

Substance Abuse, 2012

The deliberate use and overuse of harmful substances has a serious impact on the quality of life of Maine people. As a result of substance abuse, the lives of Maine residents have been shorter and less safe. Substance abuse and dependence are preventable health risks that contribute to injuries, violence, cerebrovascular disease, liver disease, cancer, and much more.

Substance abuse leads to greater medical costs through an increase in related diseases and also adversely impacts productivity and increases rates of crime and violence.¹ In 2010, approximately \$302,829,757 was spent in Maine on medical care where substance use was a factor. Overall substance abuse was estimated to have cost the State 1.4 billion dollars, or \$1,057 for every Maine resident.¹

There were 133 alcohol induced deaths in 2009 in Maine. This rate of 8.4 per 100,000 population is not significantly different from the US rate of 7.4 and has not changed significantly over the past 10 years.²

6.7% of Maine adults over the age of 18 reported heavy alcohol consumption in 2012 and 17.7% report binge drinking, while 1.2% report misuse of prescription drugs.² While state-level estimates of other drug use are available from other data sources, these are beyond the scope of the State Health Assessment.

Approximately four in 10 (42.2%) high school students in Maine reported ever having used illicit drugs in 2011. 28% report current alcohol use, 16.9% report binge drinking, 22.1% report marijuana use, and 7.1% report misuse of prescription drugs. While only limited trend data is available, alcohol use and prescription drug use decreased from 2009 to 2011.²



Substance Abuse measures chosen for the State Health Assessment include:²

- Alcohol-induced mortality
- Alcohol-related mortality
- Alcohol use – youth
- Binge drinking – youth
- Binge drinking – adults
- Chronic heavy drinking – adults
- Lifetime use of illicit drug use among HS students
- Marijuana use – youth
- Nonmedical use of prescription drugs – youth
- Past-year nonmedical use of prescription drugs – adults

Additional measures related to substance abuse can be found in several sections of the State Health Assessment, including Maternal and Child Health and Tobacco Use. In addition, the Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services produces annual reports on substance abuse in Maine.

Men in Maine continue to be more affected by substance abuse than women, with higher rates of Alcohol Induced Deaths (12.1 per 100,000 population versus 5.0), alcohol-related deaths (7.3 per 100,000 versus 2.6), and binge-drinking (20.2% versus 9.2%). This is also true for adolescents.

For example, one in four (25.1%) of male high school students reported current marijuana use in 2011, while less than 1 in 5 (18.7%) of their female classmates did.

Knox and Waldo county youth generally have higher rates of substance use for indicators in the State Health Assessment than youth in other counties, with over half (53.3%) of Knox high school students reporting lifetime drug use, and one in five (20.4%) of Waldo county high school students reporting binge drinking. Aroostook county youth and adults generally reported lower levels of substance use. For example, only 5.2% of Aroostook high school students reported misusing prescription drugs in 2011, and only 7.8% of Aroostook county adults over the age of 18 reported binge drinking.

While limited data is available for adults, in youth, substance abuse in Maine disproportionately affects American Indians, Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics. For example, over half (56.1%) of Native Americans high school students report lifetime drug use, while over six in 10 of Hispanics

(61.9%) and Pacific Islanders (62.7%) do so. These disparities are also present in reported current use for all the adolescent substance abuse indicators in the State Health Assessment.

Similarly, lesbian, gay and bisexual youth have higher rates of substance abuse, with six in 10 (60.9%) lesbian and gay high school students and two out of three (66.4%) bisexual high school students reporting lifetime drug use.

Healthy Maine 2020 also has objectives related to substance abuse, including:³

- Binge drinking – HS students (2011)
- Binge drinking – adults (2009)
- Lifetime use of illicit drug use among HS students (2011)
- Nonmedical use of prescription drugs – HS students (2011)
- Past-year nonmedical use of prescription drugs – adults (2011)
- Persons who need alcohol and/or illicit drug treatment and received specialty treatment for abuse or dependence in the past year

¹ Maine Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, The Cost of Drug and Alcohol Abuse in Maine, 2010. 2013: Augusta, ME. Available from <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/osa/data/pubrpts.htm> (accessed 10/23/2013).

² Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. State Health Assessment – 2012. Available from: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/phdata/sha/index.shtml> (accessed 8/21/2013).

³ Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Healthy Maine 2020. Available from: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/healthy-maine/index.shtml> (accessed 8/21/2013).