

OMAHA COALITION MEETING
Wednesday, June 12, 2024
9 a.m.

Please use to sign-in:



AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Review of the May 8, 2024 Meeting Minutes
(please contact PEM staff with corrections)
- III. How the Price of Alcohol Impacts our Communities
- IV. Focus Area Updates
 - a. Local
 - i. College World Series
 - ii. Liquor License Histories
 - b. Policy
 - i. Alcohol Taxation Interim Study
 - ii. Policy Work Group Meeting - TBD
 - c. Enforcement
 - i. Compliance Check Results
 - d. Youth
 - i. Youth Leadership Network Fun Meeting – June 12th @ Spare Time
 - ii. Youth Leadership Retreat – June 25-27 @ Lutheran Church of the Master
 - e. Awareness
 - i. June Research Summary available at www.projectextramile.org
- V. Additional Discussion/Announcements
- VI. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date: **August 14th, 9 a.m.**
UNO's Community Engagement Center, Room 209

IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS

Youth Leadership Retreat – June 25-27, 2024

Nebraska Liquor Control Commission Hearings – July 2 & 3 and August 6 & 7, 2024

PROJECT EXTRA MILE

OMAHA METRO AREA COALITION MEETING MINUTES May 8, 2024

- I. Call to Order: Tom Safranek called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.
- II. Welcome and Introductions: Coalition members and speakers in attendance: Sharona Ernst, Shelby Bingham, Ashley Pick, Bridget Battafarano, Molly Rezich, Toby Czapla, Jim Timm, Tom Safranek, Zack Hicks, Mike Jones, Nicholas Sauma, Alvin McCruel, Palistene Gray-Moore, and Jason Sharp. Coalition members in attendance via Zoom: Michaela Perry, Whitney Abbott, Connie Holmes, and Antoinette Francois. Staff members: Chris Wagner and Liene Topko.
- III. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the April 10th meeting were included in the coalition meeting packet. No additions or corrections were made.
- IV. Nebraska's Statewide Community Health Assessment: Zack Hicks with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Behavioral Health provided a summary of the Statewide Community Health Assessment (SCHA) and an update on the Partnership for Success (PFS) grant. Priority areas for the statewide PFS grant were identified as: mental health and suicide across the lifespan, vaping among youth and young adults, and high risk drinking among young and older adults. Zack explained that the PFS distribution could be decided by July and will focus on the counties with the greatest need in each priority area.
- V. Focus Area Updates
 - a. Policy
 - i. Chris Wagner shared that the NU Board of Regents voted to permanently allow alcohol sales at Haymarket Park for Nebraska baseball and softball games. This is likely another step toward allowing alcohol sales at Memorial Stadium. PEM will keep the coalition informed on any further developments.
 - ii. Wagner also shared that the next round of dietary guideline revisions are occurring. This time around, the research gathering for alcohol consumption guidelines has been shifted away from the federal government to the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM). PEM will keep coalition members informed if there are future opportunities for engagement on the issue.
 - iii. Lastly, Wagner also updated the group on the interim study Senator John Lowe introduced to examine alcohol pricing in Nebraska. This was a result of the Youth Leadership Network's efforts when meeting with senators during the March Leadership Day. The goal is to hold the hearing in Omaha, so the youth and coalition members are able to partake.
 1. Dr. Safranek suggested getting an alcohol tax expert to share their expertise on the effectiveness of increasing alcohol prices.

- b. Youth
 - i. Liene Topko shared that the Youth Leadership Network conducted an environmental scan during the April meeting at a grocery store and gas station to examine alcohol placement and pricing.
 - ii. The Youth Leadership Retreat will be held in Omaha on June 25-27, 2024. Coalition members were encouraged to spread the word and invite youth they know who may be interested.
 - 1. A suggestion was made to provide transportation for students who would want to attend but lacked transportation. Wagner shared that staff have offered to provide transportation to meetings in the past and that will continue.
 - c. Awareness
 - i. The May Research Summaries are available at www.projectextramile.org/ResearchSummary
- VI. Additional Discussion/Announcements: none
- VII. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date: The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Why Increasing Alcohol Taxes Makes Sense

Reducing Underage Drinking, High-risk Drinking and Related Harms

A review of 72 studies and reports published in the Journal of Preventive Medicine found strong evidence that raising alcohol taxes is an effective strategy for reducing excessive alcohol consumption and related harms. The authors noted that “increased alcohol taxes are associated with decreased overall consumption, decreased youth consumption, decreased youth binge drinking, reduced alcohol-related motor-vehicle crashes, reduced mortality from liver cirrhosis, and reduced violence.”¹

Why is an Increased Tax on Alcohol Needed?

- The economic and social costs of drinking far exceed alcohol tax revenues. Underage drinking alone cost the citizens of Nebraska \$324 million in 2013. These costs include medical care, work loss, and pain and suffering associated with the multiple problems resulting from the use of alcohol by youth.²
- A CDC study reports that, in 2010, Nebraska’s costs due to excessive alcohol consumption were \$1.16 billion, \$491 million of which was paid for by the government.³ In contrast, the state only took in \$27.6 million in taxes that year, or a mere 5.6% of its cost.
- More than 178,000 deaths are caused by excessive alcohol use each year,⁴ making it the fourth leading cause of preventable death in the United States⁵. Excessive alcohol use is also a risk factor for many health and societal problems.⁶
- Revenues from increased alcohol taxes can be designated to fund alcohol prevention programs, increased enforcement of alcohol laws (i.e. high-profile sobriety checkpoints), treatment for alcohol-related disorders, or education.
- 43% of Nebraskans surveyed support or strongly support additional taxes.⁷ Furthermore, in a national survey, nearly 81 percent of adults favor an increase of five cents per drink in the tax on beer, wine, or liquor to pay for programs to prevent minors from drinking and to increase alcohol treatment programs.⁸
- 20% of drinkers consume over 85% of all alcoholic beverages.⁹ This means the remaining 80% of drinkers consume, on average, relatively small quantities of alcohol and pay a minimal amount of taxes. Alcohol tax increases impact excessive drinkers more and these drinkers are the ones who are causing all the socio-economic costs in our communities.
- Now a fraction of what they were decades ago, federal alcohol excise tax rates in the United States have fallen off dramatically. Adjusted for inflation, the federal excise tax on a six-pack of beer since 1950 has dropped from \$1.33 to 33 cents, making beer far cheaper today, relative to other consumer products, than it was twenty and thirty years ago, according to the Center for Public Interest.¹⁰
- The latest CDC Prevention Status Report indicates that Nebraska ranks among the worst states in terms of alcohol excise tax rates.

¹ Elder et al. (2010)

² PIRE (2015)

³ Sacks et al. (2015)

⁴ CDC ARDI (2024)

⁵ NIAAA (2023)

⁶ The Community Guide (n.d.)

⁷ NASIS (2020)

⁸ Harwood, Wagenaar, & Bernat (2002)

⁹ Greenfield & Rogers (1999)

¹⁰ Center for Science in the Public Interest (2007)

- Nebraska’s excise tax for beer is \$0.31/gallon; the Community Preventive Task Force (Task Force) recommends the tax to be at or above \$1 per gallon.
- Nebraska’s excise tax for wine is \$0.95/gallon; the Task Force recommends the tax to be at or above \$2 per gallon.
- Nebraska’s excise tax for distilled spirits is \$3.75/gallon; the Task Force recommends the tax to be at or above \$8 per gallon¹¹.

Alcohol Tax Increases Work

- **Studies show that increased alcohol taxes are effective.** Higher excise taxes on alcohol are often passed on to consumers, which leads to a reduction in the quantity and frequency of alcohol consumption among youth¹², who are more price-sensitive consumers. Higher alcohol prices or taxes have been consistently related to fewer motor vehicle crashes and fatalities, less alcohol-impaired driving, less mortality from liver cirrhosis, less violence, lower incidence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and less alcohol-related dependence.¹³ Six studies from the systematic reviews conducted by the Task Force found consistent evidence that higher alcohol prices were associated with less youth drinking. On average, a 10 percent increase in the price of alcohol reduced beer, wine and spirit consumption by 5 percent, 6 percent, and nearly 8 percent respectively with alcohol-related crashes and other problems falling by like levels. Smaller increases produce proportional results.¹⁴
- **How do increased taxes on alcohol prevent underage drinking?** Although alcohol excise taxes are often raised for revenue-generating reasons, several studies suggest that higher excise taxes also have an impact on youth consumption and its consequences. Young adults are more responsive to price increases than adults. Higher taxes on alcohol are associated with less drinking among 16- to 21-year olds and specifically amongst high school students.¹⁵
- **Excise taxes naturally lose effectiveness over time.** Alcohol taxes are implemented at the federal and state level and are beverage specific (i.e. differing for beer, wine and spirits). Excise taxes are based on volume, unlike sales taxes which are based on the sales price. When taxes are based on volume, and not adjusted regularly, their effects are quickly reduced through inflation.

The Nebraska Experience

While a number of high-profile drunken driving crashes has seen Nebraska state senators examining a variety of approaches to cracking down on the problem, no bill to address alcohol taxes has made it to the floor for debate in recent legislative sessions.

- Nebraska ranks as the seventh-worst state in terms of binge drinking with 19.3% of adults binge drinking.¹⁶
- Nebraska ranks second-worst in terms of self-reported drinking and driving with 955 episodes per 1,000 population.¹⁷ Between 2010 and 2020, the Nebraska Highway Safety Office reports 704 people were killed in an alcohol-involved crash in Nebraska due to a drunk driver.¹⁸
- While traffic fatalities are a great concern, they are only a fraction of the total alcohol-attributable deaths Nebraska experiences. Between 2020 and 2021, Nebraska averaged 1,001 alcohol-attributable deaths per year and more than 21,000 years of potential life lost.¹⁹ In 2014, an estimated 2,403 hospitalizations occurred.²⁰
- Mirroring the decline of the federal rate due to inflation, Nebraska's inflation-adjusted excise tax on a six-pack has dropped from 32 cents to 17 cents since 1970.²¹

¹¹ CDC (2016)

¹² Coate & Grossman (1988)

¹³ Center for Science in the Public Interest (2007)

¹⁴ The Community Guide (2007)

¹⁵ The Community Guide (2007)

¹⁶ CDC BRFSS (2022)

¹⁷ Jewett et al. (2015)

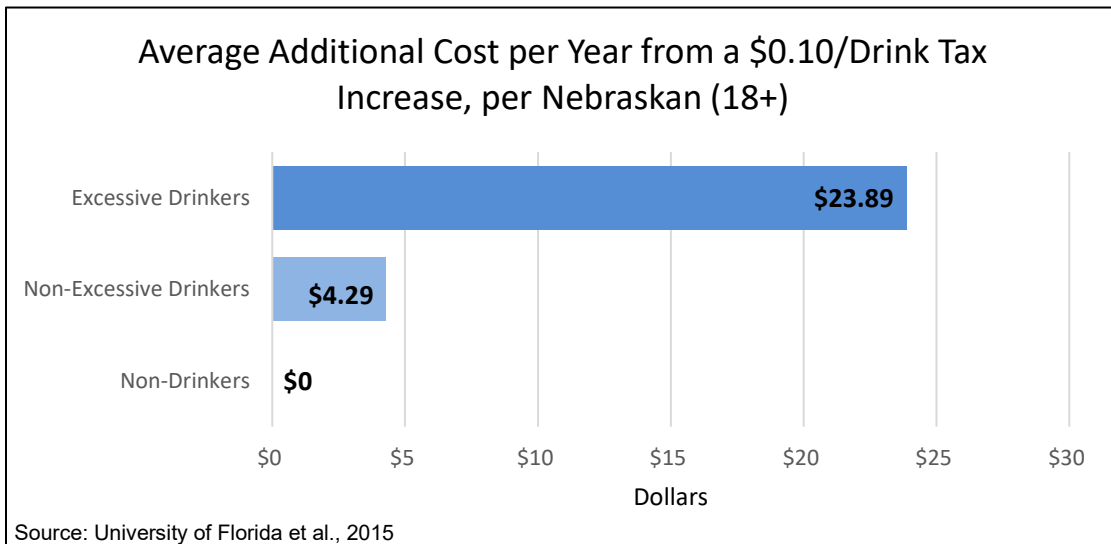
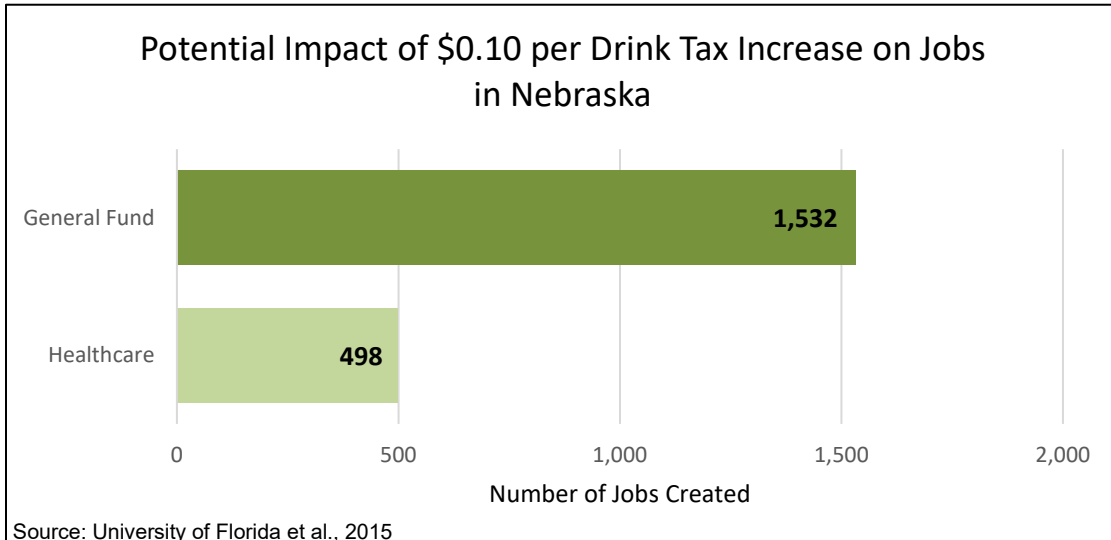
¹⁸ NDOT-HSO (2021)

¹⁹ CDC ARDI (2024)

²⁰ Nebraska Epidemiological Profile (2017)

²¹ Cordes (2011)

- Nebraska has increased its alcohol taxes just 14 times in the past 80 years with only six of those increases applying across the board, meaning that the tax rate on each type of alcohol was increased at the same time. Rates have not been raised across the board since 1985.²²
- If a \$0.10 per drink excise tax increase were to be imposed on alcohol in Nebraska, the state could create an estimated 2,030 new jobs. Furthermore, excessive drinkers would be most impacted by the tax increase, paying over five times more on average than non-excessive drinkers per year.²³



- A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention analysis of 23 separate sobriety checkpoints in 2002 found the strategy reduced alcohol-related deaths and injuries by an average of 20 percent.²⁴ In Nebraska, this would save 15 lives every year.²⁵ Such increased enforcement could be funded with revenue from increased alcohol taxes.

²² Nebraska Legislature (n.d.)

²³ University of Florida et al. (2015)

²⁴ Elder et al. (2002)

²⁵ Nebraska Department of Roads (2014)

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RESEARCH SUMMARY
Date Compiled: June 2024

Key takeaways from included research:

- As a result of declining alcohol use among US adolescents/early young adults and increases among other adults, a new study examined reasons for drinking based on age and sex. Researchers found notable increases in social among women aged 29/30 of 53% to 87% between 1987 to 2020. They concluded that binge drinking would not have increased had it not been for these social reasons.
- A new study examined how beverage-specific drinking patterns varied by gender, age, and race and ethnicity from 1979 to 2020. Researchers found that women’s drinking volume increased most among those aged 30 and older from 2000 to 2020. Men’s alcohol volume also increased, however it remained below 1979 and 1984 levels. Alcohol consumption also increased among older adults. Increased consumption rates were also found among Black men and women and Latina women from 2000 to 2020. Researchers emphasized a need for alcohol policy, interventions, and education to consider specific groups and how to address alcohol use among them.
- Researchers wanted to explore the patterns of how bartender influencers on TikTok feature and incorporate alcohol in their videos. Among 15 of the most followed bartenders on TikTok, they identified 345 videos which received an average 18 million views per video and found the most common alcohols in the videos were liquor, vodka, rum, and whiskey which displayed or mentioned a brand. These videos greatly increase exposure to digital marketing of alcohol and are related to increases in alcohol consumption, especially among young people. Stronger regulations are needed to reduce marketing exposure and the associated the harms.
- This study sought to describe the prevalence of trends in virtue marketing on new alcohol packaging. Virtue marketing was defined as health-, eco-, and cause-oriented claims. They found that virtue marketing was on 36.5% of new alcohol products with health-oriented claims being the most common at 32.5%. Researchers concluded that virtue marketing continues to increase in Australia, and this may exploit consumers’ motivation for purchasing products based on healthy, sustainable, and socially responsible claims.

U.S. Alcohol-Related Deaths Jumped 5-Fold In 20 Years

Written by Joshua Cohen

The leading preventable cause of death in the United States is tobacco and second is poor diet and physical inactivity. Care to guess what comes in third? You can't be faulted if you guessed opioids such as illicit fentanyl, given all the media attention it gets. But no, it's something much more accessible, advertised directly to the consumer and having a negative impact across all socioeconomic groups: Alcohol, and specifically the problem of alcohol abuse, which has been dramatically worsening recently.

From 1999 to 2017, the number of alcohol-related deaths in the U.S. doubled, to more than 70,000 a year. These numbers got much worse at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, alcohol-related deaths soared, reaching 178,000 in 2020 and 2021. Comprehensive federal datasets have yet to be released for 2022 and 2023.

In a study published in 2020 in the Journal of the American Medical Association, researchers showed that significant increases in mortality started emerging in the mid 2010s across all racial and ethnic groups. But the steepest rate of acceleration of alcohol-induced deaths occurred among younger, white individuals, especially women. Authors noted that the large increases among younger age groups presaged "substantial future increases in alcohol-related disease." In light of more recent figures which suggest an intensifying problem, it appears that the researchers' warning provided more than four years ago was prescient.

What could be compounding the problem of youth drinking are the ways in which advertisers depict alcohol consumption. They emphasize its social acceptability—even its supposed link to social success—and this especially applies when commercials direct their messages at a comparatively young demographic.

The data demonstrate that the marketing works. Researchers publishing in the Journal of Public Health Research found a strong association between the youth-appeal of marketing content of televised alcohol advertisements and the brand-specific consumption of both underage youth and adults.

Critics of certain commercials that are aimed at a younger demographic, like a beer ad which aired in 2019 promoting "Coors Light. The Official Beer of Saturday Morning," suggest the companies that sponsor the advertising are going too far.

The negative health effects of alcohol are usually because of excessive drinking over long periods of time. Here, the leading causes of alcohol-attributable deaths are liver and cardiovascular diseases, seven types of cancer—including liver, throat, mouth, esophagus and stomach—as well as alcohol use disorder. NIAAA defines the latter as a "medical condition characterized by an impaired ability to stop or control alcohol use despite adverse social, occupational, or health consequences." This can encompass alcohol abuse, dependence, addiction and the colloquial term, alcoholism.

But consuming a large amount of alcohol in a short period of time can also be deadly, as it may lead to alcohol poisoning or other dangers like motor vehicle accidents. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 17% of U.S. adults binge drink. Moreover, in 2021, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities accounted for 13,384 (roughly a third) of all motor vehicular deaths. And

40% of violent crimes such as assault, homicide and domestic abuse, were committed by people who had high blood alcohol content at the time of their arrests.

The rise in alcohol abuse certainly isn't limited to the U.S. In the United Kingdom, for instance, The Guardian reported last month that heavier drinking during the Covid-19 pandemic led to 2,500 more deaths from alcohol in 2022 than in 2019, a 33% jump.

While alcohol can be a toxic, carcinogenic drug, it's also enjoyed by many people in moderation and often as an accompaniment—a lubricant of sorts—in a variety of social settings. Research psychologists have found that drinking moderate amounts of alcohol in a group setting “boosts people's emotions and enhances social bonding.”

In addition, there may be physical gains associated with consumption of small amounts of alcohol. The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and others, like WebMD, still tout certain cardiovascular health benefits related to moderate intake of alcohol.

Nevertheless, other health entities, such as the Mayo Clinic, appear to be taking a different stance lately. The hospital group now says that “drinking alcohol in any amount carries a health risk,” though it qualifies the statement by suggesting that “while the risk is low for moderate intake, the risk increases as the amount you drink goes up.”

And a STAT News article published this month indicates that “alcohol isn't healthy after all.” The publication asks whether the new dietary guidelines, set by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services and scheduled to be released in 2025, will be shaped more by health or (alcohol) industry interests? Some suggest that changes in guidance are likely if the experts who draft the recommendations take into account the evidence of alcohol-related harms, including “heightened risks of certain cancers, chronic diseases, and injuries.”

While prevention is important, treatment is equally vital. Research published by The Lancet shows that early, preventive strategies in primary care can be effective, and a variety of interventions are available to treat alcohol dependence.

However, many lack access to quality care for alcohol misuse and alcohol-associated diseases. Additionally, there may be a stigma attached to seeking help for something as socially acceptable and easily accessible as alcohol.

Public health specialists have therefore asserted that it's time for a national dialogue about substance misuse of all drugs, legal and illegal, and that this discussion should include alcohol. In this context, experts suggest that efforts need to be centered around research on alcoholism, addiction and abuse, as well as ways to improve access to therapy for alcohol use disorders, possible curbs on advertising and targeted awareness and education campaigns.

However, alcohol abuse and misuse is not (yet) considered a public health emergency. Without declaring it as such, sufficient funding for a concerted nationwide policy is not forthcoming, which means the federal government hasn't prioritized an alcohol policy in the same way it has done for illicit drugs, or prescription opioids for that matter. Perhaps the latest alarming figures on the rising toll of alcohol abuse will help trigger more urgency.

Women are binge drinking more than ever – and advertising is making it worse

Written by Anna Wolfe

Vitamins or vodka; dry January or drink this green juice; Christmas indulgence or “Christ! Hit the gym”. This is the reality of being a woman in the 21st century: simultaneously promoted drinking and dieting. Hard seltzers and health kicks.

Research shows a significant link between eating disorders and substance misuse disorder in women, both of which are on the rise alongside drinking-related deaths. While we frequently see news about “sober curious” Gen-Zers, a recent report from the World Health Organisation (WHO) unveiled that young girls in the UK now drink more than boys, and the number of hospital admissions due to alcohol use is now higher for women than for men.

Extreme diet culture and drinking irresponsibly are two scourges cut from the same cloth; they aren’t sustainable, and we’re made to believe we can fill a void and control our happiness with products that will always control us. Love yourself, but not as you are. Drink this, but don’t take it too far. And, while advertisers didn’t create addiction, they’ve disguised problems as solutions, encouraging a feast or famine mentality.

“Advertising reflects society’s values,” says Peter Scott, CEO and founder of ex-advertising empire The Engine Group. Back in its heyday, Scott and his business partner Robin Wight wouldn’t even touch tobacco clients. Now, they claim the game has become increasingly dangerous across the board. Glasses of wine come in regular and large “like you’re at a Starbucks,” says Scott, while already addictive screens are flooded with what Wight calls a culture “under the influence of influencers”.

The practice of targeting women when advertising booze first came into its own in the Eighties, with the birth of the innocent-sounding alcopop. “Liquor distilleries noticed their clientele were dying out so they identified a gap in the market; an entire gender,” Ann Dowsett Johnston, author of *Drink: The Intimate Relationship Between Women and Alcohol*, tells me. “Thus, the alcopop was born – prepackaged little drinks, vodka-infused, rum-infused, sweet, aimed at young girls.” Bartles and Jayme brought out the first iteration in 1980; producers continue to follow in their footsteps today, with ever-more inventive cocktails in cans for sale, marketed squarely at women.

Dr Katherine Severi, chief executive of the Institute of Alcohol Studies and Dr Alex Barker, lecturer in psychology at the University of Derby, both confirm that alcohol marketing leads to increased “uptake and use” in individuals; and, according to Dr Severi, it contributes to young people starting to drink earlier and at heavy, problematic levels.

While there are restrictions about what you can claim in an alcohol or food advertisement, marketing is such an effective tool because “we’re greatly affected by music and visual imagery,” Wight tells me. “Our decision-making falters, and that’s why adding a song and splash of colour communicates with our subconscious. It’s powerful.”

Adverts clearly work; the current restrictions don’t. Dr Barker explains how easily alcohol brands can loophole their way out of the regulations. Television programmes are a good example; “brands can appear in programmes if they are considered ‘editorially justified’, with no providers being paid for the product. The problem is, it’s very hard to know and/or prove whether money has changed hands, and branded products could be given as props at no cost.”

Take reality TV shows, 98 per cent of which contain alcohol content (with a side of unattainable beauty standards). In one scene of *Made and Chelsea*, *The Den At M Bar* mysteriously appeared to sell only 14 bottles of Johnnie Walker. In Season 2 of *Keeping up with the Kardashians*, Kendall Jenner's 818 tequila brand was featured "65 times before its launch in the UK", says Dr Barker. Tune into *Love Island*, previously sponsored by Echo Falls, and you'll find hours of high-street fashion flirtation sandwiched between Just Eat and WKD ads.

The rules for live TV are also different to those applied to on-demand streaming programmes. "Alcohol product placement is allowed but must not be aimed at under-18s or encourage 'immoderate' drinking," says Dr Barker. Alcohol sponsorship at sporting events is "self-regulated by the Portman Group, a group composed of alcoholic beverage producers, who seek to ensure that alcohol is promoted in a 'socially responsible manner'."

But how is anybody expected to spend, sip or snack on anything "responsibly" when addiction narratives are handled irresponsibly, our mental health is on the decline, and we're sold supposed self-soothers, shame-inducers and advertised aspirations, leaving many of us feeling "less than"? All you have to do is turn on your TV, scroll through your feed and flick through your nearest magazine to discover the mixed messages women are constantly bombarded with – encouraged to both escape via overindulgence and embrace a never-ending treadmill of self-improvement to achieve the "perfect" face and body.

"I was enslaved by a cycle of starvation, binge eating, binge drinking and shopping to feel better"

Addiction comes from the Latin word "addicare". Before "addict" became the slur it is today, it described someone who was enslaved by or bound to something. I know this feeling all too well: I was enslaved by a cycle of starvation, binge eating, binge drinking and shopping to feel better. The worse my relationship with myself became, the more I tried to buy my way out of it. Drinking and hyperfocusing on my body were symptomatic of my poor mental health, not conscious decisions. Initially, they worked; I didn't have to feel or think about what I was numbing. But down the line, they became the problem. Alcohol didn't fulfil its advertised promise of connection and relaxation, and diet plans and "guilt-free" snacks only added more unnecessary guilt to my binges. I thought the root of my distress was my appearance, so I spent thousands of pounds I didn't have, getting into debt and attempting to "rectify" what didn't need rectifying.

My deterioration was rapid. I went from obese to underweight within a year. The reality of addiction is isolation, and I hid away, eventually reaching a point of suicidal ideation. I needed self-compassion and support, but asking for help is hard when you think you're the issue.

When discussing the increasing numbers of young girls and women seeking treatment for substance issues and eating disorders, rehab counsellor Daisy King expressed how we're conditioned to feel ashamed of ourselves, our appetites and our bodies, then "bombarded with advertising that promises to help us change". The same applies to our drinking habits.

The UK is the only country where Dowsett Johnston's book, *Drink: The Intimate Relationship Between Women and Alcohol*, was sold with the word "deadly" in place of "intimate" in the title. Drinking is ingrained in our culture and "sold like a brand of perfume" that we turn to for "reprieve from the insidious messaging that we as women must be perfect. It doesn't have to be alcohol, it can be food, sex, and, of course, shopping. Anything that changes the way we feel."

“Marketers feed on this,” says King. “Even though there’s been a shift in acceptance around ‘normal’ weight, when you look at the discrepancy between the ‘ideal weight’ and the ‘actual weight’ of women over the decades, the gap becomes wider and wider.”

Eating disorder recovery dietitian Elle Kelly helped me break free of thinking that attached shame to food and my body. My addictions weren’t a lack of willpower or loss of morals; they were treatable disorders that most people come up against, either in themselves or through a loved one.

Some 3.4 million Brits, 90 per cent of whom are women, have an eating disorder. One in every six adults is at risk of developing one in their lifetime, with binge eating being the most common. Anorexia remains the biggest killer of all psychiatric disorders. Umairah Malik, clinical advice coordinator at the charity Beat, speaks of the importance of challenging the dangerous misconception that only white young women are affected by eating disorders: “That simply isn’t the case, and these misconceptions can lead to delays in getting the right treatment.”

Meanwhile, more children drink in the UK than anywhere else; women’s drinking at all ages is increasing faster than men’s, and the physical effects are following suit. It’s proven that women have heightened risks of liver damage, heart disease, brain damage and breast cancer from drinking. Despite drinking less during the pandemic, women aged 40 to 60 “were significantly more likely than expected to experience serious complications like alcohol-related cardiovascular and liver disease, as well as severe withdrawal,” according to a study conducted by the Journal of JAMA Health Forum. The report also showed that women are considerably less likely to seek or receive treatment due to shame, stigma and the fact we live in a country where women receive poorer healthcare.

“There needs to be much less talk about addiction without recovery. There is a solution and addiction isn’t a death sentence” -Dr Samantha Duggan

Change is long overdue, and behavioural psychologist and secretary of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on 12 Step Recovery, Dr Samantha Duggan, is one of the women trying to make that happen. “There needs to be much less talk about addiction without recovery. There is a solution and addiction isn’t a death sentence.” Like me, Dr Duggan is multiple years sober; unlike me, early intervention stopped her anorexia from taking hold.

While it’s sad that so many young girls are entering treatment for both alcoholism and eating disorders, King also sees hope ahead. “It means that their problems are being recognised and validated early, and, if caught sooner rather than later, they might save themselves decades of suffering and physical and emotional damage.”

We need to be honest about why so many women are struggling. We need restrictions that rein in irresponsible marketing and advertising. And we desperately need to end the stigma surrounding addiction in all its forms to stop women suffering in silence.

LPD: Man gets fourth DUI after crashing into light pole while heavily intoxicated

Written by Jake Lawson

LINCOLN, Neb. (KOLN) - Lincoln Police responded to a vehicle that crashed into a light pole early Thursday morning, and a 25-year-old Lincoln man was arrested on suspicion of his fourth DUI.

Abram Krzycki, of Lincoln, is charged with driving under the influence with three prior convictions, tampering with an interlock and driving under revocation.

At 12:30 a.m., officers were called to the area of 70th Street and Stacy Lane after a vehicle crashed into a light pole. A caller told police she heard the vehicle revving up as though the driver were about to take off.

Officers made it to the wreck and spoke with the driver, identified as Krzycki. His eyes were bloodshot, his speech was slurred and he smelled like alcohol, according to an arrest affidavit.

A search of the vehicle turned up seven Southern Comfort shooters, and court records show six of them had been drunk. Police think Krzycki fell asleep at the wheel before hitting the light pole.

His identification was checked, and police found that he was supposed to have interlock device installed in his vehicle. The device wasn't there, police wrote. Further investigation showed he'd been convicted of three DUIs between 2019 and 2023.

A preliminary breath test at the scene showed that Krzycki had a BAC of 0.37, over four times the legal limit.

Krzycki was taken into custody and arraigned later on Thursday afternoon. His bond was set at 10% of \$50,000, and he's expected back in court on June 13.

Alaska Legislature Passes First of its Kind Alcohol Cancer Warning Requirement

Written by Press Release

Law Will Require Signs Posted at Retail with Statement “Alcohol Use Can Cause Cancer, Including Breast and Colon Cancers”

Washington, D.C.—Consumer Federation of America celebrated the Alaska State Senate’s passage of legislation late Wednesday night that will require all alcohol retailers in the state to post cancer warning signs at the point-of-sale. The bill marks the first time a state legislature has targeted alcohol specifically as a carcinogen.

The bill, which also loosens restrictions on the sale of alcohol by employees under age 21, now awaits the signature of Republican Governor Mike Dunleavy. Like 23 other states and the District of Columbia, Alaska law currently requires a point-of-sale warning sign on the danger of drinking alcohol during pregnancy, and the bill will update those signs in addition to requiring a cancer warning statement. California has required cancer warnings for a variety of carcinogens, including alcohol, under its Proposition 65 legislation. However, the Alaska law reflects growing concern that drinkers do not sufficiently comprehend the cancer risk associated with alcohol.

According to American Cancer Society researchers, alcohol use represents the 3rd leading cause of cancer in the United States. For some cancers, even light or moderate drinking significantly increases risk. For example, researchers estimate that consuming 1 standard drink per day is associated with a 4% increase in breast cancer risk, and drinking 2-4 drinks per day with a 23% increased risk. Researchers estimate that cancers associated with alcohol consumption affect nearly 90,000 Americans each year.

Yet surveys from organizations such as the National Cancer Institute and American Institute for Cancer Research have consistently found that fewer than half of U.S. adults know that alcohol increases cancer risk. One National Cancer Institute survey showed that 10% of adults think drinking wine decreases cancer risk. Another recent survey of young women found that only 28% were aware that drinking alcohol increases breast cancer risk. Advocacy groups like Consumer Federation of America have highlighted this disconnect between alcohol’s contribution to cancer risk, and consumer awareness of that contribution, to argue for an update to the warning label on alcoholic beverages, and for laws like the one passed in Alaska this week.

“We applaud the Alaska state legislature for seeking to enable consumers to make more informed choices around alcohol,” said Thomas Gremillion, Director of Food Policy at Consumer Federation of America. “Alcohol-attributable cancers kill tens of thousands of Americans each year. The available evidence makes clear that most consumers fail to appreciate that risk. Policymakers in other states, and at the federal level, should follow Alaska’s lead in warning consumers about alcohol cancer risk.”

20 Nebraska troopers honored by MADD for drunk driving enforcement

Written by 1011 NOW Staff

LINCOLN, Neb. (KOLN) - Twenty Nebraska State Patrol Troopers were honored on Tuesday for keeping Nebraska roads safe from impaired drivers.

The troopers received the "Heroes Award" from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD).

"Every DUI arrest has the potential of saving lives," said Colonel John Bolduc, Superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol. "These troopers represent great examples of that life-saving mission. We'd like to thank MADD for their tireless advocacy to keep Nebraska roadways safe."

Every year, MADD honors law enforcement and advocates from across Nebraska for their work to prevent drunk driving.

Those honorees work in areas of enforcement, education and awareness, and advocacy.

In total, 20 troopers were honored. Those troopers include:

Adult DUI Enforcement

- Trooper Ben Nguyen – Troop H
- Trooper Chase Landry – Troop H
- Trooper Aaron Hartley – Troop B
- Trooper Daniel Osuna-Salazar – Troop B
- Trooper Brady Tophoj – Troop D
- Trooper Kaden Brandt – Troop D

Adult DUI Enforcement Team

- Troop A – Trooper Anthony McGlade, Trooper Zach Matthews, Trooper Anthony Franks, Trooper Kaleb Mayfield, Trooper Logan Krein, Trooper Ryan Healy, Trooper Ashley Elrod
- Troop B – Trooper Daniel Osuna-Salazar, Trooper Andrew Bestenlehner, Trooper Kak Ayaj, Trooper Mara Tighe, Trooper Dylan Duhsman, Trooper Seth Miller, and Sergeant Jesse Pfeifer

Education and Awareness Individual

- Trooper Timothy Flick

Teen Drug Use, by the Numbers

Written by Steven Ross Johnson

It's an age-old worry among many parents: Is my kid using drugs?

Data shows why such concerns these days go beyond fretting over a teen potentially puffing on pot, with the rise of fentanyl fueling record-high fatal overdose totals in the U.S. and research pointing to the synthetic opioid's deadly impact on youth.

But there's also more positive news: Illicit drug use among American teens has held fairly steady around the lower levels reached in 2021, amid the school and societal disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Estimates from the most recent iteration of the annual Monitoring the Future survey also show significant increases in the shares of 10th- and 12th-graders who have never used alcohol, marijuana or nicotine, to approximately 54% and 38%, respectively.

The Monitoring the Future survey since 1975 has provided a national snapshot on the state of substance use among America's adolescents and teens. The most recent drug use estimates were drawn from surveys of more than 22,000 students in eighth, 10th and 12th grade across 235 public and private schools.

Here's a look at some of the notable teen drug use data identified by the project.

Which Drugs and Substances Are Teens Using the Most?

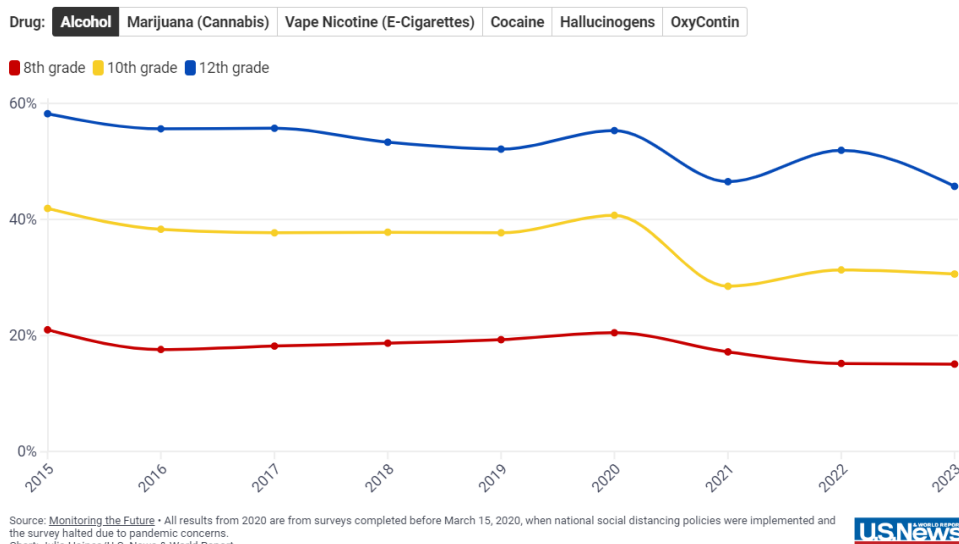
Alcohol, marijuana and nicotine through vaping remained the most commonly used substances among teens in 2023, though at levels notably below what they were prior to the pandemic.

Approximately 29% of 12th-graders, 18% of 10th-graders and 8% of 8th-graders had used marijuana sometime over the previous 12 months in 2023 – rates that remained relatively unchanged since 2021. Among all three grades combined, lifetime use of marijuana/hashish stood at 23%. The drops in marijuana use since the onset of the pandemic have marked the first substantial change in prevalence in over a decade, researchers said.

Meanwhile, the share of 12th-graders estimated to have used alcohol over the past 12 months decreased from 52% in 2022 to 46% in 2023. Past-year prevalence stood at 31% among 10th-graders and 15% among eighth-graders, while lifetime use among all students was 36%.

Nicotine vaping within the past year fell significantly among both 10th- and 12th-graders from 2022 to 2023, landing at 18% and 23%, respectively. It held fairly steady at 11% among students in eighth grade. Lifetime use among all three grades was 25%.

Past-Year Prevalence of Drug Use Among Teens



Other Drug and Substance Use Among Teens

Relatedly, lifetime cigarette use “trended slightly downward in all three grades” in 2023, according to a Monitoring the Future report on the latest survey results. Lifetime use among all grade levels was approximately 10%.

“Overall, cigarette prevalence in 2023 (was) at or near the lowest ever recorded by the survey since the start of the survey in 1975,” the report states.

Lifetime prevalence rates for other drugs across all three grade levels include:

- Cocaine - 1.1%
- Methamphetamine - 0.5%
- Heroin - 0.5%
- Hallucinogens (including LSD and psilocybin) - 4%

Among 12th-graders, past-year prevalence rates for select drugs include:

- OxyContin - 0.6%
- Vicodin - 0.6%
- Ecstasy (MDMA) - 0.7%
- Ketamine - 1%
- Any prescription drug (without doctor’s orders) - 4.1%

Digging Into Delta-8, aka ‘Diet Weed’

New to the survey in 2023 was asking 12th-graders about their use of delta-8 THC, which is a variant of the main psychoactive compound in cannabis and has been referred to as “diet weed.” Legal at the federal level due to a legislative loophole but not in all states, delta-8 has become accessible in places like gas stations, smoke shops and convenience stores. It comes in various forms, including gummy candies and flavored vaping devices.

More than 11% of 12th-grade students used delta-8 over the past 12 months in 2023, according to MTF estimates. Prevalence of delta-8 use was found to be higher among teens who lived in states that had not legalized recreational marijuana for adults.

“Potential health effects of delta-8, including dependence, are currently unknown,” the report states.

Spike in Legal Use of ADHD Medications

The share of 12th-grade students who had ever legally used drugs to treat attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder declined slightly in 2023 to 14.3% after jumping from 11% in 2021 to a high of 14.6% in 2022 – its largest single-year increase on record.

Lifetime prevalence among 8th-grade students declined from 12% in 2022 to 10% in 2023, while the percentage remained unchanged at close to 11% among 10th grade students in both 2022 and 2023.

“It is possible that the need for treatment of ADHD increased during the pandemic due to adolescents experiencing more stress during the pandemic,” the MTF report states. “Another possibility is that sheltering at home during the pandemic may have made any attention issues of adolescents more salient to their parents.”

Illicit Prescription Drug Use Down

Use of any prescription drug without a doctor’s orders among 12th-graders continued to hover around the lower level reached in 2021, after the pandemic took hold.

In 2023, the past-year prevalence of prescription medication use was 4% among 12th-grade students, compared with 5% in 2022 and 7.5% in 2020. Lifetime prevalence in 2023 was 8.5%, down from 14% in 2020.

Gov. Pillen outlines some funding levers in his quest to lower Nebraska property taxes

Written by Zach Wendling

BEATRICE — Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen said Friday he hopes to trim state spending by at least \$500 million in the next couple of years and capture more federal dollars for property tax relief.

Pillen made those commitments at the third of his property tax town halls, echoing a previous plan for tax relief that failed to garner enough senators' support this spring. The town halls are designed to drum up enough support so at least 33 lawmakers will support the governor during an expected special session for property tax relief.

"Some have said, 'Well, you know we've been talking about property tax for 60 years and it's the same old song,'" Pillen told the roughly three dozen people at the public library in Beatrice. "No, this song's different."

The Governor's Office on Friday announced the second leg of Pillen's property tax town halls for next Thursday and Friday:

- May 30 at noon — SCC Learning Center, 537 Main St., Plattsmouth.
- May 31 at 11:30 a.m. — Seward Memorial Library, 233 S. Fifth St., Seward.
- May 31 at 2 p.m. — Holthus Convention Center, Room I, 3130 Holen Ave., York.

Reduction goal: \$2 billion

When Pillen came into office, he said, he walked into a situation that "scared the bejesus" out of him, where the state's revenue coffers were plentiful but agencies wanted to increase spending.

This set him on a path to reduce 40% in property taxes, or about \$2 billion.

Lawmakers nearly took another major step in April, but State Sen. Lou Ann Linehan of Elkhorn, Revenue Committee chair, pulled her Legislative Bill 388 after it appeared to have fewer than 33 senators in support. That's the minimum number of votes required to end debate on heated measures.

"I've already told the Revenue Committee that we're going to be working this summer," she told the Nebraska Examiner after that vote.

The governor remained committed to calling for hard caps on local spending, at about 2% or 3%, and to front-load property tax credits, allowing taxpayers to capitalize immediately rather than applying later for credits based on how much income tax they pay.

State spending and sales taxes

To fund his ideas, Pillen wants to trim about \$500 million in state funding in the next couple of years that he said would enhance but not reduce state services. The state contracted with a Utah-based firm seeking to find similar efficiencies.

"We're just doing business practices of improving processes, streamlining, looking at things as a systems approach and making a difference," Pillen told reporters.

Pillen is also looking at about 120 sales tax exemptions that “pick winners and losers” and reviewing which should be eliminated, such as exemptions on pop and candy that were part of the latest tax package.

State Sen. Tom Brandt of Plymouth, who lives 10 miles east of Beatrice, gave his support for looking at sales tax exemptions, adding Nebraska leads nationwide in those carve-outs.

“The sky is not going to fall if we take this stuff,” Brandt said of the exemption on pop and candy.

Filling in for State Sen. Myron Dorn of Adams, who represents Beatrice but had a prior obligation, Brandt attended the town hall and said he trusts that the “49 personalities in the Legislature” will find a common sense solution for a governor who is “on the right track.”

“I’m fully in support of whatever we come up with, and I appreciate that the governor is asking you for input,” Brandt said.

In part, Pillen wants to reduce state government spending to what it was around 2012, during a deflationary period, and “correct those sins” when lawmakers increased obligations.

Another funding suggestion is a philosophical change away from what Pillen said is “goober politics” where some lawmakers believe they must curry political favors for reelection.

“There’s some senators who think their job is to take money to their community — that’s not Nebraska,” Pillen said. “That’s a different vision, different view.”

Federal funding, increased tax obligations

The governor is also seeking to increase how many federal dollars the state draws down, building off some successes in the past two years, including State Sens. Mike Jacobson of North Platte for hospital assessments; Anna Wishart of Lincoln for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics; and Dorn for nursing home assessments.

“Green light, pedal to the metal,” Pillen recalled telling his cabinet members on securing such funding this week. “No strings attached, but we have to get more than our fair share.”

“Sin taxes” might be increased, such as those on tobacco, vaping products or alcohol, as well as on agriculture inputs, Pillen said.

The governor also suggested a future plan could be the state taking on more, or all, of local obligations to fund K-12 education, similar to what happened with community colleges in 2023.

One man in the audience, who said he lives close to the Kansas border, said he’s worried Pillen’s 40% reduction to property taxes still wouldn’t be enough.

“Yeah, that helps, but it’s still not in the range of being competitive with our next-door neighbors,” the man said.

Pillen responded that he overall wants to decrease state taxes, noting that for surrounding states with no income or property taxes, they might have higher sales taxes as a tradeoff.

Unfunded and underfunded mandates

“Operation Clean the Closets Out” is also on the table, which Pillen described as outlining what unfunded mandates exist for county and city governments and undoing those. Pillen said approximately 22% of county government costs come from unfunded mandates.

“We have to get the unfunded mandates out, and same for cities,” Pillen said. “We have to say no. We have to clean up government.”

State Sen. Carol Blood of Bellevue, who ran against Pillen for governor two years ago, has tried for years to tackle unfunded and underfunded mandates, proposing a constitutional amendment that would let Nebraskans vote on ending future obligations unless they come with funding.

Blood said Friday that Pillen hasn’t reached out to her on the mandates. She said a list of them already exists because of previous legislative studies.

At a 2023 hearing, she pointed to many such mandates, including supervision and transportation of juvenile offenders, election ballot printing and autopsy or grand jury costs after a prisoner’s death.

“We know it’s a good idea, but nobody, nobody would listen to us,” Blood said.

She said the Legislature had a chance to act sooner but put good ideas “in the dumpster,” which is part of the reason she’s not willing to go into a special session.

“They say they want our ideas, but they don’t really,” Blood said. “I’m not going to have them shove something down my throat that I know is just going to make it harder for the middle class and people that are struggling financially.”

Summer special session goal

Special sessions cost thousands of dollars each day, which Blood said might be one reason to wait on proposals that might not be guaranteed to pass. Pillen dodged a question on special session costs, stating that “really good savings” could come from senators introducing fewer bills.

Asked why he thinks the town halls would change the spring outcome, Pillen told reporters he understands he faces a game of “33-17,” needing at least 33 votes but failing if 17 or more senators are opposed.

However, he said, he believes in the people of Nebraska and believes they must be part of a solution, which comes at the same time as an election year for some key senators who Pillen might need to support his tax proposals.

“If the citizens of Nebraska aren’t engaged with the members of the Unicameral, they can be rest assured special interest groups are, and they don’t have the citizens of Nebraska’s backs,” Pillen said.

Pillen said he expects to call a special session before school starts in August, scheduling around a summer trade mission to Indonesia.

“We will get it fixed, but we need your help,” Pillen said.

Nebraska traffic deaths on pace to reach new 5-year high

Written by Alex Vargas

Nebraska has seen a significant increase in the number of deaths from motor vehicle crashes in 2024 compared to 2023.

According to Nebraska Department of Transportation statistics, there have been 94 traffic deaths so far this year. At this point last year, there had been 72 deaths recorded.

Most of that 30% increase has occurred on rural roadways — there have only been four fatalities in Lincoln this year, while that number was three at this point last year.

The five-year average through May 24 in rural areas is 53 fatalities, while on urban roads, it's 24.

That's typically because higher speed limits in rural areas increases the severity of those crashes, according to NDOT Highway Safety Administrator Bill Kovarik.

This year that gap has widened, with 68 fatalities on rural roads and 26 fatalities in urban areas as of May 24.

"It's driver behavior going in the wrong direction again," Kovarik said, pointing to several possible factors.

The first is the use of seat belts, which have been shown to reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45% for somebody in the front seat of a vehicle, according to the National Highway Safety Administration.

Seat belt usage is particularly important when it comes to crashes at higher speeds, which can lead to occupants being tossed out of a vehicle if they're not properly restrained, significantly increasing the chances of death.

Kovarik said that in many of the fatal accidents, those killed were not wearing a seat belt.

"Any little mistake you make going 75 miles an hour, there's typically going to be a fatality," he said. "We just need to get everybody wearing their seat belts again. I think that would help considerably."

Driver impairment is another area of concern, Kovarik said.

According to the Lincoln Police Department's annual report, there were 1,244 DUIs in 2023, compared to the five-year average of 983 between 2018 and 2022.

Police Chief Michon Morrow said the department has worked to crack down on impaired driving by participating in several enforcement projects that fund overtime for officers.

"These (projects) likely prevent crashes and likely also saved lives," Morrow said at a news conference last month.

In April, 34-year-old Grabiell Revilla was charged with two counts of manslaughter after a crash near South 28th Street and Pine Lake Road that killed Omar Rios, 23, and Darien Rosales, 21.

Revilla is accused of being under the influence of alcohol when the Honda Pilot he was driving left the north side of Pine Lake Road, rolled and collided with a tree. Rios and Rosales were passengers in the vehicle.

First responders found Revilla unconscious in the driver's seat with an odor of alcohol, according to the probable cause affidavit.

A preliminary breath test revealed a blood alcohol level of .119%, more than double the legal limit.

"We have details that show around 30% or more of our fatalities are the result of impaired driving every year," Kovarik said.

Nebraska also has seen a 29% increase in fatal crashes involving motorcycles so far this year compared to this point in 2023, and a 36% increase from the five-year average as of May 24.

Motorcycle safety is something Lincoln mother Melissa Blakemore has worked to bring awareness to after her son, John Howell, was riding his motorcycle through the intersection of South 33rd Street and Nebraska Parkway and collided with a minivan that failed to yield the right of way.

Howell was in the hospital for a month after sustaining multiple facial fractures, a broken jaw, ribs, sternum, a brain bleed and a partially collapsed lung. He continues to recover and will require further rehab.

Blakemore said that a few extra moments looking out for motorcyclists could save lives.

"This can happen to any motorcyclist out there," she said.

Researchers urge immediate alcohol regulation to curb violence against women, kids

Written by Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education

Community organizations and researchers working in violence prevention and alcohol harm reduction are meeting this week to discuss the role of alcohol in violence against women and children and the policy and program responses needed to address this.

A review study published this month in *Global Health Action* on the impact on women from men's alcohol use, led by Dr. Ingrid Wilson, will be the focus of a roundtable discussion hosted by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) in Perth on Wednesday 29 May.

Community organizations and researchers are advocating for changes to alcohol laws to prioritize the prevention of violence against women and children, increased funding for women's services and alcohol and drug services, and targeted perpetrator programs that involve addressing alcohol and other drug use.

The study identified that globally, men's high-risk alcohol use contributes to intimate partner violence, yet interventions that target alcohol-related harms to women are scarce.

Caterina Giorgi, CEO of the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), said, "We know that alcohol is a significant contributor to violence, and addressing the role of alcohol is one of the levers that we can use to help keep women and children safe."

She continued, "This is why this week, a range of researchers from across the world and community sector organizations who are working on the ground, are coming together at this moment of crisis. We will talk about what more can be done to help to keep women and children safe and to reduce the impact that alcohol has in increasing this violence."

More than 1 in 3 intimate partner violence incidents in Australia involve alcohol. Almost 1 in 5 (18%) women reported experiencing alcohol-related verbal abuse, 15% reported feeling fearful due to a partner's alcohol use, and 5% reported physical abuse.

In 2021–22, an estimated 348,300 women who experienced sexual assault by a man in the past ten years believed that alcohol or another substance contributed to their most recent incident of assault.

According to Giorgi, a hurdle to overcome is alcohol companies that continue to hamper policy progress on the commercial drivers of violence.

She said, "There are alcohol lobby groups, large alcohol retailers, and large alcohol companies who do all they can to try and undermine any policy development. There are groups that have actively been trying to stop state and territory governments from updating their laws to include common sense measures to reduce the harm from the delivery of alcohol."

The experts are urging governments to consider the link between alcohol accessibility and violence when developing liquor laws, and to prioritize the safety of women and children.

Lorraine Keane, CEO of Holyoake, a non-profit organization that provides alcohol and other drug, mental health counseling, and support services, said, "A strong and consistent relationship

between alcohol use and violence against women has been clearly established in research conducted over the last three decades."

She added, "We are calling on the government to acknowledge the significant impact alcohol has on family violence and to put more of a spotlight on alcohol policy change that fosters harm minimization."

Dr. Ingrid Wilson is an Assistant Professor at the Singapore Institute of Technology and Adjunct Research Fellow at the Judith Lumley Center, La Trobe University. She refers to global alcohol-driven partner violence as "endemic" and mostly hidden.

"Our review of global research shows us that women are affected severely by the physical violence that they experience from an alcohol-affected partner.

But what is less well-known is women's experience of other forms of violence and control from an intimate partner who has been drinking, including economic abuse, reproductive harm and mental ill health. The impacts are devastating and far reaching," Wilson said.

According to the study led by Dr. Wilson, alcohol-related actions by alcohol-affected men include harm to women in the form of:

- General aggression and violence (e.g., use of weapons, verbal aggression)
- Sexual coercion/violence (e.g., forced sex, refusal to use a condom)
- Alcohol-related economic abuse and related behavior (e.g., diversion of household spending on alcohol)
- Alcohol-related controlling actions (e.g., jealousy, restricting activity)
- Physical health (e.g., death, STI infection, injury)
- Reproductive harm (e.g., unwanted pregnancy)
- Mental ill health (e.g., fear, anxiety)
- Relationship and family (e.g., harm to children)
- Social harm (e.g., humiliation, social isolation)

The roundtable will facilitate a discussion among researchers and community organizations regarding the link between alcohol and violence against women and children, as well as the necessary policy and program responses to prevent this violence.

2 Nebraska deputies suffer minor injuries as dozens of juveniles try to flee party at an Airbnb

Written by McKenzy Parsons

NANCE COUNTY, Neb. — Two Nance County deputies were injured as dozens of juveniles attempted to flee the scene of a large party at an Airbnb on Friday.

According to the Nance County Sheriff's Office's Facebook post, the incident happened at an Airbnb in the southwestern rural part of the county.

There was a report of a party with loud music and multiple minors drinking alcohol.

When deputies arrived, they said they saw over 100 people and over 20 vehicles at the property.

Partygoers began fleeing on foot and some into vehicles.

The post said, the vehicles began driving recklessly as they tried to flee the scene, and during that time, two deputies were struck.

Eight of the fleeing vehicles either crashed in a ditch or got stuck near the property.

The post said, deputies found several of the people who were at the party, and they identified they were all under the age of 21.

The Airbnb was rented by an 18-year-old, and deputies said the estimated damage to the property which included graffiti and damage to furniture and floors will cost about \$3,000.

Over 30 citations for minor in possession of alcohol were issued, and other charges are pending.

Nance County Sheriff's Office said, both of the deputies suffered minor injuries.

If anyone has any information about the incident, they are asked to contact the Nance County Sheriff's Office at 308-536-2452.

'There's no fairness': Family of wrong-way crash victim fights for stricter penalties

Written by Maddie Augustine

OMAHA, Neb. — Days before a DUI suspect heads to court for a deadly crash, one of the victim's family calls for justice.

Investigators said 25-year-old Maison King was driving drunk on the wrong side of I-80 in April when he hit a car nearly head-on, killing two people and injuring two others.

Twenty-six-year-old Ross Lewis was one of the two people killed. His sister, Amy Schipporeit, said he was a protector of everyone he loved and stopped to help anyone who needed it. She said they never want another family to have to feel the pain they do, that's why she said Nebraska needs stricter punishments for DUI crashes like the one that killed Lewis.

"Someone could do this and get two to five years, somebody else could do it and get 18," Schipporeit said.

On April 13, Jessica Mutchler said she and her boyfriend, Lewis, were taking an Uber home after a night out.

"He kept squeezing me onto him, like, squeezing me into him randomly at points in the car ride saying, I love you. Are you OK?" Mutchler said.

But just minutes into the ride, something wasn't right.

"I feel the car slowing down," Mutchler said. "And one of the guys up front said something about, is he going the wrong way?"

Mutchler said she looked up and saw headlights coming straight at them through the front windshield, and their Uber driver, 30-year-old Kyle Arnold, tried to move over but there were cars already stopped next to him.

"I don't remember anything from the headlights coming at us. Ross grabbing me and then waking up in the hospital," Mutchler said.

Police said those headlights were 25-year-old Maison King driving the wrong way down I-80, hitting Arnold's vehicle and killing Lewis and Arnold in the crash.

"I asked her again, Where's Ross? And she's like, Jess, he didn't make it," Mutchler said.

Mutchler and a third passenger in the Uber were also injured. Mutchler was facing several life-threatening injuries.

"I was bleeding internally from all my lacerations, and then they said they had to do CPR and revive me once or once or twice," Mutchler said.

It left Lewis' loved ones heartbroken.

"He's not someone I'll ever forget," Mutchler said.

"There's not a day that goes by that we don't think of him or miss him," Schipporeit said.

And they have questions. Schipporeit said someone reported King driving in the wrong direction nearly six miles before he stuck the couple's Uber.

"We can send out alerts for Amber Alerts and all this stuff," Schipporeit said. "How is there not, like, something that comes up in a map that it's, like, hazard wrong-way driver?"

Schipporeit said she wants changes made to the punishments possible for drunk driving cases like the one that killed her brother.

"There's just no standard," Mutchler said. "It's just at the discretion of whatever judge likes it. And I don't think that's fair."

She said the couple made the right decision that night to call an Uber and hopes others will continue to do the same.

"Just don't chance it. Like, even if you've only had a couple, call a friend, get a ride, call an Uber. It's just not worth it," she said.

Mutchler is still recovering from her injuries, with an eighth surgery scheduled for this month.

King will be in court on Tuesday facing two counts of motor vehicle homicide-DUI.

Lincoln hookah bar's liquor license suspended after shooting, repeated security issues

Written by Alex Vargas

The Nebraska Liquor Control Commission voted Tuesday to suspend the Royal Hookah Bar & Lounge's liquor license for 60 days following several security issues at the bar, including the fatal shooting of a 32-year-old man in April by a security guard.

The commission also placed a mandatory closing time of 1 a.m. on the bar, which will only be able to sell its hookah products during the suspension. The area around the bar will also be monitored during operating hours and any future violations will result in another hearing, according to the commission.

"This is one of the biggest (suspensions) I have seen," said Hobert Rupe, executive director of the commission.

Greg Little, 32, was a patron at the bar located near 16th and O streets when he was shot and killed by a security guard outside of the bar on April 7 at about 3 a.m. after a dispute over cutting in line, police say.

They say three security guards working at the bar attempted to intervene and that Little, or someone else in his group, grabbed a baton from one of them. The altercation spilled outside, and a skirmish ensued as the guards tried to retrieve the baton.

A 24-year-old security guard fired four shots, hitting Little in the arm and upper chest. He was taken to a local hospital, where he died from his injuries.

Police haven't identified the man who fired the shots or the Omaha-based private security company he worked for.

The Lancaster County Attorney's Office announced last week that no criminal charges will be filed against the security guard.

The fatal shooting was the latest incident in a string of crowd control and other issues at the hookah bar.

Since 2022, the location has had 36 calls of service, including Little's death and 15 instances of a disturbance, according to LPD records.

In January, the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission added a condition to the bar's license that there could be no violations for one year from the date ordered.

The condition was added after a situation in October when a crowd of people tried to force their way into the establishment during a high-capacity night. The Lincoln Police Department had to be called to help regain order.

Jamil Khoudeida, the owner of the bar, was at Tuesday's hearing and said the bar had cut ties with the security company that was being used the night of Little's shooting — the second security company the bar had used since October.

Khoudeida's attorney Matt Kosmicki said the business will no longer work with armed security guards and will instead employ its own security guard on staff.

"They are looking to make improvements to their business practices downtown," Kosmicki said.

The security guard who shot Little was armed with multiple guns. From video footage obtained by the Journal Star, the guard dropped one of the guns during a fight with another man, then shot Little as he reached to the ground.

Lincoln Police and the Lancaster County Attorney's Office have said that DNA consistent with Little was found on the trigger guard and slide area of the gun.

Khoudeida told the commission that the security company had told him they had "Omaha security experience." He was not sure if they had any other training.

"I trusted them," Khoudeida said. "I did not know he had that many guns."

Khoudeida did know they were armed every time they worked at the bar, however, and said the bar had input into how they operated at the venue.

The establishment was an outlier compared to the rest of Lincoln's downtown bar scene, where most security staff is either not armed or armed with non-lethal weapons.

LPD alcohol investigator Scott Parker testified at Tuesday's hearing, saying he did not know of another venue in Lincoln with armed security.

After the shooting, Khoudeida voluntarily implemented new hours at the bar that are similar to other bars along O Street that close at 2 a.m.

But the commission's ruling will force them to roll that closing time back even further.

Prior to the shooting, the bar would routinely stay open past 2 a.m. for customers to purchase and consume hookah products after they stopped selling alcohol.

Aaron Baney, an LPD officer who is assigned to patrol that stretch of O Street, said during Tuesday's hearing that most of the calls to the Royal Hookah Bar & Lounge were after 2 a.m.

Shannon Nyhoff, the legal enforcement administrator for the commission, says she does not remember a security staff member killing someone in the past 10 years.

In August 2023, a security guard at a different bar was found to have used a baseball bat on a patron excessively and that bar had its liquor license suspended for 25 days.

Earlier this year, another bar was handed a 25-day suspension after security used mace on a patron.

Nyhoff also cited a couple of 2020 cases where establishments had crowd control and security issues that resulted in their licenses being given up or denied.

"You can implement any system you want, but it depends how well-trained your employees are," Baney said.