

projectextramile

PREVENTING ALCOHOL-RELATED HARM

The Extra Mile

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

Alcohol Awareness Month -- Focusing on Cancer

It's April, which means Alcohol Awareness Month has begun. Coincidentally, it is also Esophageal and Head & Neck Cancer Awareness Month. These awareness months have more in common than many realize. That's because [even moderate alcohol consumption increases the risk of developing these and at least five other types of cancer.](#)

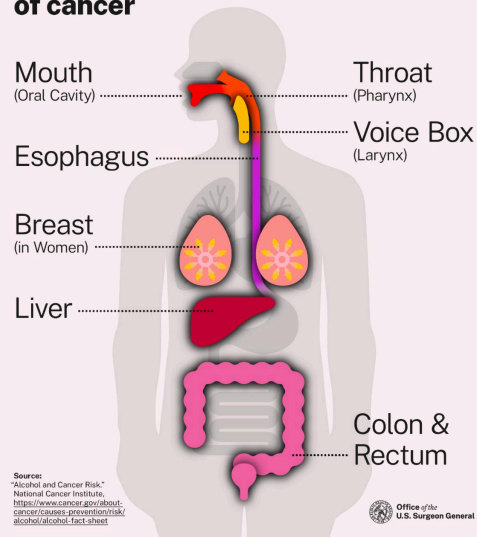
[Alcohol consumption increases cancer risk in several ways:](#) it turns into a toxic chemical that damages our DNA, it raises hormone levels linked to cancer, helps other carcinogens enter cells (particularly in the mouth), damages organs like the liver, and causes inflammation and cell damage over time.

According to the CDC, [Nebraska has 1,001 alcohol-related deaths per year](#) due to excessive alcohol use, with 112 of those deaths being from alcohol-attributable cancers. What's particularly troubling is that *any alcohol consumption* elevates your risk for developing of one of those cancers but the more you drink, the more at risk you put yourself. That's a big problem for Nebraska. While we're middle of the road for the percentage of adults that report any drinking in the past 30 days, we're the third-worst state for binge drinking with nearly 20 percent of adults reporting binge drinking at least once in the past month.

The [2025 Surgeon General's Advisory on Alcohol and Cancer Risk](#) made the alcohol & cancer connection even clearer. It noted that 16 percent of women who have less than one drink per week will develop an alcohol-related cancer in their lifetime. That risk increases to 19 percent for one drink a day and 22 percent for two drinks a day. For men, the risk is lower but still notable: less than one drink a week presents a 10 percent risk, which increases to 13 percent at two drinks per day. The Advisory recommends updating warning labels on alcoholic beverage containers to highlight cancer risk and recommended that the U.S. Dietary Guidelines account for alcohol's cancer risk so that Americans can be better informed about the health risks of alcohol consumption.

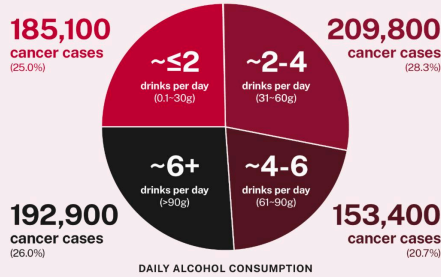
Unfortunately, the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines had the alcohol industry's fingerprints all over them. Removed for the first time ever was the inclusion of minors under the age of 21 among the groups that should avoid alcohol. The recommended limits on alcohol consumption were also replaced with a vague recommendation that Americans should "consume less alcohol for better overall health." There was also no mention of cancer or

Consuming alcohol increases the risk of developing at least 7 types of cancer



741,300 cancer cases worldwide were attributable to alcohol consumption in 2020

The risk of cancer is lower at lower levels of consumption. However, many more people consume ≥ 2 drinks per day, thus leading to a similar number of overall cancer cases at lower levels as higher levels of consumption.

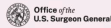


One standard drink in the U.S. contains 14 grams (0.6 fl oz) of pure alcohol:



Source: Runggay, H., Shield, K., Charvat, H., Ferrari, P., Sompolrain, B., Obot, I., Islami, F., Lenerice, V. E. P., Hebl, J., & Sornpaisarn, I. (2020). Global burden of cancer in 2020 attributable to alcohol consumption: a population-based study. *The Lancet. Oncology*, 21(8), 1071-1080. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-2245\(20\)3279-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-2245(20)3279-5)

Drink number ranges within figure are estimates based on 14g = 1 U.S. standard drink.



the fact that less than one drink per week increases your risk of developing an alcohol-related cancer. Research shows that approximately 16,800 cancer deaths could be prevented if adults who drink excessively reduce their consumption to within the previously recommended limits (2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines).

The good news, however, is that states have the ability to regulate how alcohol is sold within their borders. It might surprise you to learn that many of our state senators understand the harms that alcohol causes in Nebraska – from the 1,001 annual deaths, to the underage drinking tragedies in the headlines, to the chronic diseases it causes, the crime, and the \$1.2 billion in annual economic costs that we all pay in one way or another through our tax dollars or insurance

premiums.

Omaha area high school students spent the better part of the last two years advocating for increasing the price of alcohol (LB 330) so that the Nebraskans who drink the most pay the most and reduce their drinking and their burden on society. Most senators that expressed a position on the issue supported an increase in the price of alcohol that could've generated tens of millions of dollars in revenue to address our state's ongoing budget deficit. Yet the power of the alcohol industry kept the bill stuck in the Revenue Committee.

A similar price increase was used in Maryland and has produced exciting results – significant reductions in [underage drinking \(26%\)](#) and [binge drinking \(28%\)](#), [adult binge drinking \(17%\)](#), [impaired driving among 15–34-year-olds \(12%\)](#), and [sexually-transmitted infections \(24%\)](#). Lives were saved and Maryland communities were safer as a consequence.

Evidence-based policies such as increasing the price, reducing alcohol outlet density, and restricting youth exposure to alcohol advertising can reduce alcohol-related cancers, crime, and economic costs. The only thing we are missing is the political will needed to say enough is enough. We don't need to keep enriching the industry at the expense of our children's well-being and our community's safety. It will take a village to make this happen, but we are closer than you might think.

Alcohol Awareness Month -- Youth Awareness Campaign

Our Youth Leadership Network students have worked diligently to create social media posts to highlight these aforementioned risks. Please engage with our accounts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X \(Twitter\)](#) to spread the message and support our students.

To highlight the alcohol and cancer connection, Project Extra Mile's April 8th coalition meeting will feature Dr. David Berrigan, PhD, MPH, who recently retired from the National Cancer Institute. Dr. Berrigan will join the meeting via Zoom to shed light on the alcohol-cancer link by discussing a new report on alcohol and

YOU ONLY HAVE ONE BODY. DON'T WASTE IT.

Fact OF THE DAY

Alcohol consumption increases the risk of developing at least 7 types of cancer.

This includes cancer of the throat, mouth, larynx, esophagus, liver, breasts (in women), and colon/rectum.

Created by PEM Youth

cancer, the Surgeon General's recommendations, and the clash between research and the alcohol industry during the dietary guidelines process.

Come join us on **Wednesday, April 8th at 9:00-10:00 a.m. CST** to learn more! The meeting is at the UNO Community Engagement Center (6400 University Drive South, Omaha, NE 68182), in Room 128. **Please RSVP** to liene@projectextramile.org if you plan to attend in person, as space is limited.

If you plan to attend virtually, the Zoom information is below:

Meeting ID: 840 9450 5730

Passcode: Coalition

Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84094505730?pwd=RmxpY1dUd3Z3WXJ2NFVlNUxXYWUwdz09>

Miles to Go: Alcohol Sales at Memorial Stadium 21% Greater than Next Big 10 School



During the first full season of alcohol sales at Memorial Stadium in 2025, [fans purchased \\$4.3 million worth of alcohol](#), making the stadium one of the top sellers among college football venues in the nation and the top seller in the Big 10 Conference with the next closest Big 10 school being the University of Michigan with \$3.4 million in sales. While the revenue boost benefits the University of Nebraska–Lincoln athletics program, the scale of alcohol sales also raises public health concerns for Nebraska.

High alcohol availability and promotion of alcohol, particularly at large public events, is [linked to increased binge drinking](#), injuries, and long-term health risks including at least seven types of cancer, liver and heart disease, and more. Large-scale alcohol sales at public events can also normalize heavy drinking as part of

sports culture, especially for young adults and college students, who already have some of the highest binge drinking rates in the state. [51% of Nebraska young adults \(19-25 year-olds\)](#) reported past-month alcohol use while 32% reported past-month binge drinking in 2023.

The Daily Nebraskan article shared that \$100,000 of the revenue was allocated to the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska (ASUN) which was then utilized to fund the [Uber Late Night Rides](#) program. According to ASUN, 5,313 students have claimed the voucher and 8,629 rides have been used between January 28 and March 22, 2026.

What this voucher program does not address is the public health harms related to alcohol consumption such as cancer, chronic diseases, poor educational performance, sexual assaults, and impaired driving by adults that purchase alcohol at the game but do not qualify for the program.

2026 Youth Leadership Retreat Registration Open



If you have a middle or high school student who is ready to grow their confidence, find their voice, and make a bigger difference in their school and community, our Youth Leadership Retreat is the perfect opportunity. Hosted by Project Extra Mile, this three-day experience takes place June 1–3 at Haven 150 in Omaha and will bring together students from across Nebraska.

For more information and registration, [please visit our website](https://www.projectextramile.org). If you have any questions, email us at info@projectextramile.org or call (402) 963-9047. Please pass this information along to students who want to grow as leaders.

Legislative Update

The second session of the 109th Legislature is expected to finish on April 17th. This session had a handful of alcohol-related bills that were debated. Due to the short session and extended budget debate, only bills with priority designation are likely to move. [LB1235](#) was a General Affairs Committee's priority related to medical cannabis bill that had some of the alcohol legislation amended into it. This bill passed final reading and was presented to the Governor on April 1st.

Due to the time limitations, it is unlikely that [LB1004](#), the bill to deregulate non-alcoholic beer, will pass this session as April 2nd was the last day to discuss General File bills. During the Session, the Youth Leadership Network students continued to push for the advancement of [LB330](#), alcohol



sales tax bill, particularly due to the budgetary shortfalls. After vigorous and contentious debate, the two budget bills, [LB1071](#) and [LB1072](#), passed on final reading and were presented to the Governor on April 1st without the inclusion of an alcohol sales tax.

To see other bills PEM is tracking and provided testimony for, [please visit our website](#).

Research Brief

A new report suggests that increasing alcohol prices and adding cancer warning labels to alcoholic beverages could significantly reduce alcohol-related cancer cases and deaths. The research found that [policies such as minimum unit pricing and clear cancer warning labels could reduce alcohol consumption and prevent hundreds of cancer cases and deaths](#) in Canada, with the strongest impact seen when both strategies were combined. Researchers estimated that a minimum price per standard drink along with cancer warning labels could reduce alcohol-related cancer cases by hundreds and deaths by more than 200 over time, with the largest benefits seen among lower-income populations and younger adults. The findings add to growing evidence that alcohol policy measures, especially pricing and public health warning labels, can reduce alcohol use, lower cancer risk, and help address health inequalities

Please Join Us as We Welcome Dr. Berrigan!



OMAHA METRO COALITION MEETING

April 8, 2026 @ 9:00AM

 **UNO's Community Engagement Center**
6400 University Drive South
Room 128 and via Zoom

**Please join us as we welcome
Dr. David Berrigan
(ret.) with the
National Cancer Institute
to discuss emerging research
on alcohol & cancer.**



X   **More Information :**
www.projectextramile.org **402-963-9047**
info@projectextramile.org

2026
Meeting Dates

January 21st
February 11th
March 11th
April 8th
May 13th

*No Meetings in
June or July*

August 12th
September 9th
October 14th
November 18th
December 9th



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



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