

FOREWORD

This document is excerpted from:

The December 2015 Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking

Foreword

As the Acting Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and Chair of the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking (ICCPUD), I am proud to present the 2015 Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking. This is the seventh Report to Congress, which is mandated by the Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-422) and represents the contributions of many federal agencies and all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Report highlights the activities of the federal agencies that participate in the ICCPUD in reducing underage drinking. It also includes survey results from the states describing their underage drinking prevention programs, their enforcement efforts, and their expenditures on underage drinking prevention.

The Report features updated epidemiological data about the scope of the underage drinking problem in America. It is heartening to note that progress continues to be made, as drinking rates among all ages between 12 and 20 have declined significantly since 2004.

Nevertheless, the data on underage drinking make clear that cause for worry remains. Binge drinking, with its attendant health and safety risks, persists as a frequent phenomenon among underage drinkers. Underage drinkers have shown an increased preference for distilled spirits, which are typically more potent by volume, over beer. Statistics on the social context of underage consumption show that underage drinking parties, which facilitate binge drinking and aggression, including fights and sexual assault, remain a common setting for drinking. Also concerning is the availability of alcohol: 90 percent of 12th graders report that alcohol is “fairly easy” or “very easy” to obtain. And drinking and driving remains far too prevalent: 29 percent of 15- through 20-year-old drivers killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes have alcohol in their systems.

Underage drinking is a problem that must be addressed on many different fronts. This Report draws upon the expertise and experience of the ICCPUD agencies as well as state law enforcement and prevention agencies and sets forth the current state of knowledge regarding best practices. It is my hope that the Report will assist in continuing the nation’s progress in preventing and reducing underage drinking in years to come.

Kana Enomoto

Acting Administrator

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration