

Excessive Alcohol Use: A Public Health Concern in New York State

By Jennifer Faringer

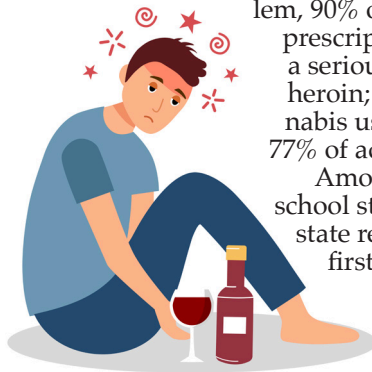
Alcohol Awarene Month in April opportunity to sider the risks associat with excessive alcohol use.

According to the Dietary Guide-lines for Americans, 2020-25, individuals should limit their alcohol intake to no more than one drink a day for women and no more than two drinks a day for men.

Women who are pregnant are recommended to abstain from alcohol throughout the duration of their pregnancy to ensure the healthiest outcome for their child. Excessive alcohol use can result in injuries and violence and is responsible for a multitude of health risks, including an increase in the risk of cancer.

Consider these additional alarming statistics for New York state:

- More than 8,050 New Yorkers die each year due to excessive alcohol use.
 - Nearly 1 in 5 adults reported binge drinking in 2024.
 - Among the two million adults who reported binge drinking, 25% binged at least four times a month and consume at least seven drinks per occasion.
 - Excessive drinking equates to roughly \$843 in preventable costs per taxpayer.
- Despite its proven dangers, the perception of risks associated with alcohol use remains low and many perceive it as less harmful than other drugs. When asked which drugs they see as a serious health prob-



lem, 90% of adults believed that prescription opioid misuse was a serious health problem; 88% heroin; 83% vaping; 40% cannabis use; while comparatively 77% of adults said alcohol use.

Among teens, 13.9% of high school students in New York state reported having their first drink before age 13 compared to 15% for the United States overall.

Research tells us that those who start drinking before age 15 are 3.5 times more likely to report having an alcohol use disorder than those who delay first use until 21 or later. Use of alcohol or other drugs before that time interferes with the normal development of the brain which is not fully developed until the age of 25. Each year, more than 100 New Yorkers under 21 die due to alcohol use from motor vehicle crashes, alcohol poisoning, suicides and homicides.

To learn more about the risks and perceptions around alcohol and other drug misuse, visit our website at www.ncadd-ra.org. To attend our community workshops or request a presentation, email me at jfaringer@depaul.org.



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