

Drug Free Workplace Conference

The DWI Resource Center is hosting a DFWP Breakfast Conference for our Business Alliance Members. Cost is \$10.00 for Alliance members and \$25.00/person for non members.

When: February 24, 2010

Time: 7:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.

Where: MCM Elegante 2020 Menaul NE

For questions and more information, please call (505) 881-1084

Alcohol Abuse Costs New Mexico \$2.5 Billion Annually, Study Says

The economic costs of alcohol abuse in New Mexico topped \$2.5 billion in 2006 -- not to mention the nearly 1,000 lives lost to alcohol-related diseases, auto crashes, and other consequences -- according to the [New Mexico Department of Health](#).

Epidemiologist Jim Roeber said the toll from drinking is far greater than most people believe.

"Alcohol abuse is a major contributing factor in many motor vehicle fatalities,

but that is not the only place where it can cause injuries and death," he said. "Alcohol abuse can play a role in fires, falls, drug overdose, and drowning, and can contribute to violence such as child abuse, homicide, suicide and personal assault."

Alcohol-related chronic liver disease is the leading cause of alcohol-related death in New Mexico, Roeber added.

Phone App Allows Drinkers to Track Consumption

The U.K. health ministry has released a software application for iPhone and Windows phones intended to empower users to keep better track of their drinking, the [BBC](#) reported Dec. 1.

The free [Drinks Tracker](#) app generates graphs based on individual alcohol consumption and advises users when they should cut back on drinking. Available from the National Health Service's Choices website, the software was released as part of the government's Know Your Limits campaign to promote responsible alcohol use.

"It is all too easy to lose track of how much you drink. So as the festive parties build up, this innovative tool will help people keep tabs on their drinking -- wherever they are," said U.K. public-health minister Gillian Merron. "Sticking within the recommended limits means you reduce the risk of serious conditions such as mouth cancer and strokes."

For those without Web-enabled phones, the NHS offers a text-messaging service with advice on moderate drinking.

Drug Users Rank Alcohol, Tobacco Among Most Dangerous Drugs

Researchers who surveyed drug users in the U.K. found a high level of awareness about the harms associated with use of various substances, [Medical News Today](#) reported Nov. 26.

Asked to rank 20 drugs based on their harms, 1,500 drug users placed heroin, crack and cocaine as the top three most dangerous drugs; alcohol was ranked fifth, and tobacco ninth. Marijuana was ranked 18th.

The survey was conducted by University College London (UCL) and Imperial College London researchers. The ranking scale used in the study was based on a framework proposed by David Nutt, until recently the British government's top advisor on drug issues.

"Given that the (U.K.'s) Misuse of Drugs Act aims to signal to young people the harmfulness of drugs, this suggests a flaw with the current classification of drugs. We found that drug users rated legal substances such as alcohol and tobacco as more harmful than Class A substances like LSD and ecstasy," said UCL

researcher Celia Morgan, who added that the study found "a high correlation between harm ratings by users and those made previously by scientific experts across all substances, suggesting users are well informed about the harms of drugs."

Researchers also queried drug users on the perceived benefits of the drugs they took; LSD, marijuana and ecstasy were ranked highest in terms of their short- and long-term benefits by users. "We recommend that future health campaigns consider whether to include the benefits of some drugs," said Morgan. "By only citing harms, such campaigns likely represent -- from a user's perspective -- an unbalanced view and may mean that the overall message is more likely to be ignored."

The 20 substances in the study were alcohol, alkyl nitrates, amphetamines, anabolic steroids, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, buprenorphine, marijuana, cocaine, crack, ecstasy, GHB, heroin, LSD, ketamine, khat, 4-MTA, methylphenidate, solvents, street methadone, and tobacco.

Legal Blood-Alcohol Limit to be Lowered in Quebec

Quebec will be joining the rest of Canada by lowering its legal blood-alcohol level for motorists from 0.08 percent to 0.05 percent, [CBC News](#) reported Nov. 30.

The decision is in line with the Quebec Road Safety Task Force's recent recommendations. The move also came on the heels of the death of seven people in car accidents over one week-end in Quebec.

Drivers in Quebec will lose their license for 24 hours if they are found with a BAC of more than .05, said Julie Boulet, the province's transport minister. Such drivers will not lose any points on their license or have to pay a fine, however.

Harsher penalties will still apply to drivers with blood-alcohol levels over .08 percent.

Drivers younger than age 22 will not be allowed to have any traces of alcohol in their system, said Boulet.

Skeptics such as Thomas Brown, researcher at the Douglas Mental Health Institute in Montreal, say the legislation needs to be backed up by additional enforcement in order to be effective.

"Simply changing the laws makes a statement about what is acceptable social behavior, but it doesn't necessarily change people's behavior," said Brown.



Winter Weather Driving Tips:



▽ Reduce Your Speed

The best accident prevention on snow and ice is to SLOW DOWN and leave plenty of room between you and the vehicle in front of you for emergencies

▽ Practice Good Winter Driving Techniques

Keep your gas tank full, turn on your head lights, keep your windshield washer fluid full with antifreeze, keep winter driving chains in your vehicle, have a winter survival kit which includes: flashlight, hand warmer packets, first aid supplies, high energy snacks and read your owners manual for special instructions on driving 4-wheel drive vehicles and vehicles with ABS on snow and ice.

▽ Avoid driving into a snow cloud

Large vehicles, such as semi-trailer trucks and snow plows, may produce dense clouds of blowing snow that make it difficult for drivers to see. When drivers encounter snow clouds, they should stay back to avoid the cloud.

▽ Plan ahead and be patient

Delays are common during bad weather. Leave a little early and be patient with delays.

▽ Check before you pass

Know where a snow plow and blade are before trying to pass. On multi-lane highways, the plow can be in your blind spot. Before attempting to pass, make sure it is safe.

▽ Pay attention to weather forecasts– trust them

Winter storms in New Mexico can become severe very quickly, so stay tuned to weather forecasts when planning your trip.

▽ Don't use cruise control

Never use cruise control when the roads are in slippery conditions. Using your cruise control can reduce your control of the vehicle if your tires begin to skid or slip.

▽ Know your current road conditions

Visit the NMDOT website for current road advisory information at

www.nmshtd.state.nm.us

www.nmroads.com

Or call 1 (800) 432-4269 or 511

▽ Wear your seatbelt

Wear your seatbelt and make sure all passengers also "buckle up."

Drinking Coffee When Drunk Creates False Sense of Sobriety

Drinking coffee not only doesn't sober you up when you are drunk but can make you reckless by imparting a false sense of sobriety, according to animal researchers at Temple University.

The [BBC](http://www.bbc.com) reported Dec. 9 that a study led by researcher Thomas Gould found that mice given a combination of alcohol and caffeine became more alert and relaxed, yet also failed to avoid shocks in a maze that alcohol-free mice were able to safely navigate.

"The myth about coffee's sobering powers is particularly important to debunk because the co-use of caffeine and alcohol could actually lead to poor decisions with disastrous outcomes," said Gould. "People who feel tired and intoxicated after consuming alcohol may be more likely to acknowledge that they are drunk. Conversely, people who have consumed both alcohol and caffeine may feel awake and competent enough to handle potentially-harmful situations, such as driving while intoxicated or placing themselves in dangerous social situations."

Rate of Alcohol-Related Deaths Declines, DOT Reports

Almost 1,300 fewer Americans died in alcohol-related crashes last year than in 2007, and fatality rates dropped by 20 percent or more in Vermont, Wisconsin, Maine, Nebraska, Minnesota, Connecticut, South Dakota, Arizona and the District of Columbia, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

The [Associated Press](#) reported Dec. 7 that the rate of drunk-driving fatal crashes declined from 0.43 per 100 million miles traveled to 0.40 per 100 million miles between 2007 and 2008.

However, the rate of alcohol-related fatalities rose in New Hampshire, Kansas, Wyoming, Rhode Island, Idaho, Oklahoma and Colorado, DOT reported.

Tolerance Equals More Consumption for Older Problem Drinkers

Adults over age 60 who have alcohol problems tend to drink more than their younger counterparts, probably because they have developed greater tolerance for alcohol, according to researchers at Ohio State University.

[Science Daily](#) reported Nov. 21 that a study found that alcohol-dependent individuals over age 60 consumed an average of more than 40 drinks per week, compared to 25-35 among younger people with similar levels of dependence. Researchers said that older drinkers developed tolerance for alcohol, meaning they had to drink more to get the same effects.

The older drinkers also reported more monthly binge-drinking episodes. "A combination of high levels of drinking and the physiological effects of aging are particularly problematic for older adults," noted researcher Linda Ginzer.


Younger Americans were still more likely to have drinking problems than older Americans, however.

Researchers found that binge drinking was more common among Americans classified as alcohol abusers than among those who were heavy drinkers but not seen as problem drinkers. "That suggests binge drinking may be a better measure of problem drinking than just the total amount of drinks someone has per week," Ginzer said.

The findings, drawn on findings from the [National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions](#), were unveiled at a recent meeting of the [Gerontological Society of America](#).

Mark your calendars!

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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.