



Advocating for evidence-based policies and practices
to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms.

OMAHA COALITION MEETING
Wednesday, April 9, 2025
9 a.m.

Please use to sign-in:



A G E N D A

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Review of the February 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes
(please contact PEM staff with corrections)
- III. How Halfway Houses are Addressing Alcohol Misuse in Omaha
Heather Kirk, Santa Monica House
- IV. Focus Area Updates
 - a. Local
 - i. Krush Ultra Lounge
 - b. Policy
 - i. Legislature
 - 1. LB 178, 113 & 186, 330
 - ii. Federal
 - 1. CDC & SAMHSA
 - 2. TTB alcohol labeling
 - c. Enforcement
 - i. Law Enforcement Training
 - 1. August 4-5 in Kearney & 6-7 in Omaha, NE
 - 2. May 14 coalition for more information
 - ii. Planning spring enforcements
 - d. Youth
 - i. Youth Leadership Day Recap
 - ii. Leadership Network – Next meeting: April 21, 2025 at 7 p.m.
 - e. Awareness
 - i. March & April Research Summaries available at
www.projectextramile.org
- V. Additional Discussion/Announcements
- VI. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date: **May 14th, 9 a.m., National Liquor Law Enforcement Association**
UNO's Community Engagement Center, Room 127

6001 Dodge Street, CEC 228
Omaha, Nebraska 68182-0600
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www.projectextramile.org

PROJECT EXTRA MILE

OMAHA METRO AREA COALITION MEETING MINUTES February 12, 2025

- I. Call to Order: Coalition Chair Tom Safranek called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
- II. Welcome and Introductions: Coalition members in attendance via Zoom: Palistene Gray-Moore, Tom Safranek, Ashley Pick, Lanette Richards, Brian Ortner, Lorelle Mueting, Maria Julian, Abigail Osterhaus, Natalie Gordon-Nash, Mattie Sohm, Nicholas Sauma, Rachel Brandenburg, Jen Pollock, Adam Turnbull, Elizabeth Woods, Don Preister, and Courtney Zimbelman-Burt. Staff members: Chris Wagner, Beatha Kliever, and Liene Topko.
- III. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the January 22nd meeting were included in the coalition meeting packet. No additions or corrections were made.
- IV. Counter Tools Support Services for Coalitions: Maria Julian with Counter Tools discussed their role in supporting the organization's goal of helping communities better understand their retail environment. Counter Tools focuses on a variety of topics and products at retail locations: alcohol, tobacco, healthy foods, sugary beverages, and more. Julian shared that there are three key things they provide coalitions: (1) training and technical assistance on the retail environment, (2) software for data collection, management, visualization, and monitoring, and (3) storytelling materials for policy changes.

In Nebraska, Counter Tools has been working with Tobacco Free Nebraska through the Department of Health and Human Services since 2016 focused on tobacco prevention. Recently, Counter Tools started working with the Project Extra Mile coalition through the Retail Alcohol Data Collaborative to better understand the availability, pricing, and marketing of specific alcoholic products that are especially appealing to youth.

- V. Focus Area Updates
 - a. Local
 - i. Liene Topko shared that Krush Ultra Lounge had a hearing before the Omaha City Council on February 11th to determine whether their liquor license should be cancelled. After the 4.5 hour hearing, the Council voted 6-0 to cancel the license. The final say lies with the Liquor Control Commission.
 - b. Policy
 - i. Chris Wagner shared that on February 3rd the General Affairs committee of the Nebraska legislature heard five liquor bills, most of which are bad for public health and safety. The organization provided testimony on multiple bills.
 - c. Enforcement
 - i. Sgt. Adam Turnbull with the Omaha Police Department shared that additional officers were out during the evening hours of February 7 & 8

looking for impaired drivers. During the enforcement they made 4 DUI arrests and issued 3 open container citations, among other traffic violations. The Ralston Police Department and Douglas County Sheriff's Department were also out on heightened patrols but were not present to share results.

d. Youth

- i. The Youth Leadership Network's next meeting is on Monday, February 24th at 7:00 p.m.

VI. Awareness:

- a. The February Research Summary is available at www.projectextramile.org/ResearchSummary

VII. Additional Discussion/Announcements: Beatha Kliwer invited coalition members to attend the 30th Anniversary Recognition Dinner on March 12th at 6:00 p.m. at Champions Run in Omaha. This will take place of the normal coalition meeting. Registration is available at www.projectextramile.org/about/2025-recognition-dinner

VIII. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date: The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

Project Extra Mile's **YOUTH** LEADERSHIP RETREAT

Project Extra Mile is a network of community coalitions across the state of Nebraska working to prevent excessive alcohol consumption, including underage drinking and its harms.

This is only possible through improved laws, increased enforcement, media advocacy, increased awareness and most importantly, powerful young voices leading the way!

LEARN TO USE YOUR VOICE TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE!

Where:

Haven150
12370 S 150th Street, Omaha, NE

Who:

Students in grades 8-12 who are interested in becoming an effective leader to make change in their community are encouraged to attend.

When:

June 3-5, 2025

Cost:

Cost is \$90 per student and includes overnight lodging, food, t-shirt, activities, and of course the leadership retreat!

**REGISTRATION ENDS
5/21/2025**

☎ 402-963-9047

🌐 www.projectextramile.org

3Years
projectextramile
1995-2025
PREVENTING ALCOHOL-RELATED HARM



This project is supported by the Nebraska Department of Transportation - Highway Safety Office (CFDA 20.600) and the Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare Block Grant, CFDA 93.959/Federal Award Number B08TI084658, through the Department of Health & Human Services, SAMHSA, and NE DHHS.



RESEARCH SUMMARY
Date Compiled: March 2025

Key takeaways from included research:

- A new study examined the influence of the design of alcohol labels (modern vs traditional) on attention and choice among young adults. The research team found that participants were more likely to look at, revisit, and look more quickly at the modern labels and do so for a longer time. This study shows how impactful alcohol labeling design can be on young consumers' product choices.
- A research team investigated the impact of age of onset of parental permission to use alcohol on later outcomes in life. They found a robust relationship between parental permission to drink alcohol and increased use of alcohol frequency & quantity, alcohol use disorder symptoms, and alcohol-related harms in young adulthood. These results show that adults and parents must be held accountable and correct their perceptions of supervised alcohol use of youth to reduce the harms the youth are experiencing.
- This study utilized data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) to examine whether gender intersected with other demographic features in alcohol use disorder (AUD). They found decreasing rates of AUD in males and females between 2009 and 2019. However, some subpopulations of females demonstrated little or no reductions. In adults under 49 and those employed, women showed smaller declines than men. Additionally, Black, single women earning between \$20,000 and \$49,000 had smaller or no declines in AUD compared to men with the same characteristics.
- A new study examined preliminary efficacy of a randomized controlled trial of the Promoting Resilient Youth with Strong Hearts and Mind (PRYSHM) Program which focuses on promoting positive identity development, building LGBTQ+ community, developing emotional skills, and providing alcohol use (AU) and teen dating violence (TDV) prevention skills. Researchers found that participants of the program had reduced AU and TDV perpetration, however further research is needed using larger samples and longer-term follow-up to evaluate the program's durability.



RESEARCH SUMMARY
Date Compiled: April 2025

Key takeaways from included research:

- Hazardous alcohol use is linked to accelerated brain aging and cognitive impairments, including behavioral inflexibility. In this study, higher alcohol use disorder identification test (AUDIT) scores predicted more brain aging, which in turn was associated with more perseverative errors in a behavioral task. These findings suggest that accelerated brain aging may help explain the connection between alcohol use and impaired behavioral flexibility, with implications for future research on mitigating these effects.
- A new study sought to determine effective health warnings about alcohol consumption and breast cancer risk. Health warnings increased attention, fear, perceived effectiveness, and severity of alcohol harms compared to a control group. Warnings about mortality and hair loss led to higher intentions to reduce alcohol consumption, highlighting the impact of these warnings on behavior.
- A Korean study aimed to evaluate how efforts to control underage drinking over the past decades have affected adolescent suicide. After peaking in 2009, suicide mortality began to gradually decline as more youth-targeted alcohol control policies were implemented. Policies included prohibition of proxy alcohol purchases for youth, the mandate for age-restriction signage in retail premises, and the increase in penalties for selling or serving alcohol to young people. Researchers concluded that limiting access to alcohol during adolescence is crucial from a suicide prevention perspective.
- This study aimed to explore factors behind the decline in passengers riding with alcohol-impaired drivers in fatal crashes since 1982. Researchers found the decline in passengers was primarily linked to a reduction in impaired drivers, rather than a decrease in passengers per impaired driver. Simulations suggest that a comprehensive strategy combining enforcement, education, alternative transportation, and stricter laws could significantly reduce passenger fatalities, while avoiding negative side effects.

Bill to lower Hawaii's legal blood alcohol concentration receives support

Written by Jeremiah Estrada

HONOLULU (Island News) -- A bill to lower the legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit for drivers from 0.08 to 0.05 advances through the State Capitol while backed by support.

The House Committee on Transportation advanced HB1387 HD1 aiming to lower the BAC threshold for driving while under the influence. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) held a rally on Wednesday to spread the message about reducing impaired driving and saving lives, joined by Representative Darius K. Kila.

"If we can discourage impaired driving in our communities, we can save lives," said Representative Kila. "Every day when I drive home, I think about Kaulana Werner, whose life was tragically taken by a drunk driver in Nanakuli. My community suffered a heartbreaking loss, and I will continue to push for stronger laws to hold negligent drivers accountable and prevent more tragedies from occurring."

MADD reported more than 108 countries have a lower limit than the United States, with the exception of Utah. Arkie Koehl, MADD Hawaii Public Policy Chair, hopes Hawaii will take charge with a proven economic benefit of lowering the limit

"Sales in Utah, which has had the bill for the last two or three years, have actually gone up dramatically. 28% on alcohol tax receipts and we think that the only way you can explain that is maybe when they know how they are going to get home safely, people tend to drink more," Koehl explained.

MADD has received support for the bill from the governor and a handful of other legislators.

Are two drinks a day too many? Inside the debate on what to tell America about alcohol

Written by Daniel de Vise

A spirited debate is playing out in Washington, D.C., over what the government should tell Americans about spirits.

Federal dietary guidelines are getting an update this year, including guidance on how much alcohol Americans can safely drink. The current guidelines suggest a daily limit of two drinks for men, one for women.

The alcohol industry wants that language preserved. But alcohol safety groups, joined by many researchers, say the guidance is bad advice. Both sides are attacking the science behind a pair of reports prepared to help federal regulators craft new guidelines. Feb. 14 is the last day for public comment.

"I personally subscribe to the view that the guidelines are outdated and too high, and the evidence doesn't support them," said Tim Stockwell, a scientist at the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research.

Stockwell points to Canada's new alcohol guidelines, which suggest a healthy limit of two drinks a week. Other voices suggest a more moderate fix: Change America's guidelines to recommend no more than one drink a day for anyone, regardless of gender.

Alcohol industry leaders would rather let the old guidance stand.

"I don't think the science is there for changing the number from two to one," said Laura Catena, a winemaker, physician and author. Catena says the current guidelines, read as a whole, are "fantastic."

Are two drinks a day too many?

The full Dietary Guidelines for Americans on alcohol, which few Americans read, offers abundant cautions. Drinking more alcohol raises your risk of dying from drink, the guidelines say. Even if you follow the one drink/two drinks limit, they say, you could face a higher risk of cancer and other diseases.

"The government's not recommending that you drink two drinks a day," said Michael Kaiser, executive vice president of WineAmerica, an industry trade group. "If you look at the guidelines themselves, they also say, 'If you don't drink, don't start.'"

Americans are getting mixed signals on the dangers of drinking. Not long ago, scientists widely believed moderate drinking conferred health benefits. That view has soured in recent years, and many researchers have drifted toward the view that no amount of alcohol is safe.

"We're all relearning what we know about alcohol," said Mike Marshall, CEO of the U.S. Alcohol Policy Alliance, an alcohol safety group.

Marshall cites a statistic from one of two reports prepared to shape the federal guidelines, written by the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking.

According to that report, if you down two drinks a day, following the current guidelines for men, there's a 1 in 25 lifetime chance you will die an alcohol-related death.

"That's crazy, right?" Marshall said. "I think that really brings home why we have to change the guidelines."

Health risks rise from one to two drinks a day

The study, published last month, assesses the risk of dying from alcohol at one and two drinks a day. At one drink a day, the risk is infinitesimal: A roughly 1 in 1,000 chance of alcohol-related death.

At two drinks a day, the lifetime risk rises to about one in 25. The largest single peril is not disease, the study says, but "unintentional injuries," such as falling down stairs while intoxicated. There's a smaller risk of alcohol-related cancer and cirrhosis – and a small benefit in reduced risk of cardiovascular disease. The heart benefit diminishes, and other disease risks rise, with heavier drinking.

"Below a drink a day, the risks seem to be small, if any," said William Kerr, senior scientist at the nonprofit Alcohol Research Group. "Above that, things start to go up steeply."

Kerr favors changing the federal guidelines to advise no more than one drink a day for anyone.

The second report, released in December by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, caused a stir in the research and temperance communities. The report emphasized the benefits of moderate drinking, while seeming to downplay the risks. Among its conclusions: "Compared with never consuming alcohol, moderate alcohol consumption is associated with lower all-cause mortality."

Both reports will influence the dietary guidance on alcohol. Advocates of temperance have attacked the more positive report, while the alcohol industry assailed the more critical one.

Biden, Trump may have different alcohol messages

Complicating matters, in January, the Biden administration weighed in with a surgeon general's advisory that tagged alcohol as "a leading preventable cause of cancer," contributing to roughly 20,000 deaths a year.

(Smoking, by comparison, was once estimated to cause more than 160,000 cancer deaths a year.)

But a lot has changed in the month since that surgeon general's report. The nation has (or will soon have) a new president, health secretary and surgeon general. And what advice they might offer the public on the hazards of drinking is anyone's guess.

Donald Trump reportedly does not drink. Neither does Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the new secretary of health and human services.

Kennedy "does not drink alcohol because of the huge consequences it's had for him and his family, so he's conscious of this," said Marshall of the Alcohol Policy Alliance. "He works for a

president who doesn't drink either, and who has often said that alcohol is not good for you." Those facts would suggest "that the climate is somewhat favorable to government doing the right thing," he said.

On the other hand, the Trump administration seems intent on less government regulation. Following that impulse, the administration might elect to remove alcohol from the dietary guidelines altogether, said Catena, the winemaker.

"It remains to be seen what the new administration does with any of this stuff," said Kaiser, of WineAmerica.

The new guidelines are scheduled for release by the end of 2025, said Andrew G. Nixon, spokesman for the Department of Health and Human Services.

Only then will we know if the alcohol industry, the research community or alcohol safety groups will have anything to toast.

Papillion Police cite more than 30 for underage drinking at party

Written by Jackson Piercy

PAPILLION, Neb. (WOWT) - Papillion Police busted a big party involving underage drinking Saturday night.

According to a post on X/Twitter, officers responded to a complaint that turned out to be over 120 kids in a home.

More than 35 were ticked for Minor in Possession, and two were cited for providing the alcohol.

According to the post, there were still many cars parked outside after the kids were released to their parents.

Mandatory alcohol server training stalls

Written by Unknown

A proposal that would require mandatory alcohol training for Nebraska servers failed to advance from general file March 4.

LB178, sponsored by Kearney Sen. Stan Clouse, would require mandatory server training for any individual involved in the sale, service or mixture of alcohol, including those who provide security for a licensed premises or are involved in verifying customers' ages for purchase or consumption of alcohol.

The required course would provide education on recognizing signs of intoxication, refusal of service to visibly intoxicated individuals and ID and age verification. The Nebraska Liquor Control Commission would be responsible for creating the training and could establish a fee of not more than \$30 for the course.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2026, a retail licensee could not employ an individual who lacks the training certificate.

Clouse said the state has seen an increase in businesses cited for selling alcohol to minors and overselling to intoxicated individuals since the pandemic. LB178 is an attempt to address the problem on the front end, he said, by helping employees serve alcohol appropriately and avoid citations.

Under a General Affairs Committee amendment, adopted 30-6, only the manager on duty of an event with a special designated license would be required to complete the training program. The amendment also would exempt law enforcement officers.

Clouse said off-duty law enforcement who often serve as security at events where alcohol is being served already have undergone extensive training and would not need the extra course.

Omaha Sen. Megan Hunt opposed the measure, calling it "busy work" for government that won't address the problem it seeks to fix. In addition, she said, bartenders who work for the state's tipped minimum wage of \$2.13 an hour should not have to pay to take a mandatory course.

Sen. Christy Armendariz of Omaha also spoke in opposition to LB178. She said the bill would create an "undue burden" on small businesses at a time when lawmakers are seeking ways to grow Nebraska's economy.

Senators need to address the problem of businesses that serve minors and overserve, she said, but in a way that doesn't punish good actors along with the bad.

Lawmakers voted 9-26 on advancement of the bill to the second round of debate. Twenty-five votes were needed.

To booze or not to booze, that is the question (this new survey just asked)

Written by Manuela Lopez Restrepo

A new Pew survey out last Friday examines how people feel about their own alcohol use and drinking habits.

The survey, conducted between Feb. 24 and March 2 of this year, focused on adults in the U.S. aged 21 and older. One major finding is that people continue to drink even when they believe it may not be beneficial to their well-being. It raises the question of what that experience is like!

Three things to know:

- According to the survey, 57% of drinkers believe that their alcohol consumption does not increase their risk of serious health problems, while 43% think it does — either to a high degree or somewhat.
- Despite these beliefs, 41% of drinkers say that recent news regarding the link between alcohol consumption and the risk of cancer will prompt them to reduce their drinking, with 11% indicating they will cut back a lot and 30% saying they will reduce it a little.
- The health impacts of drinking have been extensively covered, addressing topics ranging from heart health to cancer. NPR's Allison Aubrey recently broke down the things to consider. She concluded by offering guidance for people who want to evaluate their alcohol consumption. This includes a self-assessment quiz called the CAGE questionnaire, which consists of four questions designed to help people determine if they need to manage their drinking habits.

Where have I heard about this lately?

Back in January, former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy issued an advisory linking alcohol consumption to the risk of developing seven different types of cancer, including those of the breast, colorectal, esophagus, liver, mouth, throat and voice box (larynx).

He also urged Congress to require health warning labels to inform consumers about the risks associated with alcohol consumption and cancer.

Teens find zero difference between zero-alcohol and alcohol drink adverts

Written by Flinders University

Teenagers consider zero-alcohol beverages to be a type of alcoholic drink, leading Flinders University researchers to voice grave concerns about the impact of their exposure to zero-alcohol branding and advertising.

"Our new study shows that teenagers classify zero-alcohol drinks as a type of alcoholic beverage, rather than as a soft drink," says lead author Dr. Ashlea Bartram from the Flinders Health and Medical Institute (FHMRI).

It means that exposure to zero-alcohol drinks in advertising or retail spaces such as the local supermarket, may have the same type of negative effects that come from exposure to alcoholic beverages.

"This is a major concern because there is a well-established association between frequency of alcohol advertising exposure and alcohol consumption among adolescents," says Dr. Bartram. "In other words, the more alcohol advertising a young person is exposed to, the more alcohol they consume."

Zero-alcohol drinks (<0.5% alcohol) resemble alcohol in appearance and taste, and are most often advertised under established alcohol brands (known as "brand extensions") or as entirely new products ("new to world").

Dr. Bartram warns there are few current restrictions on zero-alcohol drinks, which are freely available for sale to all age groups, including in places where alcohol is not available, such as supermarkets—and in these places they are often located alongside soft drinks.

The study published in the International Journal of Drug Policy involved more than 300 teenagers aged 15–17 participating in a reaction-time experiment, viewing 20 randomly ordered images of alcoholic drinks, zero-alcohol drinks and soft drinks.

They were asked to quickly indicate whether the images made them think of alcohol. Their response time and agreement levels were recorded and analyzed.

The study was designed to further understand their perceptions of zero-alcohol drinks and the impacts these perceptions may have on their future alcohol consumption.

"Most images of alcoholic drinks (94.4%), the 'brand extension' zero-alcohol drinks (90.7%), and 'new-to-world' zero-alcohol (85.6%) drinks prompted them to think of alcohol, compared to just 5.2% of images of soft drinks," says Dr. Bartram.

"They were slightly quicker to categorize 'brand extension' (such as Heineken or Gordon's) zero-alcohol drinks as alcohol rather than 'new-to-world' drinks—but overall it was clear that the vast majority of these products were prompting teens to think of alcohol.

"Put simply, in the majority of cases, young people associate zero-alcohol drinks with alcohol, so there is now a strong argument for some sensible restrictions to be made on where these drinks can be sold and advertised."

Dr. Bartram says that it is well documented that alcohol consumption is particularly harmful for young people's developing brains, bodies and mental health due to its neurodevelopmental impacts, and can increase a young person's risk of illness, accident, and injury.

"Young people who start drinking alcohol at an early age are also more likely to drink alcohol in harmful ways, or become dependent on alcohol in later life," Dr. Bartram says.

The Australian Alcohol Guidelines recommend that children and people under 18 years old should not drink alcohol to reduce their risk of injury and health risks.

Australia's National Preventive Health Strategy 2021–2030 has also set an ambitious goal to limit alcohol consumption among youths aged 14 to 17 years old to less than 10% by 2030.

"The rise of zero-alcohol drinks presents a unique regulatory challenge. Many of these beverages feature branding and designs that closely mirror conventional alcoholic drinks, contributing to the normalization of alcohol consumption for younger Australians," says Dr. Bartram.

"As the boundaries between alcohol and its alternatives blur, the safeguarding of young Australians against the dangers of alcohol consumption must remain a central focus in public health initiatives.

"We're now calling on governments to reconsider the regulations on how zero-alcohol drinks are marketed and sold."

Troubled Omaha nightclub losing its liquor license

Written by Philip Catalfamo

OMAHA, Neb. (WOWT) - The owner of a troubled Omaha nightclub was set to make his case to the state liquor commission to keep the club's liquor license, but that didn't happen.

Instead, Krush Ultra Lounge made an agreement with the City of Omaha to voluntarily surrender its liquor license.

Krush will be able to keep serving alcohol until April 15. After that, they will voluntarily give up their liquor license in accordance with the decision handed down by the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission on Wednesday.

A spokesman for Krush said that date came from a settlement with the city that the owner would withdraw the appeal made to the state liquor commission, which had been scheduled for May 7.

Krush will still be able to operate as a business, despite the loss of its license; but won't be able to sell alcohol.

This isn't the first time the establishment has had its license questioned. Krush, previously called the Throwback Arcade Lounge, has had a history with the City of Omaha. Since last April, there have been 16 incidents where police were called, including a shooting in September 2024.

In February, the City Council unanimously recommended to the state that Krush lose its liquor license.

"It is rare that we get to this point, and it's sad," Councilman Danny Begley told First Alert 6. "But as a council and as a councilmember of that district, I listened to my constituents and the Omaha Police Department; and I was gravely concerned about the safety of people that not only go there, based on the tavern reports, but also hearing from the people who go to the Old Market. It was just an environment that was no longer safe."

Holly Barrett, executive director of the Omaha Downtown Improvement District, echoed those sentiments in a statement on Wednesday: "The Downtown Improvement District never wants to see a business close. Unfortunately, this bar has not been a good neighbor for several years, and we are looking forward to the opportunity to see something new go into that wonderful space."