



The Extra Mile

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

Going the Distance: Advocates Honored during 30th Anniversary Celebration

The Project Extra Mile coalition met on March 12th to recognize the amazing work of individuals and organizations who are working tirelessly to make their communities healthier and safer places. The evening also served as a celebration of Project Extra Mile's 30 years of service to the State of Nebraska. Attendees included past and current employees, board members, neighbors, and partners from across the state.

Dr. Sean Haley with the City University of New York provided an overview of the changing alcohol landscape and how communities can take action to prevent alcohol-related harms. Dr. Haley shared that alcohol-related deaths continue to increase exponentially, describing how the alcohol industry took advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to loosen restrictions and make alcohol more available with policies like cocktails-to-go and delivery becoming permanent in many states. Dr. Haley encouraged attendees to keep working toward environmental strategies that address the affordability and availability of products to reduce excessive consumption and the associated harms.

Former Project Extra Mile Board Member and Omaha City Prosecutor Marty Conboy reflected on the beginnings of the organization and the importance of continuing to move the good work of the organization forward. He emphasized that despite all the setbacks and many of the victories, Project Extra Mile and coalitions like it were needed now more than ever. Many of the honorees of the evening shared a similar sentiment.

We are grateful for the support of the event sponsors: Flowerama, Heartland Family Service, the Omaha Police Department, and the UNMC College of Public Health, and everyone who spent time out of their day to join us in celebrating the honorees and our 30th anniversary!



Legislative Update

The hearing for Senator Juarez's [LB 330](#) was held on March 20th at the Revenue Committee. The bill seeks to increase the sales tax on alcohol by 10 percent. During her introduction, Senator Juarez shared that she introduced the bill on behalf of the Project Extra Mile Youth Leadership Network students to help address the harms the students are seeing in their communities with the revenue being used to help prevent and treat excessive alcohol consumption, enhance the enforcement of our state's liquor laws, and fund new social work positions in public schools.

During the hearing, three students and two adults spoke in support of the bill. The students shared how their lives have been negatively impacted by excessive alcohol consumption. The committee members expressed appreciation for the students who came in person to testify and those who submitted comments online. The bill received a total of 23 online comments in support of increasing the sales tax on alcohol in Nebraska. There was one testifier in opposition speaking on behalf of the entire alcohol industry and one comment against the bill.

Project Extra Mile Executive Director Chris Wagner noted that current alcohol excise taxes are based on volume and not price, meaning that they have lost 30 percent of their value due to inflation since the last time they were increased in 2003. Wagner discussed the harms that the state of Nebraska has experienced due to excessive alcohol consumption and the successes other states, like Maryland and Illinois, have seen in reducing harms after increasing taxes on alcohol. He also gave committee members a sense of the economic impact of the bill given that the fiscal note did not estimate revenue based on the increase. Based on alcohol sales data in Nebraska and research noting that for a 10 percent increase in price, we could expect a 7.7 percent decrease in consumption, Wagner told the committee that the state could expect approximately \$122 million in revenue each year. The bill remains in the Revenue Committee.

[LB 113](#) was recently advanced to Final Reading been placed on Select File after debate around the number of retail locations that a business may have and how many gallons of product a micro-distillery may self-distribute. During the General File debate, senators agreed to amend to 8 retail locations instead of 10 and 3,500 gallons instead of 5,000 for

self-distribution. Sen. Dover successfully amended a version of his LB 186 to the bill on the second round of debate, which reduces food service requirements for entertainment districts and allows patrons to carry open containers across streets and highways if basic safety measures are taken to reduce the likelihood of pedestrian traffic injuries. The original bill limited these provisions to first class cities and smaller. The amendment applies to all cities.

Other alcohol related bills and their status are below:

- [LB 33](#) (deregulating near beer) remains in the General Affairs Committee
- [LB 124](#) (harmonizing penalties for motor vehicle homicide of an unborn child) has been placed on General File
- [LB 178](#) (mandatory alcohol server training) failed on General File.

For more information on these and other bills Project Extra Mile is tracking, and to see our testimony, [please visit our website](#).



Research Brief



Recently, the Center for Alcohol Policy (CAP) released their [National Alcohol Regulation Sentiment Survey](#) results. The Center's goals are to inform policymakers about state-based regulations of alcohol and safe & responsible consumption, fight underage drinking and drunk driving, as well as inform key entities about the effects of alcohol consumption. The results showed that 83% of Americans support a broad array of state-level alcohol regulations and the three-tier regulatory system. Support for regulating the alcohol industry has been increasing over the years, with 90% agreeing that it's very important for the industry to be regulated. 58% of Americans shared that increasing the number of alcohol outlets would cause problems in communities and 66% said more needs to be done to reduce potential harms from alcohol. The top four concerns Americans reported they want lawmakers to consider when setting alcohol regulations were: reducing drunk driving

(81%), protecting public health/safety (73%), reducing underage drinking (67%), and encouraging moderation (58%). Lastly, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions had been loosened to allow curbside pickup of alcohol as well as alcohol delivery directly to the consumer, 83% of respondents felt it's important to hold companies that deliver alcohol to the same standards as brick and mortar businesses and 76% believe the person delivering must be held to the same standards as bartender or store clerk who sells alcohol.

Coalition Spotlight: Brian Ortner

This month we would like to spotlight Brian Ortner, Public Affairs Specialist with AAA Nebraska and Iowa. He started in this role three years ago after more than 10 years working with the American Cancer Society. While AAA is a membership and insurance company, Brian's role encompasses anything that falls under traffic safety and driver education, such as state level advocacy on traffic safety improvements, collaborative efforts to enhance safe driving education, law enforcement relations, community event support and participation, and more. He's been part of the coalition since 2023. When asked about why he engages with the coalition, Brian shared, "If working together, we can show young people the impact that drugs and alcohol have not only on their body but to those around them as well."



Meetings are held at
UNO's Community Engagement Center
6400 University Drive South



2025 Meeting Dates

January 22nd

February 12th

Join us at our
30th Anniversary
Recognition Dinner
on March 12th

April 9th

May 14th

No Meeting in June

No Meeting in July

August 13th

September 10th

October 8th

November 12th

December 10th



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