



The Extra Mile

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

Two Industry-Aligned Scientists Removed from Research Panel Only to be Replaced by Two More

The panel will look at alcohol & health for Dietary Guidelines -- ACT NOW!

The U.S. Dietary Guidelines are updated every five years and cover many aspects of nutrition, diet, and individual health, including alcohol consumption. During the drafting of the 2020-25 guidelines, the [scientific advisory committee recommended tightening daily alcohol consumption for men to no more than one drink per day for men](#), which would have been a victory for public health and safety. However, these revisions were ultimately ignored, demonstrating the influence of the alcohol industry over public health science.

That influence has reared its head again this year as the federal government ramps up work on the 2025-2030 guidelines. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines process traditionally alternates every five years between the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). For 2025, the process was to be implemented by HHS; however, appropriations language directed money to USDA that has been funneled to the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) to look solely at alcohol portion of the guidelines -- a truly unprecedented move that may be the result of industry concern that the federal government might follow the lead of the Canadian government, which is [recommending no more than two drinks per week](#).

Moving that process to the private sector also reduces the transparency of the process, as evidenced by the nominating process for researchers that will serve on the committee that will review the relationship between alcohol and health. Initially, Doctors Eric Rimm and Kenneth Mukamal were selected by NASEM, causing an uproar among the public health community due to the fact that both were involved in the unethical and discredited Moderate Alcohol and Cardiovascular Health (MACH) study [that was shut down by the National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#) due to the fact that "senior officials at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) actively and secretly courted the alcohol industry to fund the \$100 million project and saw to it that a favored principal investigator (PI) [Mukamal] won the funding."

The public health community quickly came together and spoke out against these appointments, resulting in the [lightning swift removal of Rimm and Mukamal](#). It was a significant victory given the importance of the federal government not rubber stamping the alcohol industry's goal of representing alcohol as a part of a healthy diet. Quite the contrary, alcohol is actually a carcinogen responsible for at least seven types of cancer in humans.

Unfortunately, this victory was short-lived as two other industry-aligned researchers,

Doctors Luc Djousse and Carlos Camargo, were selected to serve on the committee. Both have had working with relationships with Rimm and Mukamal, and Djousse was a featured speaker at the 2017 Beer and Health Symposium funded by the alcohol industry.

A lack of transparency “begs the question as to whether the National Academies has found itself co-opted once again,” [said Project Extra Mile Founder Diane Riibe](#) in an interview with the New York Times this week.

The public health community still has an opportunity to weigh in on these appointments. Tell NASEM that we need credible, objective experts who aren't for sale. **Today is the last day to provide feedback on the committee's composition**, which can be accessed [here](#).

Miles to Go: 25 Businesses Cited for Selling Alcohol to Minors



On December 8 & 9, 2023, Project Extra Mile helped coordinate alcohol retail compliance checks in Douglas & Sarpy Counties. Overall, 25 (10%) out of 260 businesses checked were cited for selling alcohol to minors. A theme during these enforcements was the importance of checking minor IDs and verifying their age. The full media release is available by [clicking here](#).

We want to thank our partners with the Bellevue, La Vista, Omaha, Papillion, and Ralston Police Departments; Douglas and Sarpy County Sheriff's Offices; and Nebraska State Patrol – Troop A for their commitment to preventing underage drinking. To learn more about how alcohol compliance checks can reduce underage drinking and prevent tragedies in your area, please contact us at liene@projectextramile.org.

SAVE THE DATE: 2024 LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING

Law Enforcement Training

CONTROLLED UNDERAGE PARTY DISPERSAL

Save the Date

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Research Brief: Existence and Strength of Policies Has a Positive Impact on Health Outcomes

The existence and strength of policies has impacts on health outcomes and behaviors. A [new study](#) was conducted to examine the association between alcohol-related public health policies and alcohol-related health consequences. This multi-national study of 169 nations found that the median alcohol preparedness index (API) score was 54 out of 100 among these nations. The United States and most of Europe had a score of 90.1 – 100. The API was determined to be inversely associated with alcohol use disorder (AUD)

prevalence, alcohol-associated liver disease (ALD) mortality, mortality due to neoplasms, alcohol-attributable hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), and cardiovascular disease. This means that the higher the API score, the better the health outcomes. Nebraska should strive to strengthen alcohol policies to improve our state's health outcomes as it relates to excessive alcohol consumption in order to reduce the state's annual 720 alcohol-related deaths. Policies found to be most effective at reducing excessive consumption include increasing the price of alcohol, decreasing alcohol availability, and enacting and enforcing bans or comprehensive restrictions on exposure to alcohol advertising.

Youth Corner: Teens Advocating for Positive Changes in Their Community

Written by Fiona Wagner, 8th Grader at Elkhorn Middle School



I joined Project Extra Mile's Youth Leadership Network this year, and together we have worked on a lot so far. I attended the summer leadership retreat and almost all of the meetings. Being a part of this group is a great privilege because I get to learn how to be a better person and connect with other people who share my passion for living a healthy and safe lifestyle. Project Extra Mile does an amazing job keeping teens like me involved in community issues to build our communication and leadership skills.

The summer leadership retreat was a great way to learn about the harms of excessive drinking. We all got out of our comfort zones by meeting like-minded youth from other schools and towns and became friends. We had fun playing sand volleyball, indoor games, swimming, and even eating s'mores, but at the same time we learned a lot about how alcohol impacts us and where we live. We had the opportunity to voice our opinions on alcohol in our community and work in groups to find solutions.

Project Extra Mile also holds monthly meetings with teens so they can freely discuss their opinions on these topics. During these meetings, we talk about how we can reduce underage and binge drinking in Nebraska. Recently, we decided that we wanted to work on a policy to make alcohol more expensive. We learned that doing so would reduce underage drinking and other harms because the more expensive something is, the less people will want to use it a lot. We decided to push for the creation of an alcohol sales tax in Nebraska because Maryland had success with it.

[In 2011, Maryland increased their alcohol sales tax by 3% which ultimately resulted in a 17% decrease in the number of adult binge drinking.](#) After adding a small tax on alcohol sales, Maryland received a big outcome that improved safety in that state. After some calculations, we found that a 5% sales tax on alcohol could lead to a \$60.6 million revenue in Nebraska. This money could be used to create rehabilitation centers for people who struggle with alcohol and make our neighborhoods better places to live. In the end, I

learned a lot about myself as a leader and look forward to being able to use these skills to make a difference in 2024 as we continue to advocate for an alcohol sales tax.

Coalition Member Spotlight - Reverend Portia Cavitt

Reverend Portia Cavitt with Clair Memorial United Methodist Church has been a part of the coalition for over a decade and has served multiple terms on the Board of Directors. Rev. Cavitt has been an expert and guide to her community not only on their faith journey, but also when it comes to addressing and reducing alcohol-related harms. She has been a strong advocate for reducing alcohol outlet density by protesting multiple liquor licenses in her community. She has also been very active in advocating for evidence-based policies at both the local and state levels. When asked why she's been involved with the coalition she explained, "I'm totally concerned about the health and wellbeing of those living in North Omaha. The increased alcohol density in my community and number of establishments selling alcohol to minors is appalling." In 2019 Rev. Cavitt was recognized with PEM's Community Advocate award. In addition to this good work, Rev. Cavitt also oversees her church's 44-plot garden and orchard and a summer youth program. Omaha is lucky to have her, and we are forever grateful for her continued engagement.



Please Join Us!

Policy Work Group meeting to follow Coalition

Omaha Metro Coalition Meeting

Wednesday, January 17, 2024
9:00 a.m.

*Please join us as
we discuss
the upcoming
2024 Legislative Session.*

Thank you for your involvement!

Meeting Location:

**UNO's Community
Engagement Center**
6400 University Drive South
Room 209, Omaha, NE
Parking Lot E

For more information:
(402) 963-9047



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Policy Work Group Meeting

Wednesday, January 17, 2024

Immediately following the monthly Coalition meeting. (Approx 10:00 a.m.)

For more information: 402-963-9047

PROJECT EXTRA MILE 2024 COALITION MEETINGS

- JANUARY 17TH
- FEBRUARY 14TH
- MARCH 13TH
- APRIL 10TH
- MAY 8TH
- JUNE 12TH
- NO MEETING IN JULY
- AUGUST 14TH
- SEPTEMBER 11TH
- OCTOBER 9TH
- NOVEMBER 13TH
- DECEMBER 11TH

LOOKING FORWARD TO CONNECTING WITH YOU IN 2024



MEETINGS HELD AT UNO'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER 6400 UNIVERSITY DRIVE SOUTH



Project Extra Mile | 6001 Dodge Street, CEC 228, Omaha, NE 68182-0600

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