



Alcohol Regulations Can Protect Health, Healthy Communities, and Equity

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Summary of Talking points

- Alcohol use in VT trends higher than national averages
- Alcohol density regulations are protective factors for public health and safety
- Regulations help to establish community norms
- The changes being proposed are in direct conflict with:
 - Several other VT policy initiatives and investments
 - Strategies needed to meet our State Health Improvement Plan and health equity goals for Vermonters

Alcohol use in VT is a concern

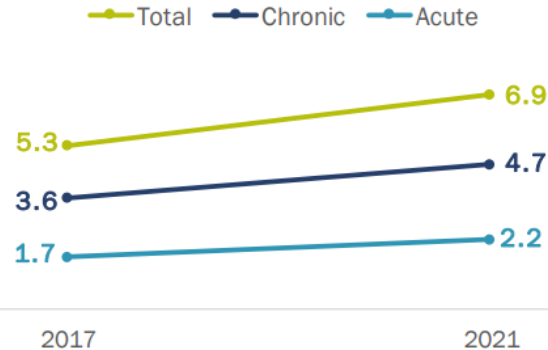
Excessive alcohol use is associated with nearly one in four deaths (24.7%) among people aged 20-34 and one in five (19.3%) of those aged 35-49.

([Alcohol-Related Deaths Among Vermonters \(healthvermont.gov\)](https://healthvermont.gov))

About a quarter of Vermont adults 65 and older report at risk drinking (24%), which is significantly higher than U.S. adults of the same age (18%).

([Data Brief \(healthvermont.gov\)](https://healthvermont.gov))

The rate of **total**, **chronic**, and **acute** alcohol-attributable deaths per 10,000 people has increased since 2017.



KEY POINTS

- **Alcohol-attributable deaths and years of potential life lost each increased by 36% between 2017 and 2021.**
- **Alcohol-attributable deaths increased across age and sex, although males and people 35-49 had the largest increases.**

NATIONAL

17%

Percentage of adults who binge drink.

Source: [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2021](#)⁵

VERMONT

19%



8+ drinks
per occasion

Among adults in Vermont who binge drink, 25% consume at least 8 drinks per binge drinking occasion.

Source: [Behavioral Risk Fac](#)



5+ times
per month

Among adults in Vermont who binge drink, 25% do so at least 5 times per month.

Source: [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2021](#)⁵



Vermont Alcohol Profile

Morbidity



In 2019, Vermont had over **1,100 new cases** of alcohol-associated cancers

38.7% of people in federally funded substance use treatment programs in 2020 were admitted for alcohol use



Mortality



28% of crash fatalities in 2020 were from alcohol-impaired driving crashes

From 2011-2020, **14.3%** of accidental drug overdose deaths involved alcohol



From 2015-2019, **36 cancer deaths per year** were attributed to excessive drinking

Cost



According to the most recent data, the total cost of excessive drinking in Vermont is over **\$513 million**

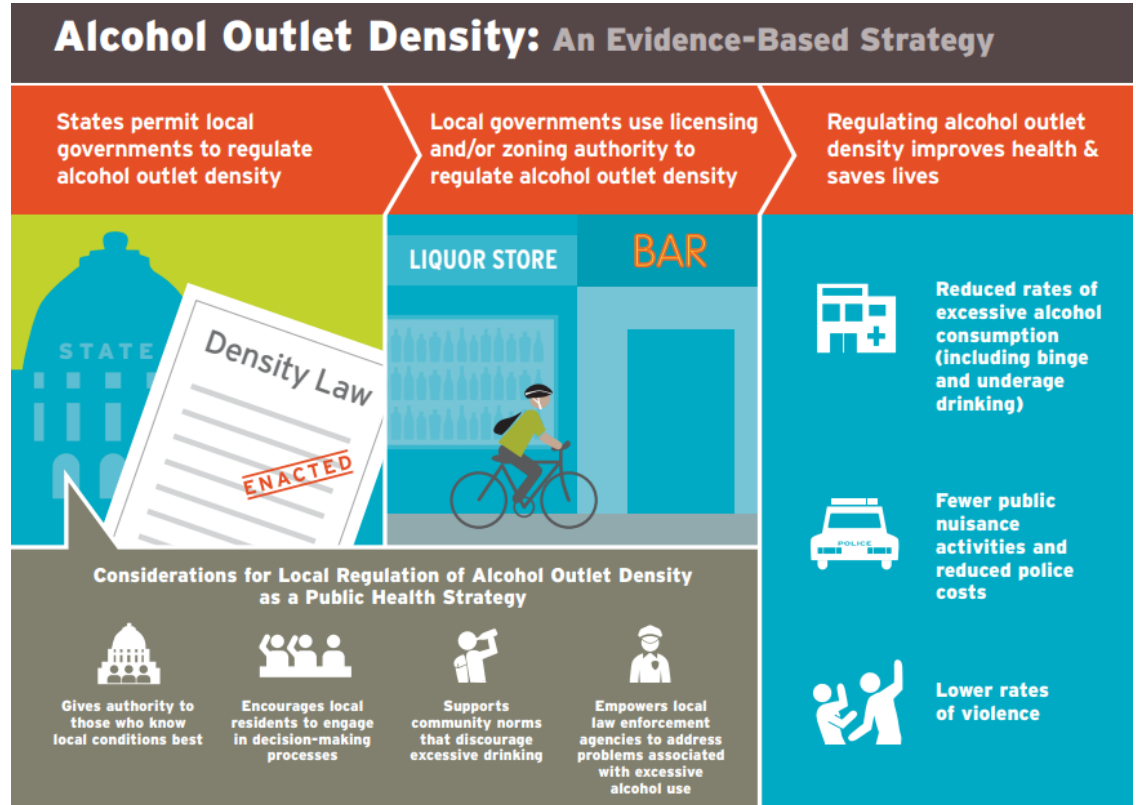
The total cost of excessive drinking in Vermont is **\$1.66** per drink



Alcohol Regulation works

Regulating alcohol outlet density is an evidence-based strategy to reduce excessive alcohol consumption and related harms.

The legislative changes being proposed seek to “loosen” guardrails VT has to protect the health and safety of the public from harms related to alcohol consumption.



Public Policy to Improve Health & Community

- VT is making large investments in the treatment of Substance Use Disorder and Co-Occurring Mental Health disorders
 - Cost of excessive drinking in VT is Over \$513 Million
 - VT just invested \$14,221,446 in expanded BP 2-year pilot project
- DLL testified that these changes make it more difficult and inefficient to keep track of who is doing what.
- To address the public health crisis of poor health, VT has implemented a State Health Improvement Plan, with a stated commitment to:

Invest in policies and infrastructure that create healthy communities.

VISION

All people in Vermont have a fair and just opportunity
to be healthy and to live in healthy communities

Health Outcomes

Vermont creates the social conditions that promote health

Invest in policies and infrastructure
that create healthy communities - page 6.

Implement policies and promote norms that
encourage physical activity and healthy eating,
and discourage tobacco, alcohol, drug use/misuse.

Personal, Family & Community Resilience Strategies

Everyone feels respected, valued, included and safe to pursue healthy and meaningful lives.

Regulations, controlling the “heat”

Current alcohol use in VT is at a “rolling simmer”, running hotter than the nation.

To remove our licensing regulations, to increase places where alcohol is served, and expand types of alcohol access is to “turn up the heat”.

When we boil over, there is harm. Can we keep the simmer?



SEE RESOURCES SLIDE.



Summary

- Urge changes to ALIGN with VT's vision for a just and equal opportunity for ALL to be healthy
- Alcohol remains the top substance of use and has wide-ranging health and economic impacts
- Increasing access and availability of a substance contributes to changes to social norms that impact youth

We must exercise reasonable caution, consider these proposed changes in the context of the whole.

Resources



[ADM State Health Improvement Plan 2019-2023.pdf \(healthvermont.gov\)](#)

[Data and Reports | Vermont Department of Health \(healthvermont.gov\)](#)

[Alcohol-Related Deaths Among Vermonters \(healthvermont.gov\)](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) summarizes strategies to help communities [create social and physical environments to prevent alcohol-related harms \[cdc.gov\]](#). The CDC also provides state fact sheets on [addressing excessive alcohol use \[cdc.gov\]](#).

The Alcohol Action Network (AAN) has also developed [state profiles \[static1.squarespace.com\]](#) on alcohol-related harms.

The World Health Organization's SAFER initiative includes an intervention to [strengthen restrictions on alcohol availability \[who.int\]](#). It highlights information on public health strategies to regulate the availability of alcohol as important efforts to reduce alcohol-related harms.

The Community Preventive Services Task Force's findings are summarized in The Community Guide on what works to prevent excessive alcohol use and include [regulating the number of places in a given area where alcohol may be legally sold \[thecommunityguide.org\]](#).

ChangeLab Solutions created an infographic and other resources on [regulating the density of alcohol retail outlets to reduce excessive alcohol use \[changelabsolutions.org\]](#).

SAMHSA's *Implementing Community-Level Policies to Prevent Alcohol Misuse* notes that policies that create safe communities by [reducing availability \[store.samhsa.gov\]](#) have shown the greatest effectiveness in reducing alcohol consumption and related harms. (Page 11)