



April 2010

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## April is Alcohol Awareness Month

When many people think of alcohol abusers, they picture teenagers sneaking drinks before high school football games or at unsupervised parties. However, alcohol abuse is prevalent within many demographic groups in the United States.

In 2007, more than one fifth (23.3 percent) of persons aged 12 or older participated in binge drinking at least once in the 30 days prior to taking SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). This translates to about 57.8 million people. The rate in 2007 is similar to the rate in 2006 (23.0 percent).

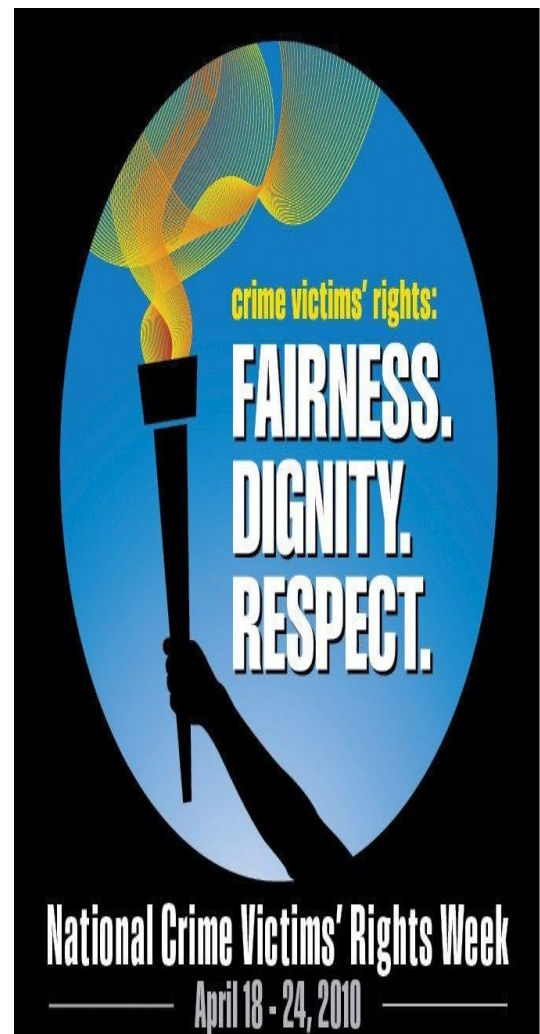
To recognize the serious problem of alcohol abuse, April is designated "Alcohol Awareness Month."

## National Victims' Rights Week April 18-24

The New Mexico Victim's Rights Legal Assistance Project is collaborating with the Corrections Department to pay tribute to crime victims and their families by hosting tree planting ceremonies at all the New Mexico state prisons on April 20. We invite everyone to join us in the tree planting ceremonies at each of the statewide prisons to commemorate, honor and reaffirm our commitment to protecting crime victims' rights. The trees will serve as a reminder to those who work and/or enter the prisons that crime victims wish to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect. It is a powerful message that reminds us all that every victim deserves our compassion and assistance to recover from the impact of crime, including full access to the criminal justice system.

For more information please call the Project at 505-292-2838. The non-profit New Mexico Victims' Rights Legal Assistance Project was started in 2003 with the purpose of providing victims of violent crime *pro bono* legal representation in New Mexico courts. The Project has successfully represented the interests of over 400 crime victims who needed legal representation to protect and enforce their constitutional and statutory rights. Too many times the victims of crime do not have a voice in a system created to protect all citizens, in reality, many victims are re-victimized as they try to navigate the criminal justice system after a violent crime has occurred with little, if any, knowledge of the how to assert their rights and have their voice heard.

Last year there were over 11,000 violent crimes committed here in New Mexico, these include: homicide, rape, domestic violence, child abuse, armed robbery, assault and vehicular homicide. These crimes involved over 11,000 new crime victims – the ripple effect is vast - they affect family and friends, neighbors, businesses, coworkers and even strangers. For more information please visit our website at [www.nm-victimrights.org](http://www.nm-victimrights.org).



## Guns Now Allowed in NM Bars—With a Catch

Individuals with concealed-carry permits can now bring their guns into establishments in New Mexico that serve alcohol, but the state's governor says they can't drink if they do so, the Gov Monitor reported March 12.

A bill signed into law by Gov. Bill Richardson lifts a ban on guns in establishments with beer and wine licenses.

However, Richardson also ordered the state Department of Public Safety to amend its regulations to explicitly prohibit alcohol consumption while carrying a gun, and urged state lawmakers to support the move.

## Open Invitation to all Albuquerque area Businesses

The DWI Resource Center, in partnership with the City of Albuquerque, extends an open invitation to the Albuquerque area business community to join our DWI Business Alliance. The DWI Business Alliance is an association of employers dedicated to reducing DWI death and injury in the City of Albuquerque through:

- Providing employees with a safe, drug and alcohol-free work environment;
- Encouraging individuals with substance abuse problems to seek help and return to work as productive members of the workforce;
- Participating in employee and supervisor training and education programs on workplace substance abuse;
- Working in partnership with community organizations on targeted DWI campaigns; Supporting programs to promote responsible social behavior off-the-job, such as designated driver or Safe Ride Home programs

DWI continues to be one of the most pressing social issues in the City of Albuquerque. Between 2001-2005, 46 percent of all motor vehicle fatalities in Bernalillo County were alcohol-involved, resulting in 168 deaths, and 3,769 injuries. In 2005 alone, the economic cost of impaired driving in Bernalillo County exceeded \$186 million, including increased taxes, business and medical costs, and insurance. Please update!

By joining the Alliance, you not only take tangible steps to reduce DWI death and injury in our community, you also promote your company as a socially responsible business to potential customers in and around the city. As part of the DWI Business Alliance, your company name and logo will appear in marketing materials, advertisements, and press releases promoting the Alliance to both the general public and business community. By displaying a DWI Business Alliance decal in your lobby or window, you will let your customers know that your business is taking active steps to reduce the social and economic impact of drunk driving in our community.

Take the first step today. **Call the DWI Resource Center at (505) 881-1084** to schedule a meeting with our staff and receive more information about the DWI Business Alliance **There is NO cost to join the alliance, and the benefits to your business are substantial.**

## New Mexico Ranks Second Lowest in the Nation for Underage Self-Purchase of Alcohol

National Survey Highlights Need for Adult Education in Reducing Access of Alcohol for Youths

*Santa Fe, New Mexico* – The New Mexico Behavioral Health Collaborative has received the results of a survey conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), which ranks New Mexico second lowest in the nation for underage self-purchase of alcohol.

The combined 2006 to 2008 data found the percentages of past month drinkers aged 12 to 20 who bought their own alcohol were among the lowest in Alaska (3.1 percent) and New Mexico (3.7 percent).

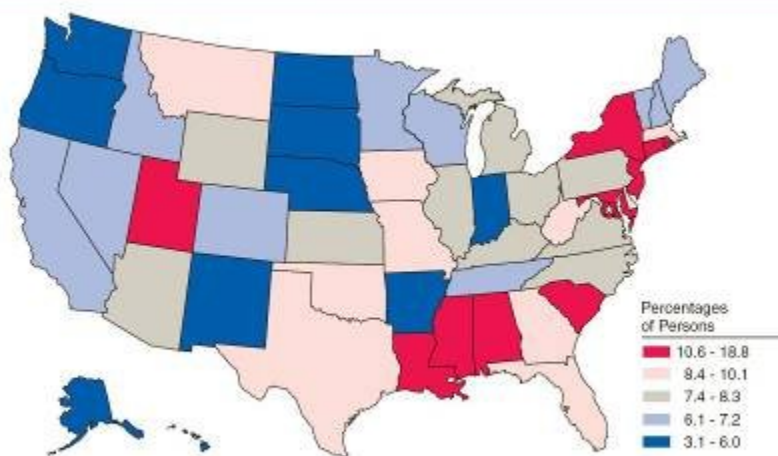
"This is far below the national average of 8.6 percent, which we are pleased with," said Linda Roebuck Homer, Collaborative CEO. "However we have more work to do in educating adults about the dangers of purchasing or providing alcohol to our underage citizens."

The same report found that more than a quarter of New Mexico's under age youth had drunk alcohol in the month prior to the survey, which is at the national average. The two survey results show the need to reduce the availability of alcohol to young people.

"This survey can help New Mexico raise awareness about underage drinking and develop effective approaches to prevent underage drinking," said Homer.

SAMHSA has launched a new series of national public service advertisements to encourage parents to talk to their children about drinking alcohol at an early age. The PSA campaign includes resources for parents that illustrate the short and long-term consequences of underage drinking and for tips on talking with their kids about alcohol. The campaign and study are being released in conjunction with Alcohol Awareness Month (April) and as part of the Surgeon General's "Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking."

Figure 2. Percentages of Past Month Drinkers Aged 12 to 20 Who Purchased Their Own Alcohol the Last Time They Drank, by State: 2006 to 2008



Source: 2006 to 2008 SAMHSA National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs).

"Prevention is the number one priority of SAMHSA, and reducing underage drinking is a key part of that effort" said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde, J.D. "The national educational campaign SAMHSA is undertaking with the Ad Council aims at bringing to bear the most effective weapon against underage drinking – conversations between parents and their children."

## Meth Damage to Fetal Brain Worse than Alcohol

A small study has found that babies exposed to methamphetamine and alcohol before birth have smaller caudate nucleus regions in the brain than non-exposed children or children exposed to alcohol only in the womb, Health-Day News reported March 17.

Researchers compared brain scans of 13 children exposed to alcohol before birth, 21 children exposed to meth and alcohol, and 27 children who were not exposed to either drug.

The caudate nucleus assists in learning, memory, motor control and motivation.

"We know that alcohol exposure is toxic to the developing fetus and can result in lifelong brain, cognitive and behavioral problems," said researcher Elizabeth Sowell of the University of California at Los Angeles. "In this study, we show that the effects of prenatal meth exposure, or the combination of meth and alcohol exposure, may actually be worse. Our findings stress the importance of drug abuse treatment for pregnant women."

## Drug Czar Warns on Drugged Driving

White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Gil Kerlikowske told an international conference that driving under the influence of prescription and illicit drugs is a growing problem, the New York Daily News reported March 10.

Appearing at a United Nations conference, Kerlikowske said that the number of drugged drivers may be rising even as drunk driving declines. He estimated that one in six weekend drivers in the U.S. is "under the influence of an illicit or licit drug." Marijuana is the most common drug used by drivers, but prescription-drug impairment also is common, he said.

Kerlikowske called for the U.N. Commission on Narcotic Drugs to address drugged driving at its 2011 meeting

## Any Drinking Raises Risks of Traffic Accidents, Researchers Say

Even one or two alcoholic drinks can increase the risk of getting into an automobile accident, even if it's not technically drunk driving, according to Italian researchers.

Reuters reported Sept. 10 that individuals who consumed one or two drinks within 2-6 hours of driving more than doubled their risk of getting into an accident. Having more than two drinks tripled the risk of a crash.

Researcher Stefano Di Bartolomeo of the Università degli Studi di Udine and colleagues drew their conclusions from interviews of emergency-room patients who had been in car crashes; drivers were asked about their alcohol and food consumption prior to the crash, as well as how much sleep they had gotten.

The study also found that drinking combined with sleep deprivation greatly increased the risk of a crash.

### Warning Signs of Alcohol Abuse

If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, you may have a problem with alcohol:

- Do you drink alone when you feel angry or sad?
- Does your drinking ever make you late for work?
- Do you ever drink after telling yourself you won't?
- Do you ever forget what you did while drinking?

People who abuse alcohol can be::

- college students who drink at local bars
- pregnant women who drink and put their babies at risk for fetal alcohol syndrome
- professionals who drink after a long day at work
- senior citizens who drink out of loneliness

## Raising Alcohol Taxes Reduces Excessive Drinking, Motor Vehicle Crashes and Other Alcohol-Related Harms

Raising alcohol excise taxes is a highly effective strategy for helping to prevent deaths due to excessive drinking in the United States, according to a systematic review published in the February 2010 issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. The review evaluated 73 published articles and reports that examined relationships between the price of alcohol, excessive drinking, and harmful consequences of excessive drinking, including motor vehicle crashes and alcohol-impaired driving.

**Higher alcohol prices or taxes were consistently related to:**

- Fewer motor vehicle crashes and deaths,
- Less alcohol-impaired driving,
- Lower levels of underage drinking, and
- Lower rates of violent crime, including homicide, assault, robbery, and rape.

• The review found that **raising the price of alcoholic beverages by 10 percent would reduce consumption by about 7 percent**. The review was led by CDC scientists and overseen by the Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Based on the strong evidence from this review, the Task Force recommends raising alcohol excise taxes to reduce excessive drinking and related harms.

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## Parents Waging a Lonely Battle—Or Not

About 20 percent of the parents surveyed by PATS believed that their children had gone beyond the experimental phase in use of alcohol or other drugs. However, almost half of these parents either did not take any action (25 percent) or waited for between a month and a year to address the perceived problem (22 percent).

Parents of children engaging in non-experimental drug use were less confident in their ability to influence their kids' drug-use decisions, according to the survey, and were more likely to believe that all teens will experiment with drugs and that occasional use of alcohol or marijuana is tolerable.

"Parents with drug-using kids have never been served by our field," said Pasierb. "They're the outliers, and they should be the focus." PDFAs have developed a program called Time to Act that is designed to improve parental knowledge about teen alcohol and other drug use, set rules and boundaries, intervene when necessary, and seek outside help when needed.

"Government prevention programs have all been defunded, and society is not on our side. It's all on the parents now," said Pasierb. "Parents are convinced that their kids are getting all this (drug prevention) in school, and it's just not true. The doctor, school, or football coach is not going to step in."



**DWI**  
Resource Center, Inc.

**About Us**

The DWI Resource Center is a tax-exempt 501(c)3 New Mexico organization formed to reduce the social and economic impact of DWI through public awareness, education, prevention programs and research. The Center also provides assistance to victims and serves as a central clearinghouse of information on DWI and victims' rights.

**Research and Statistics**  
**Public Policy & Law**  
**Victims' Rights Legal Assistance Project**  
**Court Monitoring**  
**Drug-Free Workplace Programs**  
**Retailers For Responsibility**  
**Victim Impact Panels**

For more information about the Center or to make a contribution, please call us at (505) 881-1084, or visit our website at [www.dwiresourcecenter.org](http://www.dwiresourcecenter.org).