

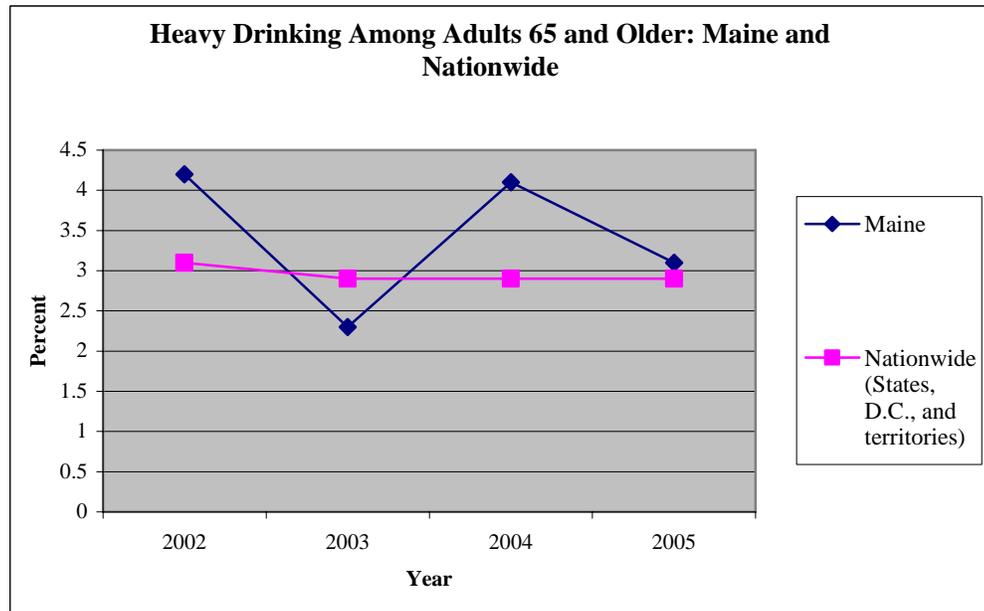
# Hancock County Needs, Resources, and Readiness Assessment on Older Adult Alcohol Abuse

August 2006

## Project Overview

### Prevalence: A National Picture

**Heavy Drinkers** (Per day: adult men having more than two drinks/adult women having more than one drink)



Graph above based on most recent Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System trending data, accessed at: [www.cdc.gov/brfss](http://www.cdc.gov/brfss)

### Prevalence: A Local Picture

- ❖ Hancock County findings from a previous community health needs assessment conducted by Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems<sup>1</sup> include:
  - Elevated trends in heavy drinking in the Hancock, Central, and Knox-Waldo regions among older adults
  - Considerably higher rates of binge drinking in the Hancock county region for adults 65+
  - Individuals 65 years of age or older nearly five times more likely (9.6%) than their counterparts in neighboring areas (2.4%) and older adults statewide (1.7%) to report chronic heavy drinking in the past month and twice as likely to report past month binge drinking



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## University of Maine Center on Aging Study Design

In order to more fully understand the needs of Hancock County in particular for addressing older adult alcohol abuse the following study was designed in partnership with the Health Hancock Collaborative (Bucksport Bay Healthy Communities, Healthy Peninsula Project, Healthy Acadia Coalition, and Coastal Hancock Healthy Communities).

- ❖ Focus Groups-12 focus groups held; divided into 3 target groups: professionals, caregivers, older adults
- ❖ Surveys of Alcohol/Drug Counseling/Social Work Professionals-1,000 mailed surveys sent, with 220 returned, representing a 22% response rate
- ❖ Key Informant Interviews- 20 interviews conducted with Hancock County and statewide community members, clergy, business owners, government officials, older adults, and professionals
- ❖ Secondary Data Analysis- Alcohol-related arrests, hospital admissions/treatment, substance abuse treatment records, previously published studies and reports

### Key Findings: Impact

- ❖ Despite previous survey evidence that older adults are reporting elevated levels of heavy and binge drinking in Hancock County<sup>1</sup>, secondary analysis of treatment data illustrates that only a handful of elders receive treatment for alcohol abuse. Adults 65 and older represent approximately 1% of all substance abuse clients in Hancock County.<sup>2</sup>
- ❖ Fifty-two percent (52%) of professionals statewide and 46% in Hancock County report having at least monthly contact with an older adult whom they believe to be abusing alcohol.
- ❖ Hospital data suggest an increasing trend in alcohol-related healthcare treatment.<sup>3</sup> Thirty-seven percent (37%) of professionals statewide and 23% in Hancock County report at least monthly contact with an older adult who is experiencing alcohol-related health problems.
- ❖ Findings from focus groups suggest that those that abuse alcohol are often “invisible”: few older adults are arrested for OUI or drunkenness; job loss isn’t a strong concern; and treatment is not often sought. These findings were confirmed via our secondary data analysis of alcohol-related arrests and treatment data.

<sup>1</sup>Public Health Resource Group, Inc., 2001. *Health Planning Report for Northern, Eastern, and Central Maine: The Eastern Maine Healthcare Community Health Needs Assessment, with a special focus on substance abuse.*

<sup>2</sup>Maine Office of Substance Abuse Treatment Data System, Years 2003 and 2004.

<sup>3</sup>Blue Hill Memorial Hospital Emergency Department data, Years 1999-2005.

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Funding for the study from SAMHSA, Center of Substance Abuse and Prevention, Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant.



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