

Underage Drinking in Minnesota

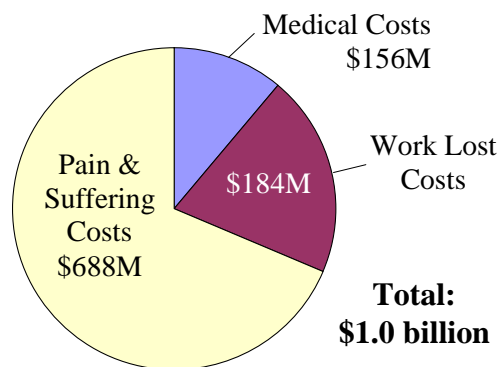
The Facts

Tragic health, social, and economic problems result from the use of alcohol by youth. Underage drinking is a causal factor in a host of serious problems, including homicide, suicide, traumatic injury, drowning, burns, violent and property crime, high risk sex, fetal alcohol syndrome, alcohol poisoning, and need for treatment for alcohol abuse and dependence.

Problems and Costs Associated with Underage Drinking in Minnesota

Underage drinking cost the citizens of Minnesota \$1.0 billion in 2007. These costs include medical care, work loss, and pain and suffering associated with the multiple problems resulting from the use of alcohol by youth.¹ This translates to a cost of \$1,993 per year for each youth in the State. Minnesota ranks 35th highest among the 50 states for the cost per youth of underage drinking. Excluding pain and suffering from these costs, the direct costs of underage drinking incurred through medical care and loss of work cost Minnesota \$340 million each year.

**Costs of Underage Drinking
Minnesota 2007**



Costs of Underage Drinking by Problem, Minnesota 2007

Problem	Total Costs (in millions)
Youth Violence	\$656.3
Youth Traffic Crashes	\$116.9
High-Risk Sex, Ages 14-20	\$48.8
Youth Property Crime	\$48.6
Youth Injury	\$47.5
Poisonings and Psychoses	\$6.2
FAS Among Mothers Age 15-20	\$14.8
Youth Alcohol Treatment	\$89.1
Total	\$1,028.2

Youth violence and traffic crashes attributable to alcohol use by underage youth in Minnesota represent the largest costs for the State. However, a host of other problems contribute substantially to the overall cost. Among teen mothers, fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) alone costs Minnesota \$14.8 million.

Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence

and are two and a half times more likely to become abusers of alcohol than those who begin drinking at age 21.² In 2007, 2,448 youth 12 - 20 years old were admitted for alcohol treatment in Minnesota, accounting for 9% of all treatment admissions for alcohol abuse in the State.³

Alcohol Consumption by Youth in Minnesota

Underage drinking is widespread in Minnesota. Approximately 196,000 underage youth in Minnesota drink each year. In 2007, according to self-reports by Minnesota students:⁴

- 63% of female and 63% of male 12th graders and 39% of female and 36% of male 9th graders reported having used any alcohol at some time in the past 12 months.
- 14% of female and 21% of male 12th graders and 4% of female and 5% of male 9th graders reported frequent use of alcohol (drinking 20 or more times) in the past 12 months.
- 24% of female and 34% of male 12th graders and 12% of female and 13% of male 9th graders reported consuming five or more drinks in a row within the past two weeks.

In 2007, underage drinkers consumed 11.4% of all alcohol sold in Minnesota, totaling \$336 million in sales. These sales provided profits of \$165 million to the alcohol industry.¹

Harm Associated with Underage Drinking in Minnesota

Underage drinking in Minnesota leads to substantial harm due to traffic crashes, violent crime, property crime, unintentional injury, and risky sex.

- During 2007, an estimated 32 traffic fatalities and 1,800 nonfatal traffic injuries involved an underage drinking driver.
- In 2006, an estimated 14 homicides; 12,100 nonfatal violent crimes such as rape, robbery and assault; and 31,600 property crimes including burglary, larceny, and car theft involved an underage drinking perpetrator.
- In 2006, an estimated 8 alcohol involved fatal burns, drownings, and suicides involved underage drinking.
- In 2006, an estimated 1,800 teen pregnancies and 8,400 risky sexual acts by teens involved alcohol.

Produced by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) with funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), November 2009.

¹ Miller, TR, Levy, DT, Spicer, RS, & Taylor, DM. (2006) Societal costs of underage drinking *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 67(4) 519-528.

² Grant, B.F., & Dawson, D.A. (1997). Age at onset of alcohol use and its association with DSM-IV alcohol abuse and dependence: Results from the Nation Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey. *Journal of Substance Abuse* 9: 103-110.

³ Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). (2007). *Substance Abuse Treatment by Primary Substance of Abuse, According to Sex, Age, Race, and Ethnicity*.

⁴ Minnesota Department of Education. (2007). Minnesota Student Survey, 1992-2007 Trends. [On-line]: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/mss/trendreports/finalmss1992to2007.pdf>