



The Extra Mile

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

Going the Distance: Youth Leaders Tackle Alcohol-Related Issues at the 2026 Nebraska Youth Leadership Retreat



Youth from across Nebraska created lasting friendships and learned how to advocate for their communities during the annual Youth Leadership Retreat. 21 students participated in the Youth Leadership Retreat held at Haven 150 in Papillion, NE on June 1-3. They traveled from Elkhorn, Fremont, Grand Island, and Omaha to participate in the three-day retreat.

During the retreat, the students explored individual and community leadership and how they can apply what they learned in their schools and communities, as well as participated in activities to build upon their problem solving and leadership skills. The sessions culminated in a final presentation, delivered in groups, where the youth showcased different alcohol-related problems in Nebraska and how to address them. The five groups presented on alcohol outlet density, impaired driving, underage drinking, and the price of

alcohol and how addressing these areas could reduce the harm we experience in Nebraska.

Congratulations 2026 Awardees!



The retreat concluded with an awards presentation highlighting students who have advocated for their schools and communities as a part of the Project Extra Mile the Youth Leadership Network.

Congratulations to Rehan Chowdhury, Fred Dixon, Alex Nguyen, and Caleb Vaughan, all winners of the Project Extra Mile Young Leader Award. King Maxwell was awarded the 2026 Youth Leadership Scholar, which comes with a \$1,000 academic scholarship! Maxwell shared "I am incredibly grateful to receive this year's Leadership Scholar Award. From the moment I became involved with Project Extra Mile, I knew this was a cause I would grow to care deeply about.

This recognition encourages me to continue growing as a leader and making a positive impact through the program. I'm thankful for the opportunities I've had over the years, from attending the Youth Leadership Retreat to participating in monthly meetings and speaking with state senators. I am grateful to Project Extra Mile for investing in me and honoring me with this award."

The students look forward to reconvening at the Youth Leadership Network on **August 17th**. For more information on the Youth Leadership Network, [please visit our website](#).

Low Levels of Alcohol Use Are Harmful for Your Health



The alcohol industry has long worked to create doubt about the health risks of drinking, often promoting the idea that alcohol can be part of a healthy lifestyle. As a result, the 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines do not reflect the scientific advisory board conclusions and recommendations around alcohol and cancer. Thanks to the persistence of the researchers, the report and its findings were instead published recently in the [Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs](#), making the evidence available to the public.

The study found that **alcohol increases health risks even at low levels of consumption** and provides **no protective benefit** against premature death. Researchers concluded that drinking at levels commonly described as "moderate" is associated with increased risk for more than 200 diseases and health conditions, including at least seven types of cancer and cardiovascular disease. These findings add to a growing body of evidence showing that alcohol-related harms begin well below levels traditionally considered high-risk and challenge the longstanding industry-fueled belief that moderate drinking offers health benefits.

The study found that drinking one drink per day is associated with about a 1 in 1,000 lifetime risk of dying from an alcohol-related cause. At 8.5 drinks per week, that risk increases to 1 in 100, and for men consuming 14 drinks per week, it rises to approximately 1 in 25. These findings demonstrate that even reducing consumption from higher levels

does not eliminate substantial risk and underscore the importance of consumer knowledge around alcohol consumption and health.

The study has significant implications for public health policy. Alcohol-related harms extend far beyond individual health, contributing to healthcare costs, lost productivity, impaired driving crashes, violence, family disruption, and other community impacts. Yet these findings were not reflected in stronger alcohol recommendations in the [2025–2030 U.S. Dietary Guidelines](#). Public health guidance should clearly communicate that reducing alcohol consumption lowers the risk of cancer, chronic disease, injury, and premature death. Dietary guidelines exist to provide people with the best available scientific evidence so they can make informed decisions about their health, not to dictate behavior, but to empower healthier choices.

World Cup Alcohol Sales Surge Raises Public Health Concerns

As excitement continues for the 2026 FIFA World Cup being hosted in North America, it is important to recognize how major sporting events intersect with alcohol marketing and consumption. The alcohol industry spends hundreds of millions of dollars each year to shape public perception around drinking, particularly by associating alcohol with celebration, national pride, and major sporting moments. This strategy is especially effective during global events like the World Cup, where increased visibility directly translates into increased sales and profits while communities often absorb the related public health and safety costs.



This dynamic is not unique to alcohol companies. Major sporting organizations also benefit financially while externalizing costs to host communities. In that sense, the relationship between large corporations and global sporting events often prioritizes revenue generation over local impacts, whether in tourism, infrastructure demands, or public safety planning. The alcohol industry's role within this system is part of a broader pattern in which commercial interests are deeply embedded in major sporting events.

Industry analysts project that the month-long World Cup could generate [more than one billion additional pints of beer](#) sold worldwide as fans gather in stadiums, bars, and viewing parties. While the tournament brings people together through sport, public health experts caution that periods of increased alcohol consumption are associated with elevated risks for individuals and communities. Reports from past events illustrate this pattern, including incidents in [Boston](#) where demand surged among visiting fans and bars struggled to keep up with supply, and in [Dallas](#) where large crowds of supporters created public safety concerns requiring police intervention. Similar spikes in alcohol sales and consumption have been observed at other major sporting moments, including when Nebraska reached the Women's College World Series and local establishments [significantly increased alcohol orders](#) to meet demand.

Research consistently shows that periods of heightened alcohol consumption are associated with increases in alcohol-related harms, including impaired driving crashes, violence, injuries, emergency department visits, and alcohol poisoning. Large sporting events often normalize heavy drinking through extensive alcohol advertising, sponsorships, and social traditions. In the United States, excessive alcohol use contributes to [more than 178,000 deaths annually](#), costs an estimated \$249 billion per year (2010 data), and is linked to a wide range of health conditions, including liver disease, heart disease, and at least seven types of cancer. These impacts also place additional strain on law enforcement, emergency medical services, and healthcare systems during high-consumption events.

Nebraska is not immune to these effects. Alcohol continues to be a contributing factor in traffic fatalities, injuries, and other preventable harms across the state. As communities participate in increased viewing events and alcohol sales during the World Cup, it is important to prioritize public safety alongside celebration. Evidence-based strategies such as maintaining responsible alcohol service practices, avoiding expansions in alcohol availability, strengthening enforcement of impaired driving laws, and limiting youth exposure to alcohol marketing can help reduce harm while still allowing fans to enjoy the tournament.

Ultimately, the World Cup highlights how policy decisions related to alcohol availability, marketing, and enforcement shape community health outcomes. As with other major commercialized sporting events, the challenge for communities is ensuring that celebration does not come at the expense of public safety and long-term well-being.

Few Days Left to Register for the 2026 Impaired Driving Summit

Registration closes July 5th



The 2026 Impaired Driving Summit will take place on **Thursday, July 30, 2026**, at the Holthus Convention Center in York, Nebraska. Sponsored by AAA Nebraska and the Nebraska Department of

Transportation – Highway Safety Office, the summit will bring together professionals from law enforcement, prosecution, treatment and rehabilitation services, education, and traffic safety organizations to address current impaired driving challenges and prevention strategies. Registration is open through **July 5, 2026**. Organizers encourage professionals and community partners involved in traffic safety, prevention, education, and outreach to attend and share the invitation with colleagues. [Click here to register.](#)

Research Brief: Alcohol Advertising and Adolescents

[A new study found](#) that adolescents are exposed to alcohol-related content across a wide range of media and often perceive it as influential in shaping attitudes and behaviors toward drinking. Researchers conducted focus groups with youth ages 15–18 and reported that alcohol marketing and media portrayals can normalize drinking, increase curiosity about alcohol, and contribute to early initiation and risky alcohol use. Participants also identified social media, entertainment content, and other forms of alcohol promotion as common sources of exposure, highlighting the need for stronger prevention strategies and policies that reduce youth exposure to alcohol advertising. These findings add to a growing body of evidence showing that alcohol marketing is a significant public health concern, particularly for young people, and support efforts to strengthen advertising restrictions, rather than letting the alcohol industry monitor themselves.





Enjoy your
summer

**NO COALITION
MEETINGS**

**JUNE AND JULY
2026**

JOIN US AGAIN
AUGUST 12, 2026
AS WE RESUME OUR
MONTHLY MEETINGS



2026
Meeting Dates

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

*No Meetings in
June or July*

August 12th
September 9th
October 7th
November 18th
December 9th



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



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