

## **Underage Drinking in Maryland**

Underage drinking is a persistent problem in Maryland as it is throughout the United States—problems caused by underage drinking are apparent in the criminal justice, public health, and education systems. To address these issues, the Maryland Coalition to Combat Underage Drinking, chaired by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention and comprised of members from state and local agencies, institutions, and organizations from across the State, is developing a state underage drinking prevention plan. Highlights of the prevalence of underage drinking and its consequences are presented below.

- Nationwide, the percentage of seniors reporting the use of any alcohol in the past year (71%) was much higher than in Maryland (63%) (National Institute on Drug Abuse 2005; Maryland State Department of Education 2005a).
- Around one-half of Maryland young adults ages 18 to 20 reported drinking (51%) and binge drinking (52%) in the past month (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2005).
- More than 2,200 underage youths were arrested for driving under the influence (DUI) in Maryland in 2004, comprising 9% of all DUI arrests (Maryland State Police 2005).
- Eleven percent (964) of all alcohol- and/or drug-related crashes in the state in 2004 involved drivers ages 16 to 20. One-tenth of alcohol- and/or drug-related fatal crashes involved underage drivers (Maryland State Highway Administration 2005).
- Nearly two-thirds (62%) of the 5,863 arrests for liquor law violations that occurred in 2004 were committed by persons younger than the legal drinking age (Maryland State Police 2005). There were 236 violations for sales to minors committed by licensed alcohol venues in FY2004 (Comptroller of Maryland 2004).
- There were 668 alcohol-related public school suspensions and 44 alcohol-related public school expulsions in the 2003-2004 school year (Maryland State Department of Education 2005b). In addition, there were 510 arrests reported by Maryland colleges and universities and 4,586 campus disciplinary referrals for liquor law violations in 2004 (U.S. Department of Education 2005).
- In FY2004, more than half (60%) of the almost 12,000 treatment admissions for youth under age 21 involved alcohol, with or without other drugs (Maryland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration 2005).

**SOURCE:** Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR). A complete list of sources is available on our website at <http://www.cesar.umd.edu/cesar/dewsfax/vol7/7-05.pdf>. For more information, contact Erin Artigiani at [erin@cesar.umd.edu](mailto:erin@cesar.umd.edu).

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