

Conclusion

The social, economic and health costs of substance abuse in Wisconsin are high. Wisconsin has one-and-a-half times the national rate of arrests for OWI (operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated) and more than three times the national rate of arrests for liquor law violations. For most years since 2000, Wisconsin's rate of deaths due to alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes was higher than the national average as well.

These high rates of alcohol-related consequences are not surprising given Wisconsin's high rate of alcohol consumption. The rate of per capita alcohol consumption in Wisconsin is among the highest in the nation. Data for 2008 show that Wisconsin has a higher prevalence of alcohol use and binge drinking among adults compared to other states. Rates of underage drinking (by youth ages 12-20) and underage binge drinking are also higher compared to rates for the United States. Wisconsin has the highest rate of drinking and driving in the nation.

As shown in this report, Wisconsin has recently made progress in reducing alcohol consumption among youth. For the first time since 1999, Wisconsin's rate of drinking among high school students fell below the national average in 2009. Combined with a steadily increasing age of initiation, and falling rates of underage binge drinking, Wisconsin appears to be improving in terms of youth alcohol use.

Alcohol-related motor vehicle deaths have also decreased. In 2008, Wisconsin's rate of alcohol-related motor vehicle fatalities fell below the national rate for the first time in many years.

Wisconsin rates of drug-related deaths and drug law arrests are lower than national averages. However, the rate of drug-related deaths in Wisconsin increased steadily from 2000 before declining in 2008. The 2008 rate was twice what it was at the beginning of the decade, suggesting a new public health priority for the state.

Misuse and abuse of pharmaceutical drugs appears to be a growing problem nationally and in Wisconsin. There is a lack of data concerning the prevalence and burden associated with their misuse and abuse. As a result, this report does not provide substantial information regarding this problem. The State Council on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse has established a Controlled Substances Prevention Sub-Committee that is examining this issue. The Sub-Committee is expected to issue a report in June 2011 highlighting Wisconsin's prevalence of and recommendations to reduce and prevent the abuse and misuse of pharmaceutical drugs. The Sub-Committee will identify prescription drugs that are most often abused in Wisconsin, including drugs of abuse with high consequences. The Sub-Committee will also examine the role of community coalitions, substance abuse prevention and treatment providers, law enforcement and the judicial system, the medical community, schools, and legislative and state agencies in preventing this abuse.

An important aspect of prevention services is the ability to track the needs of communities through epidemiological factors. Resources can then be allocated to address the problem using evidence-based programming. As part of Wisconsin's data-driven approach to prevention funding, an earlier version of this Profile helped to identify key consequences of alcohol and other drug abuse in the state. The priorities defined in this Profile (and the

Wisconsin Epidemiological Profile on Alcohol and Other Drug Use, 2010

earlier edition) are being used to assist local organizations/governments to address those specific consequences. These priorities are:

- Underage drinking (ages 12-20)
- Adult binge drinking (ages 18-34)
- Alcohol-related motor vehicle fatalities and injuries (especially among people ages 16 to 34)
- Drug-related deaths (with a focus on unintentional opioid-related overdoses and deaths among people ages 20-54).

The Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (funded by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) is providing additional funding for local communities to do in-depth needs assessments on the risks and protective factors associated with the documented consequences of alcohol and drug abuse. The *2010 Wisconsin Epidemiological Profile on Alcohol and Other Drug Use* focuses on key problem areas at both the statewide and local level to guide Wisconsin's funding decisions for the greatest potential impact.