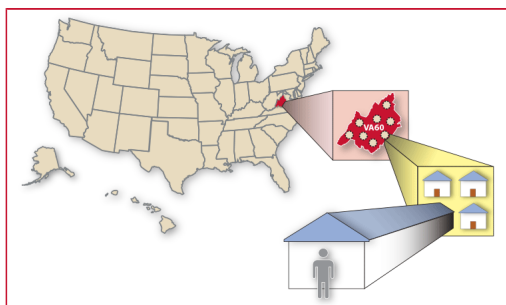


The CBHSQ Report

Spotlight

June 11, 2015

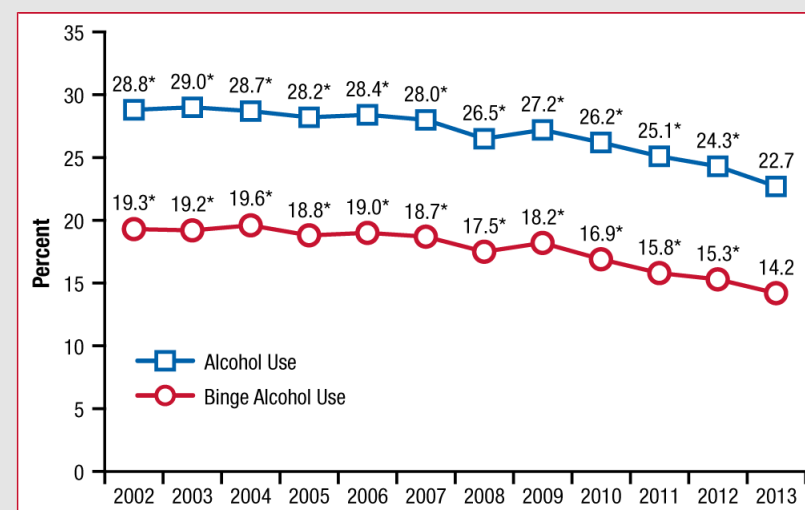


UNDERAGE DRINKING DECLINED BETWEEN 2002 AND 2013

Underage alcohol use is one of the most serious public health issues facing youths in the United States. Every year, underage drinking undermines the well-being of America's youths, causing a wide range of costly health and social problems.¹ Underage alcohol initiation increases a youth's risk of developing an alcohol use disorder later in life and increases the likelihood of driving after drinking too much at some point in their lives.¹ However, alcohol remains the most widely used substance of abuse among America's youths. For example, a higher percentage of youths aged 12 to 20 in 2013 used alcohol in the past month (22.7 percent) than tobacco (16.9 percent) or illicit drugs (13.6 percent).

In 2013, about 8.7 million people aged 12 to 20 reported drinking alcohol in the past month. Approximately 5.4 million (14.2 percent) were current (e.g., past month) binge drinkers. Binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past 30 days.² Underage drinking declined from 28.8 percent in 2002 to 22.7 percent in 2013. Underage binge drinking also decreased between 2002 and 2013. Despite these declines over time, about 1 in 5 people aged 12 to 20 were past month underage drinkers in 2013, and about 1 in 7 were binge drinkers.

Past month alcohol use and binge alcohol use among people aged 12 to 20: 2002 to 2013



*Difference between this estimate and the 2013 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Declines in alcohol use by those aged 12 to 20 indicate that underage drinking can be prevented. To learn more about how to talk to youths about alcohol use, please see <http://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking-topic>.

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking*. Washington, DC: Author.
2. In this report, the definition of binge alcohol use is the same for both males and females and for all age groups.

Source: National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs), 2002 to 2005, 2006 to 2010 (revised March 2012), and 2011 to 2013. The NSDUH is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their places of residence.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. The Data Spotlight may be copied without permission. Citation of the source is appreciated. Find this report and those on similar topics online at <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/>.