 and older carried out by the American Institute for Cancer Research.

Yet alcohol consumption is the third leading preventable cause of cancer, after tobacco and obesity, according to the surgeon general's report.

Dr. Murthy said it was important to know that the risk rises as alcohol consumption increases. But each individual's risk of cancer is different, depending on family history, genetic makeup and environmental exposures.

“I wish we had a magic cutoff we could tell people is safe,” he said. “What we do know is that less is better when it comes to reducing your cancer risk.”

“If an individual drinks occasionally for special events, or if you’re drinking a drink or two a week, your risk is likely to be significantly less than if you’re drinking every day,” he added.

Editorial, 1/8: Labels linking alcohol to cancer would bring awareness

Written by LJS Editorial Board

Alcohol is responsible for about 100,000 cases of cancer and 20,000 cancer deaths annually, and is the third-leading preventable cause of cancer in the U.S., after tobacco and obesity.

Those are the facts behind an advisory issued last week by Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy warning Americans that alcohol consumption can increase cancer risk and calling for an updated health warning label on alcoholic beverages.

Those alcohol-created cancer deaths, more than the yearly 13,500 alcohol-associated traffic crash fatalities, are a public health issue that, despite long-standing research, most Americans aren't aware of.

The link between alcohol consumption and cancer risk is well established for at least seven types of cancer: breast, colorectal, esophagus, liver, mouth, throat and voice box. That risk remains regardless of the type of alcohol consumed and increases with greater consumption.

For breast, mouth and throat cancers, the risk may start to develop with one or fewer drinks per day, according to the Surgeon General's office.

That evidence largely negates a decades-long perception that some alcohol, especially red wine, could have health benefits.

Even a December report from the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine that concluded that moderate drinking might be associated with lower risks of cardiovascular disease found that moderate drinking was also associated with a higher risk of certain types of cancer.

As with his advisories on firearm violence, loneliness and isolation, social media and youth mental health and the mental health of parents, Murthy is attempting to increase awareness of a little-discussed public health issue.

That awareness, obviously, would be enhanced with an updated warning label on alcoholic beverages to reflect cancer risk.

That change, which is unlikely to be approved by the newly sworn-in Republican Congress, would, like the warning labels on cigarettes, put the cancer risks along with other alcohol-related health risks directly in front, each time there's a purchase of beer, wine and liquor.

A new label, and the surgeon general's advisory, could lead to decreased alcohol use, just like with cigarettes.

An August Gallup poll found that nearly half of Americans already say having one or two drinks a day is bad for a person's health, with younger adults most likely to say drinking is bad for health, so a decrease in alcohol consumption may already be coursing through society.

That said, the most valuable aspect of Murthy's advisory can be accomplished without a label via its call for adjusting guideline limits for alcohol consumption to account for cancer risk. Those limits, if they can become widely known, immediately could help limit consumption and, as they are followed over time, reduce alcohol-related cancers.

Downtown Omaha bar fined, leaving city leaders with growing concerns

Written by Alex McLoon

OMAHA, Neb. — Just outside Omaha's Old Market, another penalty for a troubled business.

Krush Ultra Lounge received a 30-day suspension of alcohol sales. The Nebraska Liquor Control Commission's executive director, Hobert Rupe, said the bar reached a plea deal with attorneys and paid a \$1,500 fine to continue alcohol sales.

The owner said he was paying the fine and declined to comment further Wednesday. Some city and neighborhood leaders have had it with incidents breaking out next door to police headquarters, drawing police resources from the rest of the downtown area, according to city officials.

"I have deep concerns about the safety of residents in the Old Market," said Danny Begley, an Omaha city councilmember.

The Omaha Downtown Improvement District, which works to create an attractive destination, opposes any renewal of the bar's liquor license.

"We have attempted to work with them for many years, and yet they continue to have tavern reports and crowd issues," said Holly Barrett, of the Omaha Downtown Improvement District. "Our organization never wants to see a business down, but these guys have not been good neighbors, and we don't think that the business contributes to the neighborhood."

Krush Ultra Lounge, formerly Throwback Arcade Lounge, has been the subject of tavern reports filed by Omaha police, including an April outburst and hearings with city leaders.

Omaha police officers were scheduled to testify to state liquor officials about recent concerns next door to headquarters Tuesday.

Another federal report on alcohol finds even moderate drinking carries risks

Written by Isabella Cueto

A new federal report on alcohol's health effects has found even moderate drinking — within the bounds of U.S. nutrition guidance — could carry health risks, including injuries, liver disease and cancer.

The risk of those potential harms, and of dying from alcohol-related causes, increases the more a person consumes, according to the study by the Interagency Coordinating Committee for the Prevention of Underage Drinking.

The findings come just 11 days after U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy issued an advisory on the links between alcohol and cancer and called for stronger warning labels on drinks. Another review, published last month by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, linked moderate drinking to lower all-cause mortality but also to an increased risk of breast cancer. The ICCPUD report points to elevated cancer risks and says, “at no age was there a significant net benefit of alcohol consumption on all-cause mortality.”

Both the NASEM report and today's release — which is led by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration — are set to inform the 2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Their at-times contradictory results on various fronts will add fuel to the existing debate about alcohol research and just how much drink should be considered “safe” by health authorities.

While some public health advocates celebrated the new report, the alcohol industry came out against it on Tuesday, saying it should not be factored into dietary guidelines. A public comment period on the two reports will begin Wednesday and end on Feb. 14.

If confirmed as health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. will have the power to shape the guidelines against the foods he often criticizes, including ultra-processed snacks, sugary drinks and seed oils. He is in long-term recovery from alcohol and drugs, but hasn't taken a clear stance on alcohol policy.

The 80-page report from the ICCPUD focused on deaths and reduced life expectancy from alcohol-related conditions. The process included a technical committee and a scientific review panel who, over many months, analyzed 56 systematic reviews on various health risks associated with moderate drinking, defined as two drinks per day for men or one per day for women. The results are for a general population, and aren't meant to be applied to individuals, since many factors can shape a given person's risk of disease and death.

“Alcohol would have a greater impact on the health of people who smoke, have poor diets, engage in low physical activity, are obese, have hepatitis infection, or have a family history of specific diseases than it would other individuals,” the report says.

To arrive at their findings, the researchers created models for alcohol-driven deaths at different levels of consumption. They found that in the U.S., the risk of dying from alcohol use “begins at low levels of average use,” and risk increases with higher alcohol use. Men and women have similar risks of health harms from drinking, the researchers note: Both have “a 1 in 1,000 risk of dying from alcohol use if they consume more than 7 drinks per week.” This risk increases to 1 in 100 if they consume more than 8.5 standard drinks per week.

Seven drinks per week — one per day — is within what the dietary guidelines define as “moderate drinking” for women, and below moderate drinking thresholds for men, which include up to 15 drinks per week. Even at two drinks per day, there were 39 alcohol-attributable male deaths per 1,000 people, the study found. (By comparison, “acceptable” risk outlined in environmental hazard laws is 1 in a million lifetime deaths from involuntary risk, the authors note.)

When estimating all-cause mortality, the researchers assessed the risks from conditions that are caused by alcohol, instead of also including deaths without any direct link to alcohol. This method was meant to reduce the risk of unknown variables being to blame, and to improve the specificity of the findings, they wrote in the report. “Only these direct risks are preventable.”

The study did not differentiate between different types of alcohol, since most experts believe it is the amount of pure ethanol that matters more than the choice of beverage. The standard drink in the U.S. has about 14 grams of pure alcohol in it, equal to a 12-oz. bottle of 5% ABV beer or a five-ounce glass of 12% ABV wine, or 1.5 ounces of 40% ABV liquor. Many mixed drinks contain more than one standard drink per serving.

As in the NASEM report, the ICCPUD study had mixed results in some areas. It linked one drink per day with an increased risk of injuries, liver cirrhosis, esophageal cancer and oral cancer, but a lower risk of stroke. The authors note that consuming many drinks in one occasion, even infrequently, could erase the benefit when it comes to stroke risk. Even two or three drinks per day on average increased the risk of stroke, based on the report’s analysis. Their read of the literature also found women had a higher risk for liver cancer but a lower risk of diabetes when they had one drink per day. (Any potential improvements in risk were often accompanied by increased risks in other conditions.)

In the past, some research has suggested some alcohol use may have a protective effect against heart disease, diabetes, stroke, kidney cancer and thyroid cancer. However, subsequent analyses to determine causality of the effect have called those findings into question, the ICCPUD report notes.

The expert panel also assessed whether drinking one to three alcoholic beverages per week had any health impacts. In men, they found that compared to not drinking, even one drink per week was associated with an increased risk of 18 conditions they studied. The highest relative risks for men were for colorectal cancer, esophageal cancer and liver cirrhosis, as well as accidents and road injuries. In women, one to three drinks per week was linked to a reduced risk of diabetes and stroke, but a heightened risk of liver cirrhosis, pharynx cancer, larynx cancer, esophageal cancer, and accidental injuries. There was little to no effect on the risk of pneumonia, pancreatitis, atrial fibrillation or hypertension at these levels of drinking.

Overall, the report confirmed the link between alcohol use and seven cancers, and said risk starts to increase “with any alcohol use” and goes up from there as drinking becomes heavier. Women have a higher risk of alcohol-attributable cancers per drink, the study found. The researchers analyzed “lifetime cancer risk,” meaning the number of people out of 1,000 who would be expected to develop an alcohol-attributable cancer at any point in their life. For men, at one drink per week, the lifetime risk was 5.6 per 1,000 people. It was 2.6 for women. At two drinks per week, that risk went up to 6.1 per 1,000 people (5.2 for women). Consuming one drink daily equaled a lifetime risk of 8.2 per 1,000 for men and 19.5 per 1,000 people for women. At three drinks per day, those risks increased to 22.6 per 1,000 for men and 66.9 per 1,000 for women.

However, the analysis found light drinking, up to three drinks per week, did not increase the risk of premenopausal breast cancer as much as it heightened the relative risk of other conditions, such as liver cirrhosis. Researchers have long suspected women may experience worse alcohol-related harm than men because of their different body composition and how they metabolize alcohol. In other words, it takes less alcohol for the average woman to reach the same blood-alcohol level as the average man. For this reason, binge drinking or heavy episodic drinking — usually defined as four or more drinks in one occasion for women (five or more for men) — is thought to carry greater risks. Some research included in the report linked binge drinking to a higher risk of breast cancer.

Risks for young people between the ages of 15 and 20, especially risks of death from traffic collisions, unintentional and intentional injuries, increased with consumption. At 21 drinks per week, over a quarter of all deaths in that age group were attributable to alcohol.

All of the papers included in the review were case-control studies or cohort studies — observational studies with “considerable” limitations, the authors note. Their selection of papers did not include reviews on the relationship between alcohol and HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, depression or cervical cancer. The included research may also compare people who drink to those who abstain for health reasons, and would not include those who died or became disabled from alcohol-driven problems when they were younger.

The scientific studies may also underestimate alcohol-related risk, since they often rely on self-reports, sometimes years apart. The ICCPUD panelists assumed “that 10% of alcohol consumed by cohort participants was not captured” in such studies. Some cohorts included participants from other countries, where drinking behaviors and norms may be different.

Complicated road to guidelines

The dietary guidelines process is overseen jointly by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture. This time around, HHS is taking the lead, and the studies of alcohol and health were outsourced from the main guidelines committee to separate panels for the first time.

Both groups have faced critiques. The NASEM committee was called out by watchdogs for including researchers with ties to the alcohol industry. In a letter earlier this year to George Koob, director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 25 members of Congress outlined concerns about the ICCPUD study. They alleged the ICCPUD convened its alcohol study groups (a scientific review, as well as a technical review subcommittee) “without the knowledge of Congress” in 2023 — to do work “duplicative” of the NASEM group’s congressional assignment. Alcohol policy experts slammed the letter as an intrusion into the scientific process, and asked whether the alcohol industry was behind it.

In a statement on Tuesday, nearly two dozen trade associations connected to the alcohol industry said federal officials should “disregard” the ICCPUD report and favor NASEM’s conclusions when it comes time to write dietary guidelines.

“Today’s report is the product of a flawed, opaque and unprecedented process, rife with bias and conflicts of interest. Several members of the six-member ICCPUD panel have affiliations with international anti-alcohol advocacy groups, and the panel has worked closely with others connected with these advocates. Congress never authorized or appropriated money for the panel

or its work, and numerous letters from Congress and industry have voiced serious concerns over the process,” the statement said.

The ICCPUD’s effort includes representatives from various federal agencies as well as outside researchers. The scientific review panel includes researchers from various academic institutions and research groups. Panelists Timothy Naimi and Kevin Shield worked on a Canadian report that recommended lower alcohol consumption — a fact some lawmakers took issue with, alleging bias. Other panelists have long spoken about and studied the connections between drinking and negative health outcomes, or concluded that alcohol has no health benefits (a perspective even Koob himself shares). Scientific reviewers’ financial disclosures are posted online; those of the ICCPUD technical review committee are not.

The technical committee, whose members have not been publicly disclosed, was tasked with combing through the research literature and summarizing the findings of the scientific review panel. It will contribute to a 2025 report to Congress. That committee includes representatives from various federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Cancer Institute, SAMHSA, and the NIAAA.

None of the technical review meetings were open to the public, though two invitation-only “stakeholder” meetings admitted public health advocates and members of the alcohol industry.

Large alcohol firms have an acute interest in the dietary guidelines outcome, and how it shapes public perception of drinking. Major alcohol companies have spent millions lobbying lawmakers and other federal officials about the guidelines since 2022.

Shifting understanding of risks

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say more than 170,000 deaths per year — including 20% of deaths of young people aged 20 to 49 — are due to excessive alcohol use. The average number of deaths per year from excessive alcohol use increased 29% between 2017 and 2021. Studies suggest alcohol consumption and related harms only worsened during the pandemic.

Medicine has over time turned in the direction of recommending less drinking, and away from the idea that a glass of wine with dinner is good for health (the “French paradox” popularized in the late 20th century). Other countries have lowered their recommended drinking thresholds. In Canada, researchers recommended public health messaging that emphasized how any level of drinking carried a risk, and it went up in tandem with a person’s consumption. Recent surveys in the U.S. also suggest public attitudes on drinking are shifting.

However, the NASEM committee’s report concluded with moderate certainty that drinking within the recommended thresholds was associated with a lower risk of all-cause mortality and cardiovascular disease death than not drinking at all. The report does not establish that drinking directly proffers some benefit, but previous studies have found a similar “J-shaped curve” when it comes to alcohol and all-cause mortality. Some experts have said such findings are likely due to healthier overall lifestyle patterns in moderate drinkers, and not due to alcohol itself.

The NASEM report also echoed a connection other studies have made between even moderate drinking and the risk of breast cancer. “Associations of alcohol with cancer risk are likely linear and not J-shaped,” the report’s authors wrote.

Dietary guidelines writers will draft a formal report next year, but HHS will have final editing privileges. The lead agency typically has a strong say; a 2020 recommendation to lower drinking thresholds for men to one drink per day was rejected by the government.

On Tuesday, the U.S. Alcohol Policy Alliance called for reducing the recommended alcohol consumption thresholds in the next dietary guidelines in response to the report. “Science tells us there are significant health risks associated with consuming alcohol at the amounts currently advised in the DGAs — in fact, for men, it’s particularly deadly,” the organization’s board chair, Tiffany Hall, said in a news release. “The fact that any amount of alcohol is harmful to your health can no longer be ignored.”

Drinking recommendations in the U.S. have gone relatively unchanged for decades. Since the 1990s, the guidelines have told the public to drink alcohol “in moderation,” if at all.

The guidance is for daily consumption, so someone cannot have a week’s worth of drinks in one or two sittings and be compliant. Having four or more drinks in one sitting is considered binge drinking for women; five or more for men. Certain groups, including pregnant people, are advised to avoid drinking altogether. Those who abstain from alcohol should not start drinking.

In early December, scientists issued their report on the role of food in health promotion and disease prevention. Dietary guidelines are just recommendations, but they influence food assistance programs, policy, school meals, and clinical practice. They also reflect social and scientific changes over time about what Americans ought to eat and drink. Whatever drinking (or abstaining) advice goes into the final guidelines will stand for five years.

Gov. Pillen proposes his answer to \$432 million projected budget shortfall

Written by Zach Wendling

LINCOLN — Gov. Jim Pillen presented his first answers Wednesday to a projected two-year \$432 million budget shortfall that key Nebraska lawmakers said they're ready to dive into.

Pillen unveiled the proposal as part of his annual State of the State speech to the Legislature, put together a budget request for the two fiscal years between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2027.

The request to lawmakers would close the projected shortfall with more than \$62.4 million in the other direction, filling the projected hole in Nebraska's more than \$17.5 billion budget.

The governor's budget proposal

Read the full 2025-27 budget proposal from Gov. Jim Pillen here.

Key contours of the Pillen-led plan include:

- Repealing recently passed state laws that included new spending or cost the state significant revenue, totaling \$120 million, some of which were passed back in 2020 while others haven't yet taken effect.
- Holding many state agencies flat for spending and implementing key cuts in others, the largest proposed cut of which was \$14.3 million from the University of Nebraska system where Pillen previously served as a regent.
- Tapping into more federal dollars, particularly in health care programs, as mandated Medicaid and health costs rise and as a continued change from his predecessors.
- Increasing "sin" taxes on cigarettes, vaping, consumable hemp products, spirits, fantasy sports and gambling cash devices.
- Adding new taxes on candy, soft drinks, alternative nicotine products and electricity rates for cryptocurrency data-mining facilities while adding back sales taxes to net wrap and twine, which were recently exempted.

"We must balance the budget, we must reduce spending to offset these costs and we must have the courage to say, 'No,'" Pillen wrote in a Wednesday letter to the Legislature. "We have to use what we have before we ask for more."

Pillen's proposal would still grow property tax relief programs by more than \$400 million over the next two years and take incremental steps toward a long-term goal to stabilize state aid to public schools.

Impact of tax cuts

Speaker John Arch of La Vista, who sets the daily agenda for the Legislature, has described the state budget and closing the shortfall as "without a doubt" the biggest issue of the 2025 session.

He has noted part of the hole comes from some "pretty big swings in the last couple of sessions," including income tax cuts for corporations and the wealthiest Nebraskans that won't be fully implemented until Jan. 1, 2027.

Estimates show that the state budget hole could grow to \$1.13 billion by the middle of 2029 if the budget is left unchanged, a circumstance that State Sen. Myron Dorn of Adams, an Appropriations Committee member, said would be more of a challenge to address.

Pillen's proposal would close that hole with more than \$5 million to spare.

"We didn't get here by COVID, overspending or by inflation or recession," said State Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh of Omaha, a new member of the Appropriations Committee. "We got here by aggressive tax cuts that were short-sighted, and I think we need to revisit some of those tax cuts."

Cavanaugh joins the nine-member committee that will balance Pillen's recommendations with lawmakers' proposals and agency requests and propose its own budget this spring.

She said her priority will be ensuring that funding is preserved to continue providing high-quality services and access to health care for vulnerable populations. That includes protecting essential government services — behavioral health, developmental disabilities and child welfare.

Spending and program cuts

Among the recently adopted laws Pillen plans to cut are incentive tax credit programs to offset relocation expenses for businesses that hire out-of-state workers, which was led by Pillen); film or TV expenditures for in-state productions; qualified shortline rail maintenance and food donations by grocery stores, restaurants or agricultural producers.

His budget proposal also would claw back \$528,352 annually from a yet-to-be-enacted prescription drug donation program for low-income or uninsured Nebraskans, which was delayed due to a newly enforced federal rule.

Pillen also recommended rejecting a Nebraska Supreme Court request for \$4.5 million to implement a veterans justice program to complement Veterans Treatment Courts and further improve outcomes. It was slated to begin July 1; it didn't include legislatively authorized funds.

The push for that 2024 law was led by former State Sens. Tom Brewer, Lou Ann Linehan and Justin Wayne, with support from former U.S. Sen. Chuck Hagel, R-Neb., a former U.S. Department of Defense Secretary.

School finance reform

Another key component of the budget would have the state take on more K-12 school operational expenses, albeit at a much smaller amount than Pillen proposed for the 2024 summer special session.

Rather than taking on the entirety of school operational expenses — about 80% of the portion of property taxes that go toward local K-12 schools — Pillen is partnering with State Sen. Jana Hughes of Seward to cover a smaller amount. Legislative Bill 303, introduced by Hughes at Pillen's request, would reduce maximum general fund school property tax rates from \$1.05 to \$1.02, per \$100 of property valuations.

That's down from a previous Pillen plan last summer to take the maximum tax rate from \$1.05 down to 15 cents in the first year. The maximum rate would have gone down to 0 cents, with the state taking over the operational expenses, in the third year.

Hughes had proposed a slower, 10-year plan to go down to 25 cents as the maximum property tax rate for schools, keeping some local "skin in the game," an idea that received backing from many educational leaders.

The new \$1.02 plan is flexible, depending on available state funds.

For example, one proposed potential revenue source to help Hughes possibly drop the maximum school tax rate further is from State Sen. Tom Brandt of Plymouth and Dorn to broaden the sales tax to about two dozen currently exempt goods and services.

Hughes, a former school board member, said she was "really happy" that Pillen was partnering with her on funding stability, which is at will to rising valuations. The state's "equalization aid" is projected to decrease by \$17.6 million in the next fiscal year before increasing \$8.6 million.

"I'm pleased that the governor and his staff have seen merit in our past work and that we're collaborating together to do what's best for Nebraska," Hughes said. "They see it as a trajectory for years to come, not just a one-time 'fix.'"

Under Hughes' LB 303, state foundation aid to schools, established in 2023, would increase by 6% to about \$1,590 roughly per each student.

Dorn said he also appreciated increased property tax funding to match increased taxes because of those rising valuations.

"It would put it so that people aren't now going to have to end up paying more than what they are today, which we haven't had any concept like that the last few years," Dorn said.

'One day at a time,

State Sen. Danielle Conrad of Lincoln, the longest-tenured member in the body, said governor's proposals are often seen as a "good start," but she hadn't yet dived into the budget proposal.

Conrad, who is working with Hughes, Brandt, Dorn and others on school finance reform, said lawmakers need to be honest that the shortfall is projected not because of an economic recession or because of a natural disaster but because of Pillen-led tax cuts.

She said postsecondary institutions, such as the University of Nebraska, might have to raise tuition to stay afloat. Regents last summer raised tuition rates and requested an increase in state dollars to help grow research and expand a new Pillen-led scholarship program for top students.

State Sen. Rob Clements of Elmwood, chair of the Appropriations Committee, described Pillen's recommendations as part of a "balanced approach" that doesn't include drastic cuts to agencies or heavily tap into cash reserves. He noted it also preserves pay increases for state employees.

Clements noted that the latest projection of a state shortfall included “very flat” revenues and was “very conservative.” He and others hope that a revised forecast at the end of February might narrow the projected shortfall, aided by strong receipts in December.

Pillen budget staffers said that if the state doesn’t see as much of a shortfall, it might lead to investments in more tax relief or school finance reform rather than preserving programs slated to be cut.

Clements, who joined the Legislature in February 2017, said the budget will be a challenge, but lawmakers will go day by day.

“It’s not easy,” Clements said. “Feeling like we’ll take it one day at a time and try not to look ahead too far, just one day at a time and prioritize the items that, as we look through the budget, what’s most important.”

The ins and outs of the governor’s proposed 2025-27 budget

WHAT IS INCLUDED:

- \$67.6 million to ensure the state can continue to reimburse local school districts for 80% of special education costs.
- \$30 million to invest in a Nuclear Command, Control and Communications Enterprise Center as part of U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base.
- \$23.6 million as federal “clawback” payments to reimburse the federal government for Medicaid/Medicare dual-eligible prescription drug costs.
- \$6.4 million, and \$10.6 million in federal funds, for mandated coverage of new high-cost drugs entering the market.
- \$5.5 million to the Nebraska Corn Board for local, regional and international marketing.
- \$4.5 million for operational improvements at the Lincoln Regional Center.
- \$4 million to continue high-priority infrastructure and maintenance in the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services.
- \$2.5 million to upgrade security systems in Correctional Services.
- \$512,300 for a Wildland Incident Response Assistance Team (WIRAT) coordinator for local and state wildfire responses.
- \$250,000 to carry out a pilot program for distributing menstrual products in select K-12 school districts next school year.

WHAT IS OUT:

- \$44.5 million from income tax exemptions for Nebraska businesses that recruit out-of-state workers, which was led by the governor.
- \$42 million from the Broadband Bridge and Precision Agricultural Incentive programs that the governor’s budget proposal said are “redundant” to the \$405 million federal Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program.
- \$15 million to award grants to a federally recognized Indian tribe to construct, develop and manage a Standing Bear Museum and Visitor Center.
- \$11 million in additional dual enrollment funding for Nebraska community colleges.
- \$9.4 million requested by the Nebraska Supreme Court to administer a veterans court program to complement Veterans Treatment Courts and further help justice-impacted veterans.
- \$5.5 million in 2020 and 2021 increases in local public health department aid and “return to a normal pre-pandemic spending level.”

- \$1.5 million for income tax credits for in-state film or TV production expenses and \$1.5 million for shortline rail maintenance.
- \$1.1 million to partner with Iowa nonprofit SafeNetRx to begin distributing donated and safe prescription drugs to low-income and uninsured Nebraskans.
- \$1 million in income tax credits for 50% of food donations from grocery stores, restaurants or agricultural producers to food banks, food pantries or food rescues.
- \$500,000 from the University of Nebraska designed to provide legal services to low-income families facing eviction (under Nebraska Supreme Court precedent, NU does not receive specific cash fund appropriations).

Nebraska traffic fatalities reach 17-year high, even as road deaths decline across the nation

Written by Kevin Cole

Increased deaths among pedestrians and motorcyclists in 2024 propelled Nebraska to its highest number of traffic fatalities in 17 years, even as preliminary figures show a decline nationally.

The 251 deaths on Nebraska roadways in 2024 are nearly 10% more than the 227 recorded last year, according to the Nebraska Highway Safety Office in Lincoln. The 251 fatalities are also 7.2% above the five-year average of 234.6 from 2019 through 2023.

Omaha also saw a sharp increase in traffic fatalities overall with 58 in 2024, compared with 40 in 2023 and 45 in 2022. Lincoln, the state's second-largest city, had just 12 traffic fatalities in 2024, according to a Lincoln Police Department spokesperson. That is one fewer death than in 2023 and eight fewer than the five-year high of 20 recorded in 2022.

Nebraska's rise in traffic fatalities comes while preliminary information indicates that fatalities are down nationally. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, traffic fatalities in the U.S. declined through the first nine months of 2024, an estimated 4.4% decrease compared to the same period in 2023.

"That is great for the nation, but we did not follow that trend," said Bill Kovarik, administrator of the state safety office. "Drivers in Nebraska have not increased seat-belt use over 92% or decreased use of phones and other distractions like we are seeing in other states."

Nebraska's preliminary figures show that only 30% of the people killed on the roadways were wearing seat belts, Kovarik said.

"That is unfortunately not much different than previous years, even though we would expect more people to wear belts since everyone know they can save your life," he said. "Speeding, distracted driving and other choices drivers are making are increasingly causing fatalities. Driving behavior needs to change or this increasing trend will continue."

Helmet use is down

Motorcycle deaths helped drive the total traffic fatality number higher in 2024.

"Motorcycle fatalities jumped back up to 32 (from 22 in 2023), very close to the five-year high of 34 from 2020, as no surprise with less riders wearing helmets," Kovarik said. "Less than 70% (of riders) were wearing helmets, which is down from previous years, which started to decline in 2023."

As of Jan. 1, 2024, motorcyclists were legally allowed to ride without helmets by meeting the following criteria: Age 21 years or older; wear eye protection while riding; successfully complete a basic motorcycle safety course.

"The helmet law is still current, there are just exceptions that make it nearly worthless and many riders stopped wearing helmets in 2023 in anticipation of these changes," Kovarik said.

Nebraska's 32 motorcycle deaths represent a 45% increase over 2023, when 22 motorcyclists died on the state's roadways. They are also a 22% increase over the five-year average of 25.4.

Twelve of those motorcycle deaths occurred in Omaha. That compares with just five motorcycle fatalities in 2023 and nine in 2022, according to Sgt. Jason Menning of the Omaha Police Department's traffic unit.

Pedestrian deaths also climbed

Pedestrian deaths were up in Omaha and the state as a whole. Of the 19 pedestrian deaths last year in Nebraska, 15 occurred in Omaha.

"Many are because drivers are not watching out for pedestrians, but many are because people get out of vehicles on the highway or walk where they should not," Kovarik said.

A new study by a Charlotte, North Carolina, law firm found that Nebraska ranked eighth in the country for highest percentage of pedestrians killed in collisions at intersections. New York led the category followed by New Jersey and Minnesota.

The DeMayo Law Office analyzed data on fatal crashes from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for the years 2018 to 2022. The percentage of pedestrians killed at intersections each year was calculated, while the total percentage of deaths between 2018 and 2022 was used to rank the states from highest to lowest.

Menning pointed to some familiar factors for the overall rise of traffic fatalities in the state's largest city. He said high speeds, lack of seat-belt use, alcohol or drug impairment and inattention are the main causes of fatalities.

"Primary factors or causes of these crashes remain high speed — 20 mph or more above posted speed limit — no seat-belt use by the deceased person and failing to yield to oncoming vehicle, especially to oncoming motorcycles," he said. "These have all been primary causes for several years."

Fatalities from ATV crashes on roadways also spiked in 2024 with seven for the year. That is a 133% increase from the three recorded in 2023 and a whopping 192% increase over the five-year average of 2.4.

"Yes, this is drastic," Kovarik said. "Again, (people make) a choice to drive ATVs (on roads) that they were not designed (to be driven) and at speeds that are unsafe."