Strategizer 55: regulating alcohol outlet density: an action guide

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Abstract

Excessive Alcohol Consumption is a Public Health Issue Excessive alcohol consumption includes both binge drinking, defined by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism as five or more drinks on one or more occasions for men and four or more drinks on one or more occasions for women, and any drinking among underage youth or women who are pregnant. Excessive drinking causes approximately 79,000 deaths per year in the United States, making it the third-leading cause of preventable death in the nation. More than half of the alcohol consumed by adults in the United States and about 90% of the alcohol consumed by youth under the age of 21 is in the form of binge drinks, Although many think binge drinking is limited to underage youth and college students, 70% of binge drinking episodes involve adults aged 26 years and older. Binge drinking is also most common among men, whites, 18-34 year olds, and people with household incomes greater than $50,000 Alcohol use at younger ages is also associated with increased risks of alcohol problems including alcohol dependence later in life. However, over 80% of adult binge drinkers are not alcohol dependent. Taken together, problems resulting from excessive alcohol consumption constitute a major public health problem for individuals, families, communities, and society at large. They also create huge economic costs the direct and indirect costs of excessive alcohol consumption in 1998 were estimated to be $184.6 billion. The reduction of excessive alcohol consumption is therefore a matter of major public health and economic concern.
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