

## Costs of Underage Alcohol Consumption and Adult Misuse in Massachusetts

Here are some data specific to Massachusetts to consider:

- In 2012, underage drinkers consumed 9.3% of all alcohol sold in Massachusetts, totaling \$344 million in sales (in 2013 dollars). These sales provided profits of \$168 million to the alcohol industry.<sup>1</sup>
- Annual sales of alcohol consumed by youth in Massachusetts averaged \$1,370 per underage drinker. Underage drinkers were heavier consumers than adults. They drank an average of 3.7 drinks per day; in contrast, legal customers consumed only 1.8 drinks per day.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2013, underage drinking cost the citizens of Massachusetts \$1.2 billion. Youth violence (homicide, suicide, aggravated assault) and traffic crashes attributable to alcohol use by underage youth in Massachusetts represent the largest costs for the state. Among teen mothers, fetal alcohol syndrome alone cost Massachusetts \$20 million.<sup>1,2</sup>
- In 2015, almost 34% of MA high school students reported current alcohol use, and over 17% reported binge drinking.<sup>3</sup> Each of our communities are battling high rates of underage drinking and other drug use.
- In Massachusetts, persons under 21 years of age are permitted to consume alcohol on non-alcohol selling private premises with parental consent.<sup>4</sup>
- Massachusetts does not have a law that prohibits internal possession or consumption of alcohol by a minor.<sup>5</sup>
- Alcohol-impaired traffic fatality rates in Massachusetts are higher than the national rate (2011-2015).<sup>6</sup>
- There are no taxes, fees or fines dedicated to funding underage drinking prevention in the State of Massachusetts.<sup>7</sup>
- More than 45,000 Massachusetts drivers have three or more OUI convictions. More than 2,500 drivers have more than five. In fact, one driver in the state had 21 convictions.<sup>8</sup>
- Underage drinking is widespread in Massachusetts. Approximately 251,000 underage persons drink each year in Massachusetts. In 2011 and 2013, Massachusetts students in grades 9 to 12 reported the following:<sup>1</sup>
  - 63.2% had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more days during their life.
  - 14.6% had their first drink of alcohol, other than a few sips, before age 13.
  - 35.6% had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more occasions in the past 30 days.
  - 18.9% had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row (binge drinking) in the past 30 days.
- Excessive alcohol consumption cost Massachusetts over \$5.6 billion dollars in 2010, equaling \$861 per capita in the state – or about \$1.93 for every drink sold.<sup>9</sup>

### Citations:

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