



SPECIAL EDITION - Write to the Governor & Legislators re. Budget!

Parents Are Heroes

A Newsletter of the Making Sobriety Attractive (MSA) Program,
a Drug-Free Communities Project for Kent County, Michigan
Preventing Underage Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD)

June **Special** Edition 2009

In this issue:

- **Write the Governor & Legislators About "Raising Alcohol Taxes" to Save us Money on AOD Consequences**

And to Increase Spending on Prevention and Treatment for our kids!

Tell us if you write to the Governor and Legislature:
info@alertlabs.org

- **Did You Know?**

There is still time (until June 30) to WIN \$30 MALL GIFT CERTIFICATE – See May Newsletter re. "WHAT Does DRINK RESPONSIBLY Mean to you? To your Kids? Send entries to info@alertlabs.org

To see previous MSA Newsletters, click below
alertlabs.org/newsletter.php

Federal Costs for Health Care Caused by AOD Use: Researchers determined how much of each state's Medicaid and other health care expenses were due to one of over 70 medical

Federal/State/Local Governments Spend Almost Half A Trillion Dollars On "Shoveling Up" The Consequences of Alcohol and Other Drug Use And less than \$5.00 per person on Prevention & Treatment

About 95% of that money is spent BECAUSE of the government's failure to provide enough money for prevention and treatment. Costs are **in health care, criminal justice, child welfare, and education and related departments**. Out of every dollar, 95 cents paid for the enormous burden of this failure and only 2 cents was invested in prevention and treatment programs that could reduce many of these costs -- and save lives, especially the lives of teens aged 12 – 19 and youth aged 21 - 30.

This huge waste of money is hidden in many different budgets, so most of our elected officials don't have a clue about how much alcohol, tobacco and other drugs really cost taxpayers, and how little the government spends to effectively address the problem. Maybe if they knew, they might do something. **You can tell them.**

1. **Click here to [See detailed expenses for Michigan and download the report.](http://members.jointogether.org/campaign/truocost/i3uesnx49jwe53d5?)**

<http://members.jointogether.org/campaign/truocost/i3uesnx49jwe53d5?> **Michigan spends \$5,281,040.300 = 18.2 % of Total State Budget = more than \$ 500 per capita on consequences of the Use and Addiction to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (AOD).**

- **Prevention, Treatment and Research = 0.2% of State Budget or less than \$5.00 per capita**
- **Health re. Substance Use Disorders = 3.5% of State Budget or about \$100 per capita**
- **Tobacco and alcohol tax revenue total = \$131.82 per capita.**
- **Liquor store revenue total \$68.24 per capita.** <http://members.jointogether.org/campaign/truocost>

OF THE TOTAL COST OF AOD MISUSE BY ABOUT 25% of us, *

Nearly 90 cents per dollar is PAID BY THE REST OF US,

Though MOST OF US DO NOT SMOKE or DRINK often or heavily.

We need more support for PREVENTING AOD USE BY OUR CHILDREN and TREATING THEM WHEN THEY DEVELOP AOD PROBLEMS.

2. **Click here to [Send a message to the governor and state legislators urging them to review and act](http://members.jointogether.org/campaign/truocost/i3uesnx49jwe53d5?)** (you can even copy this article from the newsletter and send it)

<http://members.jointogether.org/campaign/truocost/i3uesnx49jwe53d5?> by **increasing the allocation to**

- **First: Prevention and Research**
- **Second: Addiction Treatment, and**
- **Third: by Raising Taxes on Alcohol, wherever sold.** (NOTE: Beer Taxes have not been raised for more than 40 years!) See the full Report from CASA at [Shoveling](#)

diagnoses that are caused by or made worse by AOD. They did the same for criminal justice, welfare and others **When the numbers are added up, the total is \$467.7 billion dollars.**

Drinkers who had their first drink before the age of 13 were twice as likely to have **unplanned sex** and more than twice as likely to **have unprotected sex.**

<http://www.madd.org/Professionals/Social-Host/Social-Host-Parent-Tips.aspx>

Teens who binge drink damage the white matter in their brain – and that slows the relay of information between brain cells. **HealthDay News** April 21 2009.

AOD problems in different professions:

Doctors: 8% – 12%

Police Officers: 25%

Nurses: 32%

Firefighters: 40%

Heavy AOD users experience a lack of creativity, productivity, poor decisions, deteriorating relationships, and expensive mistakes.

addictionsearch.com/treatment_articles/article/substance-abuse-among-healthcare-professionals_49.html

What/Who is MSA? The MSA Project is Sponsored by the Kent County Prevention Coalition and Implemented by the ALERT Labs Group* (Alcohol Laboratories for Education, Research, and Training) Group. MSA is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through SAMHSA's "Drug Free Communities Support Program." alertlabs.org

Up II: The Impact of Substance Abuse on Federal, State and Local Budgets.

<http://www.casacolumbia.org/ViewProduct.aspx?PRODUCTID=3594d7eb-1e01-4c31-bf01-e363d92053ed> See also www.alertlabs.org/blog.php - Increase Michigan Taxes on Beer.

***NOTE:** ~75% of us drink moderately **or not at all** and are **not** addicted to alcohol, nicotine or any other drug. The remaining ~25% need treatment for their drinking problem and their average age is 18!

DID YOU KNOW?

MSA research shows that about 23% of Kent Co. teens surveyed, binge drink, AND NEED HELP IN ORDER TO QUIT. The State budget should provide funding for them to get that help. www.alertlabs.org/media.php – MSA PowerPoint: The STARR Program.

Teen Drinkers Face Greater Alcohol Risks as Adults – Need Prevention Programs

Adults who began drinking at age 16 or younger **drove drunk, suffered unintentional injuries, and became dependent on alcohol at about twice the rate** as those whose onset of drinking occurred at age 21 years or older. **Pediatrics**, May 26, 2009.

MSA research shows that Kent Co. teens surveyed begin to drink at age 14, on average. www.alertlabs.org

Higher Beer Taxes & 21 Drinking Age Reduce Traffic Deaths of Young People

Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research, - May 2007.

Communities with few alcohol regulations could consider raising taxes on beer as a way to reduce drunken driving fatalities among young people. Alcohol-control policies such as the minimum legal drinking age and raising beer taxes have helped prevent youth access to alcohol and the problems of underage drinking. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates drinking age laws save more than 900 lives a year in traffic fatalities alone.

Between 50 and 60 percent of all fatal car crashes that occurred on weekends during graduation season were alcohol-related, according to the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.**

Parents and Teens Differ in Their Views of Youth Concerns

Parents of teenagers *overestimate* how important social pressures are for teenagers... 42% percent of parents reported that social pressures and relationships, such as fitting in, peer pressure, and sexual issues, were the top concern of teenagers, compared to only 22% of teens. In contrast, parents *underestimated* the importance of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs in the lives of teenagers. It was found that **28 percent of teens reported that alcohol and other drugs are the number one problem facing people their age, compared to only 17 percent of parents.** <http://www.casacolumbia.org/articlefiles/380-2008%20Teen%20Survey%20Report.pdf>

Depressed Teens at Higher Risk of Committing Suicide When Drinking

A new study finds the risk of suicide rises sharply in teens that drink when they are depressed... suicide risk increased 68 percent among students in grades 7-12 who drank when they felt depressed and had previously thought about suicide. Risk also increased threefold among those teens who never contemplated suicide previously... the findings demonstrate *the need to screen teens for alcohol use* [as is done by the STARR program, nlh] that could predict impulsive suicides. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, April 2009.

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