

Underage Drinking in New Mexico

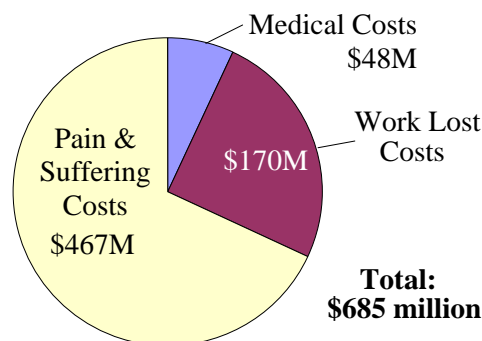
The Facts

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 New Mexico

Underage drinking cost the citizens of New Mexico \$685 million in 2001. 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 \$3,438 per year for each youth in the State. New Mexico ranks 2nd 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 New Mexico \$218 million each year.

**Costs of Underage Drinking
New Mexico 2001**



Costs of Underage Drinking by Problem, New Mexico 2001

Problem	Total Costs (in millions)
Youth Violence	\$340.1
Youth Traffic Crashes	\$193.8
High-Risk Sex, Ages 14-20	\$74.8
Youth Property Crime	\$27.8
Youth Injury	\$24.7
Poisonings and Psychoses	\$9.4
FAS Among Mothers Age 15-20	\$12.6
Youth Alcohol Treatment	\$1.8
Total	\$685.1

Youth violence (homicide, suicide, aggravated assault) and traffic crashes attributable to alcohol use by underage youth in New Mexico 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 New Mexico \$12.6 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 2002, 380 youth 12- 20 years old were admitted for alcohol treatment in New Mexico, accounting for 7% of all treatment admissions for alcohol abuse in the State.³

Alcohol Consumption by Youth in New Mexico

Underage drinking is widespread in New Mexico. Approximately 118,000 underage youth in New Mexico drink each year. In 1991, according to self-reports by New Mexico students in grades 9-12:⁴

- 86% had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more days during their life
- 40% had their first drink of alcohol, other than a few sips, before age 13
- 60% had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more occasion in the past 30 days
- 42% had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row (i.e. binge drinking) in the past 30 days

In 2001, underage drinkers consumed 30.7% of all alcohol sold in New Mexico, totaling \$227 million in sales. These sales provided profits of \$111 million to the alcohol industry.¹

Federal Resources Available for Combating Underage Drinking in New Mexico

New Mexico receives \$360,000 for the Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws Program of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, allocated specifically to address underage drinking. Additional funds which could be used to address the problem in New Mexico include:

- \$8.6 million through the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant administered through Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. \$1.7 million of that total is set aside for prevention.
- \$2.9 million from the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities State Grants program of the U.S. Department of Education.
- \$0.4 million from the Community Service for Expelled and Suspended Students initiative of the U.S. Department of Education.
- \$0.7 million from the Governor's Discretionary Funding for Safe and Drug-Free Schools.

Funds available for New Mexico to combat substance abuse	\$13 million
Total underage drinking sales	\$227 million
Total alcohol industry profits on underage drinking	\$111 million
Total underage drinking costs	\$685 million

Produced by: The International Institute for Alcohol Awareness (IIAA), a Project of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE). www.beaawarenow.org.

¹ Levy, D.T., Miller, T.R., & Cox, K.C. (2003). Underage drinking: societal costs and seller profits. Working Paper. Calverton, MD: PIRE.

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). (2001). *Substance Abuse Treatment by Primary Substance of Abuse, According to Sex, Age, Race, and Ethnicity*. Available [On-line]: http://www.dasis.samsha.gov/teds00?TEDS_2k_index.htm.

⁴ Center for Disease Control (CDC). (2001). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS). Available [On-line]: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/2001/youth01online/htm>.