



Public Health Law

Office for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

***Healthy People 2020* Law and Health Policy Project: Legal and Policy Resources Related to Substance Abuse**

The *Healthy People 2020* (HP2020) Substance Abuse and Health topic aims to “reduce substance abuse to protect the health, safety, and quality of life for all, especially children.”¹ The objectives address many areas, from steroid use² to underage drinking.³ Furthermore, several other topics in the HP2020 project include objectives that overlap with objectives in the substance abuse topic, indicating the importance of this issue.⁴ The report for the Substance Abuse Law and Health Policy Project, however, focuses solely on alcohol consumption. From 2006 to 2010, excessive alcohol consumption accounted for 1 in 10 deaths among adults aged 20–64 years.⁵ However, several evidence-based policies and legal interventions—such as those recommended by the Community Preventive Services Task Force for [Preventing Excessive Alcohol Consumption](#) and [Reducing Alcohol-Impaired Driving](#)—might work to achieve the goals of healthier, safer, and more livable communities.

This resource has been developed for members of the public interested in substance abuse and related topics. It lists legal and policy resources related to reducing alcohol-related deaths, decreasing the proportion of adolescents reporting use of alcohol, and reducing driving under the influence of alcohol.

Reducing Alcohol-Related Deaths

A variety of law and policy approaches might help reduce excessive alcohol use and thus decrease the number of alcohol-related deaths.⁶ The resources below explore some of these approaches, such as tax policy interventions and advertising bans.

- Alexander C. Wagenaar, Melvin D. Livingston & Stephanie S. Staras, [Effects of a 2009 Illinois Alcohol Tax Increase on Fatal Motor Vehicle Crashes](#), 105 AM. J. OF PUB. HEALTH 9, 1880–85 (Sept. 2015).
- Mandy Stahre, Jim Roeber, Dafna Kanny et al., [Contribution of Excessive Alcohol Consumption to Deaths and Years of Potential Life Lost in the United States](#), 11 PREVENTING CHRONIC DISEASE E109 (June 2014).



- Timothy S. Naimi, Jason Blanchette, Toben F. Nelson et al., [A New Scale of the US Alcohol Policy Environment and Its Relationship to Binge Drinking](#), 46 AM. J. OF PREVENTIVE MED. 10–16 (Jan. 2014).
- Randy W. Elder, Briana Lawrence, Aneeqah Ferguson et al., [The Effectiveness of Tax Policy Interventions Reducing Excessive Alcohol Consumption Related Harms](#), 38 AM. J. OF PREVENTIVE HEALTH 217–29 (Feb. 2010).
- William Hollingworth, Beth E. Ebel, Carolyn A. McCarty et al., [Prevention of Deaths from Harmful Drinking in the United States: The Potential Effects of Tax Increases and Advertising Bans on Young Drinkers](#), 67 J. OF STUDIES ON ALCOHOL 300–8 (Mar. 2006).

Reducing Alcohol Use Among Adolescents

Several objectives across *HP2020* focus on adolescents' alcohol consumption.⁷ Harmful results of underage drinking include death, serious injuries, impaired judgment, and brain development problems.⁸ The following resources address reducing adolescents' alcohol consumption.

- US DEP'T OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVS., [Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking](#) (June 2015).
- James C. Fell, Sue Thomas, Michael Scherer et al., [Scoring the Strengths and Weaknesses of Underage Drinking Laws in the United States](#), 7 WORLD MED. & HEALTH POLICY 28–58 (Mar. 2015). (online subscription required).
- [Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act](#), Pub. L. No. 109-422, 120 Stat. 2890 (Dec. 20, 2006).

Reducing Alcohol-Impaired Driving

The resources below consider policies that might reduce alcohol-impaired driving,⁹ such as ignition interlock policies¹⁰ and publicized sobriety checkpoint programs.¹¹

- NAT'L CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES, [State Ignition Interlock Laws](#), (updated Jan. 2016).
- Patrick M. Carter, Carol A. Flannagan, C. Raymond Bingham et al., [Modeling the Injury Prevention Impact of Mandatory Alcohol Ignition Interlock Installation in All New US Vehicles](#), 105 AM. J. OF PUB. HEALTH 1028–35 (May 2015).
- NAT'L HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMIN., [Digest of State Alcohol Highway Safety-Related Legislation](#) (updated Feb. 2015).

Acknowledgments and Disclaimers

This document was developed by Julia Charles, JD, Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education fellow with the Public Health Law Program (PHLP) within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Office for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support.

For further technical assistance with this inventory, please contact PHLP at phlawprogram@cdc.gov. PHLP provides technical assistance and public health law resources to advance the use of law as a public health tool. PHLP cannot provide legal advice on any issue and cannot represent any individual or entity in any matter. PHLP recommends seeking the advice of an attorney or other qualified professional with questions regarding the application of law to a specific circumstance. The findings and conclusions in this summary are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For further technical assistance with this inventory and for questions regarding the *HP2020* Law and Health Policy Project, please contact Angela McGowan at angela.mcgowan@hhs.gov.

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¹ US DEP'T OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVS., [Substance Abuse: Overview](#) (updated Feb. 2016).

² Healthy People 2020 Substance Abuse Objective #18 (reduce steroid use among adolescents).

³ *Id.* ##2 (increase the proportion of adolescents never using substances), 3 (increase the proportion of adolescents who disapprove of substance abuse), 4 (increase the proportion of adolescents who perceive great risk associated with substance abuse) & 14.1 (reduce the proportion of students engaging in binge drinking during the past 2 weeks—high school seniors).

⁴ For example, Educational and Community-Based Programs objective #2.6 aims to increase educational programs to “prevent health problems in alcohol or other drug use” (US DEP'T OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVS., [Educational and Community-Based Programs: Objectives](#) (updated Feb. 2016).

⁵ Mandy Stahre et al., [Contribution of Excessive Alcohol Consumption to Deaths and Years of Potential Life Lost in the United States](#), 11 PREVENTING CHRONIC DISEASE E109 (June 2014).

⁶ *HP2020* Substance Abuse Objective #20 is to “reduce the number of deaths attributable to alcohol”; Objective #14 aims to “reduce the proportion of persons engaging in binge drinking of alcohol beverages.”

⁷ For example, Substance Abuse Objective #2.1 aims to “increase the proportion of at risk adolescents aged 12 to 17 years who, in the past year, refrained from using alcohol for the first time,” and Educational and Community-Based Programs Objective #1.5 concentrates on “increas[ing] the proportion of elementary, middle, and senior high schools that provide comprehensive school health education to prevent health problems in alcohol and other drug use.”

⁸ “Underage” refers to people under the age of 21. NAT'L INST. ON ALCOHOL ABUSE & ALCOHOLISM, [Underage drinking](#) (no date).

⁹ Substance Abuse Objective #6 aims to “increase the number of States with mandatory ignition interlock laws for first and repeat impaired driving offenders in the United States,” and Substances Abuse Objective #17 seeks to “decrease the rate of alcohol-impaired driving (.08+ blood alcohol content [BAC]) fatalities.” Furthermore, Injury and Violence Prevention Objective #13 aims to “reduce motor vehicle crash-related deaths” and Injury and Violence Prevention Objective #14 aims to “reduce nonfatal motor vehicle crash-related injuries.”

¹⁰ The Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends ignition interlocks as a way to reduce alcohol-impaired driving. Ignition interlocks are “devices that can be installed in motor vehicles to prevent operation of the vehicle by a driver who has a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) above a specified level (usually 0.02%–0.04%). Interlocks are most often installed in vehicles of people who have been convicted of alcohol-impaired driving to give them an opportunity to drive legally.” CMTY. PREVENTIVE SERVS. TASK FORCE, [Reducing Alcohol-Impaired Driving: Ignition Interlocks](#) (updated Sept. 24, 2013).

¹¹ Publicized sobriety checkpoint programs are recommended by the Community Preventive Services Task Force as a way to reduce alcohol-impaired driving. The programs “are a form of high visibility enforcement where law enforcement officers stop drivers systematically to assess their degree of alcohol impairment. Media efforts to

publicize the enforcement activity are an integral part of these programs.” CMTY. PREVENTIVE SERVICES TASK FORCE, [Reducing Alcohol-Impaired Driving: Publicized Sobriety Checkpoint Programs](#) (updated Sept. 12, 2014).