



The Extra Mile

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

Extended through Feb 28th!

Hy-Vee

Project Extra Mile
has been selected as the recipient for the
Hy-Vee Reusable Bag Program
that Supports Local Non-Profits

When you buy the \$2.50 red My Heart Reusable Bag this month at the Hy-Vee located at 9707 Q Street in Omaha, Project Extra Mile will receive a \$1 donation for each bag purchased.

Unless it is otherwise directed by the Giving Tag

Going the Distance: Advocates Oppose Bill to Make "Non-alcoholic" Beer Legal for Youth

19 Opponents included high school youth, pastors, and prevention professionals

The first regular session of the 108th Legislature began on January 4th, 2023. 14 bills have been introduced that seek to change alcohol policies in our state with a vast majority of them contradicting the scientific literature on what works to decrease alcohol-related harms across our state. These bills would do this by increasing the availability and advertising of alcohol in our communities.

One bill stood out as particularly shocking because it would deregulate near beer (commonly referred to as non-alcoholic beer despite the fact that these products can contain up to 0.4% alcohol). If that bill were to be enacted into law, children of all ages could legally purchase and consume these products. This fact led many advocates to weigh in with the committee to express their concerns, chief among them being the likelihood that young children would want to try these products in order to feel included and grown up. Allowing children to consume these products would increase the likelihood that they would want to try full strength beer and other alcohol before reaching the legal age of 21. This is particularly concerning given research shows that youth who begin drinking prior to age 15 are [six times more likely](#) to become dependent on alcohol than if they had waited until 21.

Despite receiving no testimony in support and only one favorable comment online, Sen. Lowe (the bill's introducer) and the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission (LCC) repeatedly pointed out that many other commodities include trace amounts of alcohol, including

mouthwash, sugar-free gum, and Diet Coke. It sounded like a justification for allowing a product that can include under one-half of one percent of alcohol and looks, smells, and tastes like alcohol to be consumed by elementary school. This was particularly surprising to hear from the LCC considering that late last year they sent a letter to all senators requesting the authority to regulate “non-alcoholic” wine and spirits, which they described as growing in popularity.

Project Extra Mile shared that the state had gone this route over 30 years ago only to realize shortly after removing near beer from the statutes that it caused a lot of problems. Police wasted resources responding to 911 calls from concerned citizens that saw teenagers driving down the road drinking these beverages and drinking in public. Furthermore, [an eight-year-old testified in 1989 that a 4th-grade boy in her elementary school had been drinking near beer during his lunch break](#) (LB 441) in the school. Legislators realized their mistake and quickly added near beer back into the statutes so it could be regulated like beer.

This bill will now be discussed by committee members during the committee’s executive session meetings, which are not open to the public. They will take votes on bills throughout the session to determine whether or not the committee will advance a bill to General File for debate by the entire legislature. To keep apprised of the status of LB 258 and the many other bills dealing with alcohol, please visit our [legislative tracking sheet](#), which is updated daily.

Miles to Go: Alcohol Use Rebounds to Pre-Pandemic Levels

According to a new Monitoring the Future survey from the University of Michigan, teen alcohol use increased significantly from 2021 to 2022. This significant increase was not seen for any other substance. Cannabis and nicotine vaping decreased during early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic and remained lower during the 2021 to 2022 period. 52% of high school seniors reported using alcohol within the last year nearly on par with the 55% in 2020.

While alcohol-related harms can affect a person at any age, drinking alcohol during adolescence increases risks to health as well as social and emotional wellbeing. Underage drinking is associated with increased risks of alcohol poisoning, disruption of brain development, memory problems, increased risk of suicide and homicide, disruption of normal growth or sexual development, high risk sexual activity, problems at school, and the potential to develop an alcohol use disorder later in life.

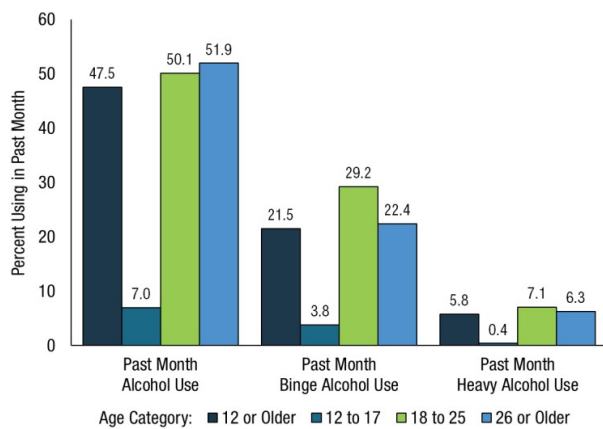
This behavior is responsible for [more than 3,900 deaths and 225,000 years of potential life lost](#) among people under the age of 21 in the United States each year. Along with the social costs, underage drinking has also been estimated to carry an [economic cost of \\$324.5 million in Nebraska alone](#) in medical expenses and work loss.

While the recent spike in underage drinking levels is alarming, there are several evidence-based actions that communities can take to prevent this issue. According to the Community Preventative Services Taskforce, an independent panel of prevention experts, communities can [adopt several policies](#) in order to prevent underage drinking including raising alcohol taxes, having commercial dram shop laws, limiting the number of alcohol outlets within a given area, and consistently enforcing laws that prohibit sales to minors.

Want to know more about underage drinking and how you can help put these strategies in place? Request Project Extra Mile’s Underage Drinking ACTION Guide here: <https://www.projectextramile.org/resource-center/action-guides>.

Research Brief:

The [2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#) found that 133.1 million people aged 12 or older consumed alcohol during 2021. Among past month alcohol users, 60



million (45.1%) reported binge drinking while 16.3 million (12.3%) reported heavy alcohol use. Binge drinking is defined as drinking five or more drinks (for males) or four or more drinks (for females) per occasion, while heavy drinking is defined as binge drinking on the same occasion on 5 or more days in the past 30 days.

When breaking the surveys down by age, 7.0% of youth aged 12-17 reported past month use and 3.8% reported binge drinking. Among young

adults, aged 18-25, 50.1% reported past month use and 29.2% reported binge drinking. The survey also found that 4.1 million people aged 12 or older initiated alcohol use in 2021. The researchers also examined the prevalence of alcohol use disorder (AUD). 2021 data shows 22.2 million people reported an AUD – with 16.7 million people reported drug use disorder and 7.3 million reported both.

Coalition Member Spotlight - Chris Foster

Chris Foster is a community advocate who and longtime member of the Project Extra Mile coalition. Chris has been involved in the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association in various capacities for decades, and was one of the key players in establishing the Let Omaha Control its Alcohol Landscape (LOCAL) Campaign and getting the Good Neighbor Ordinance (GNO) passed in Omaha. He has written numerous letters to the editor calling for greater accountability by businesses to follow the law and reduce their negative impacts in the community.



“Project Extra Mile’s work is absolutely vital to the health of our neighborhoods, especially more vulnerable ones like Gifford Park with a large young population and over-saturated easy access to alcohol. Alcohol has had a profound effect on Gifford Park by draining resources, negatively impacting young and old residents’ mental and physical health, and stealing opportunities at the prime of their lives. The organization has helped our neighborhood understand the licensing process and rules and regulations that are supposed to protect public health but too often fail.” Chris has also been active in this community through Restoration Exchange Omaha, the Midtown Neighborhood Alliance, Omaha Tennis Association, Community Bicycle Project, and many others. We want to thank Chris for his continued contributions to the coalition and his commitment to a healthier and safer Gifford Park Neighborhood.

Save the Date!



Law Enforcement Training

Conducting Alcohol Retail Compliance Checks

March 29, 2023 - Omaha

March 30, 2023 - North Platte



Register online at: www.projectextramile.org

Please join us!



Omaha Metro Coalition Meeting

Wednesday, February 8th
9:00 a.m.

Please join us in person
as we welcome
former alcohol regulator,
Pam Erickson,
to discuss the importance
of the Three-Tier System.

Thank you for your involvement!

Meeting Location: **UNO's Community** **Engagement Center**

6400 University Drive South
Room 230, Omaha, NE
Parking Lot E

For more information:
(402) 963-9047



www.projectextramile.org • info@projectextramile.org

**PROJECT EXTRA MILE
2023 COALITION
MEETINGS**

LOOKING FORWARD TO CONNECTING WITH YOU IN 2023

**JANUARY 18TH
FEBRUARY 8TH
MARCH 8TH
APRIL 12TH
MAY 10TH
JUNE 14TH
NO MEETING IN JULY
AUGUST 9TH
SEPTEMBER 13TH
OCTOBER 11TH
NOVEMBER 8TH
DECEMBER 13TH**



**MEETINGS HELD AT
UNO'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER
6400 UNIVERSITY DRIVE SOUTH, ROOM 230**



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