



## INFORMATION SHEET

# UNDERAGE DRINKING

- Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States, more than tobacco and illicit drugs,<sup>1</sup> and is responsible for more than 4,300 annual deaths among underage youth.<sup>2</sup>
- Youth who start drinking before age 15 years are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse later in life than those who begin drinking at or after age 21 years.<sup>3, 4</sup>
- Although drinking by persons under the age of 21 is illegal, people aged 12 to 20 years drink 11% of all alcohol consumed in the United States.<sup>5</sup>
- Underage alcohol use can cause alterations in the structure and function of the developing brain, which continues to mature into the mid- to late-twenties, and may have long-term consequences.<sup>6</sup>
- In 2010, there were approximately 189,000 emergency rooms visits by persons under age 21 for injuries and other conditions linked to alcohol.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage DrinkingExternal Web Site Icon. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2007.

<sup>2</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Alcohol-Related Disease Impact (ARDI). Atlanta, GA: CDC.

<sup>3</sup>Hingson RW, Heeren T, Winter MR. Age at drinking onset and alcohol dependence: age at onset, duration, and severity. Pediatrics 2006;160:739–746.

<sup>4</sup>Office of Applied Studies. The NSDUH Report: Alcohol Dependence or Abuse and Age at First UseExternal Web Site Icon. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, October 2004.

<sup>5</sup>Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Drinking in America: Myths, Realities, and Prevention Policy Adobe PDF fileExternal Web Site Icon [PDF-1.08MB]. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2005.

<sup>6</sup><http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Report-to-Congress-on-the-Prevention-and-Reduction-of-Underage-Drinking-2012/PEP12-RTCUAD>

<sup>7</sup>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. The DAWN Report: Highlights of the 2010 Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) Findings on Drug-Related Emergency Department Visits [PDF-410KB]. Rockville, MD; 2012.

## UNDERAGE DRINKING IN ILLINOIS

All information below was obtained on 02/03/2016 from the 2014 Illinois Youth Survey: [https://iys.cprd.illinois.edu/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_178052/File/state-reports/2014/2014\\_IYS\\_State\\_Report\\_Narrative\\_FINALJuly2015.pdf](https://iys.cprd.illinois.edu/UserFiles/Servers/Server_178052/File/state-reports/2014/2014_IYS_State_Report_Narrative_FINALJuly2015.pdf)

- Alcohol is the drug of choice compared to all other substances. Among 12th graders, reports of past year use suggest that the top three most commonly used drugs are alcohol, marijuana, and cigarettes. This pattern has been observed since 2008.
- Underage drinking is on the decline. Use of alcohol in the past year and in the past 30 days is lower among 8th and 10th grade youth in 2014, compared to 2012. But, Illinois 8th and 12th graders are more likely to use alcohol than their national counterparts.
- Liquor remains the most commonly consumed alcohol beverage type for high school aged Illinois youth, followed by beer from bottles/cans. Younger adolescents (6th and 8th grade youth), consumed wine above all other types of alcohol.

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