



## The Extra Mile

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

### Going the Distance: Maryland Sees Drop in Violence from Decreased Alcohol Availability

*Reducing hours of sale reduced late-night crime in a Baltimore neighborhood*

Following two shootings less than a week apart in October 2019, a community member reached out to Senator Cory McCray (Maryland) regarding neighborhood crime and violence and the role that alcohol plays in crime. As a result, [Senator McCray introduced Senate Bill 571](#) in 2020 to address problem liquor stores that, in his words, "habitually nurture an environment conducive to crime and violence." SB 571 passed, reducing hours of sale of alcohol in a Baltimore neighborhood from 6 a.m. until 2 a.m. to 9 a.m. until 10 p.m. -- a seven-hour reduction. Senator McCray wrote that the hours of sale "is accepted as a normal way of life in Baltimore. I know of no other jurisdiction in the State of Maryland where this would be accepted."

Reducing hours of sale is an evidence-based strategy, proven to be effective at reducing excessive consumption and the associated harms, and "a relatively simple intervention" as indicated by Dr. David Jernigan, a co-author of the study. The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) published three "best buys" to prevent and reduce excessive alcohol consumption and the associated harms including [restricting physical availability of alcohol](#) through regulating the number of alcohol outlets in a geographic area (density), regulating days and hours of sale, and restricting where alcoholic products are sold.

A [study was conducted](#) following the passing of SB 571 to examine the impacts of the reduced hours on violent crimes, including homicide, robbery, aggravated and common assault, and forcible rape. Results [showed an immediate 51% drop in homicides](#) within the first month, followed by an annual 23% decrease in all violent crimes in the treatment neighborhood, compared to a similar neighborhood that did not implement the change. In subsequent years, homicide rates decreased by 40%. The decrease in hours of sale had an overall positive impact on the community through the significant decrease in crime. Researchers also conducted sensitivity analyses (examining how changing one variable may impact others) and confirmed the decline of late-night crimes, suggesting that "crimes did not shift to earlier hours of the day or to adjacent neighborhoods."

This policy experiment in Baltimore can serve as an example for Nebraska communities. [Nebraska Revised Statute 53-179 states](#), "No alcoholic liquor, including beer, shall be sold at retail or dispensed on any day between the hours of 1 a.m. and 6 a.m." In 2010, the law was amended to extend closing time to 2 a.m. by local ordinance or resolution. According to the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission, 160 communities (cities or counties) have extended closing time to 2 a.m. Rather than expanding sales, local governing bodies can further restrict hours of sale by enacting an ordinance. Our state has consistently ranked as one of the worst binge drinking states in the nation, [7th worst \(19.3%\) in 2022](#), and

three of our communities, Kearney, Lincoln, and Omaha, [ranked as some of the worst binge drinking cities](#) of those indexed in 2021. Baltimore has shown us a simple and highly effective way to improve the safety and health of our communities.

## Miles to Go: University of Nebraska Regents Continue March Toward Expanded Alcohol Sales on Campus

On Friday, April 19th the [University of Nebraska Board of Regents](#) voted 5-2 to allow alcohol sales at Haymarket Park for Nebraska baseball and softball games, effective immediately. The relaxing of rules and allowing of alcohol sales began after the 1999 ban on alcohol sales was rescinded on February 11, 2022. Since then, the university seems to be on a slow march towards expanding alcohol at all sporting events.



Source: Omaha World Herald

In 2022, the athletic department sent out a survey to Nebraska football season ticketholders asking for reactions to hypothetical scenarios in which alcohol could be sold under different conditions. It appeared then to any objective observer that they were bending over backwards in their search to find ways to make expanded alcohol sales palatable to fans.

**2/11/2022** – Regents repeal 1999 ban on alcohol sales on University property; Allow alcohol sales at PBA for the Big Ten Wrestling Championship

**9/30/2022** – Regents permanently allow alcohol sales at PBA for Nebraska men's & women's basketball games

**9/22/2024** – Regents approve alcohol sales at Memorial Stadium for Volleyball Day

**4/19/2024** – Regents permanently allow alcohol sales at Haymarket Park for Nebraska baseball & softball games

University officials have always emphasized adding alcohol sales at sporting events as a means to enhance the fan experience; however, fans have been enjoying Nebraska sports for decades without alcohol inside stadiums and arenas. The ban was repealed despite concerns expressed by our coalition and others as well as a mountain of research showing alcohol at these events increases underage and binge drinking. It is evident to policy's critics that adding alcohol sales has always been about increased revenue through sales and marketing opportunities.

A brief discussion point at the meeting to expand sales to Haymarket Park was the need to invest in an alcohol awareness program for students (akin to using a band-aid to stop a bleeding artery). A better and scientifically supported approach would be to restrict the availability of alcohol on a campus that is primarily populated by underage students and at university operated properties where these events occur. Not to mention the fact that Nebraska has been among the Top 10 worst binge drinking states for well over a decade and the City of Lincoln among the worst cities in the country for binge drinking.

This chipping away of the long-standing alcohol policies that prevented and/or severely limited alcohol sales at UNL sporting events undermines the health and safety of athletes, spectators, and the community at large. According to the [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\)](#), harms for college students include over 1,500 deaths annually from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, nearly 700,000 assaults, and the fact that 20 percent of college women have experienced sexual assault with a majority of those

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## Legislative Wrap-Up: Co-Branding Bill Signed into Law and Alcohol Tax Study Introduced

The second session of the 108th Legislature finished sine die on Thursday, April 18th. During the session, a handful of alcohol-related bills were signed into law by Governor Jim Pillen:

- [LB253](#) creates veteran justice programs that would permit a veteran, if eligible, to receive a deferred judgement for misdemeanor and felony convictions, including first and second offense driving under the influence (DUI), resulting in the charge being dismissed upon completion of the program.
- [LB836](#) prohibits off-premises liquor license holders from displaying alcoholic products immediately next to non-alcoholic products with the same or similar brand name, logo, or packaging. The bill was amended into [LB685](#).



During a Youth Leadership Day in March, Omaha area youth met with senators to educate them about alcohol-related harms they are seeing in their communities and how the Legislature has an important role to play in setting the price of alcohol (through taxation) to help decrease harms. As a result of this advocacy, Senator John Lowe (Kearney) introduced [LR353](#) to examine the pricing and taxation of alcohol in Nebraska.

When told of the youth's successful advocacy efforts, High School Senior Janine Fell shared, "my heart was filled with gratitude and hope because of Senator Lowe. Not only did he listen to what we had to say, but he believed that our concerns were worth investigating through this study."

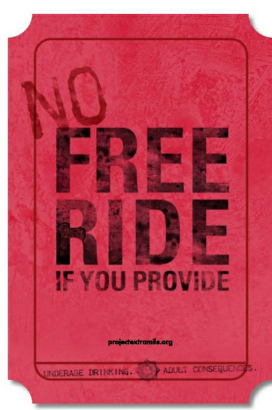
The study will provide an opportunity for the youth and community at large to share their experiences with how excessive alcohol consumption has harmed their communities and how implementing an alcohol sales tax or increasing excise taxes can decrease harms and costs our state experiences. [According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), 1,001 Nebraskans die every year from excessive alcohol consumption, including 226 from heart disease and stroke, 112 cancer deaths, 75 motor vehicle crash deaths, and 59 suicide deaths among others.

For more information about these bills and others, please visit our [website](#).

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## Alcohol Compliance Checks Conducted in Cass and Washington Counties

During the months of March and April, law enforcement agencies conducted alcohol compliance checks in Cass and Washington Counties. The operations resulted in 4 (11%) of 38 businesses checked selling alcohol to minors. Operations are conducted this time of year to ensure businesses are not selling alcohol to minors during prom and spring breaks when youth are more likely to attempt to access alcohol. All adults in the community must also be responsible and not provide alcohol to minors,



those who knowingly and intentionally provide alcohol shall be [guilty of a Class IIIA felony](#). [Nebraska law states](#), that adults who provide or sell alcohol to minors can be held civilly liable if the minor drives and causes property damage, injury, or death of a third person. There is No Free Ride if You Provide.

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## Research Brief

A [report was recently released](#) examining whether the COVID-19 pandemic was associated with increased rates of high-acuity alcohol-related complications, meaning situations when chronic alcohol-related diseases suddenly worsened requiring immediate attention of a healthcare professional. Researchers conducted a longitudinal interrupted time series study to analyze U.S. insurance claims data from March 2017 to September 2021 for differences between monthly rates versus predicted rates of high-acuity alcohol-related complication episodes. They found that rates of high-acuity alcohol-related complications were statistically higher than expected in the 4-18 months of the pandemic after March 2020, especially among women aged 40-64 who experienced a 33.3-56.0% increase in complications. Researchers suggest increased attention to alcohol use disorder risk factors, alcohol use patterns, health effects, and alcohol regulations and policies to reduce the alcohol-related harms our communities are experiencing, particularly women aged 40-64 years.

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## Coalition Member Spotlight - Jeanne Bietz

Jeanne Bietz, MA is a Community Health Educator with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Injury Prevention Program. She has been involved in public health for 25 years with a focus on injury prevention. Throughout her career, Jeanne has run the Safe Kids program as well as worked for Avera McKennan Hospital performing car seat checks and created a child passenger safety training for staff. In her role at DHHS, Jeanne coordinates the Nebraska Community Collective (formerly known as Nebraska Drive Smart) and the Teens in the Driver's Seat program fostering partnerships with public and private entities. She joined the Project Extra Mile Coalition 10 years ago. Jeanne shared that she values the work and how the coalition keeps partners updated when it comes to alcohol-related harms, "I learn something new during each meeting on youth use, policy, and community work." Thank you for your leadership in the community and for being a valuable member of the coalition, Jeanne!



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## Community Training Opportunity

*Reach out to our office with your training interests*

# Training Opportunity

## IS YOUR COMMUNITY INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT...

### Excessive Alcohol Consumption

What is excessive consumption? What are the associated harms? What does it look like in Nebraska? What strategies are proven to be effective in preventing excessive alcohol consumption and its harms?

### Liquor Licensing Process

How can communities be more engaged and informed? How can alcohol outlets negatively impact neighborhoods? What can communities do to prevent new and existing problem outlets?

### Advocacy vs. Lobbying

Lobbying is always advocacy, but advocacy isn't always lobbying. Being an effective advocate requires us to know the difference between the two. Understanding these basics will help empower organizations and communities to advocate on the issues that most impact them, enhancing both public health and safety.

## TRAININGS ARE TAILORED TO YOUR NEEDS

### CONTACT US

- ✉ [info@projectextramile.org](mailto:info@projectextramile.org)
- ☎ (402) 963-9047
- 🌐 [www.projectextramile.org](http://www.projectextramile.org)



**Please Join Us!**



# OMAHA METRO COALITION MEETING

May 8, 2024 @ 9:00 AM



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

Please note the  
room change

Please join us as we welcome  
Zach Hicks with the  
Division of Behavioral Health  
to discuss the Statewide  
Community Health Assessment.



More Information :  
[www.projectextramile.org](http://www.projectextramile.org)

402-963-9047  
[info@projectextramile.org](mailto:info@projectextramile.org)

**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**



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