

# The Extra Mile

Advocating for evidence-based policies and practices  
to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms



## **MILES TO GO: Preventing Further Underage Tragedies**

### **Placing responsibility where it belongs**

The Gretna community continues to deal with the aftermath of the June 17 crash which took the lives of four teenage girls and seriously injured a fifth. Deaths due to underage drinking are entirely preventable and far too common, with the 2017 Nebraska DHHS Epidemiological Profile estimating that there were 108 underage alcohol-related deaths in the state that year. In fact, [underage drinkings plays an out-sized role](#) in the three leading causes of death among U.S. teenagers: unintentional injuries, murder, and suicide.

Honoring the memory of these girls means seeking justice in this case, and also doing what we can as a community to prevent other needless deaths. This means moving beyond platitudes about "kids being kids" and instituting real policy changes that have been demonstrated to reduce underage drinking and its consequences.



First of all, as the Sarpy County Sheriff's Office has made clear, the adult(s) who provided alcohol to these girls should be identified and held accountable. As [PEM Executive Director Chris Wagner stated](#), "adults simply following the law may have prevented these deaths."

Sarpy County has been a leader in these types of source investigations through its [TRACE program](#). Nonetheless, Sarpy County officials expressed in their last update that members of the community have not been as cooperative as they'd hoped. Accordingly, a reward for information leading to the identification of the alcohol supplier [has been increased from \\$8,000 to \\$14,000](#) (see below for details).

Another key intervention moving forward is the continued conducting of regular compliance checks of alcohol retailers to ensure they are not selling to minors. This enhanced enforcement is [proven to be highly effective by scientific research](#), and Project Extra Mile has been consistently coordinating these efforts in Nebraska since 1997.

Additionally, broader evidence-based alcohol policies can reduce overall alcohol-related harm and specific. Chief among those strategies is **increasing alcohol taxes**. The expert report *Getting to Zero Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities: A Comprehensive Approach to a Persistent Problem* from the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) clearly states: ["There is strong, direct evidence that increasing alcohol prices and taxes reduces binge drinking and alcohol-related motor vehicle fatalities."](#) Furthermore, young people are very price sensitive consumers, helping to explain why [alcohol tax policy has been shown to specifically limit underage drinking](#).

Finally, we also know what does NOT work to reduce underage drinking. Fear-based tactics, personal accounts and testimonies, and the mere providing of knowledge have been [consistently found to be ineffective](#) - at least in isolation.

To submit an anonymous tip, call Sarpy County Crime Stoppers at **402-592-7867**, or submit a tip [here](#).

## The Hustler Club

**New liquor license recommended despite red flags**

On July 16, the Omaha City Council voted unanimously to recommend a liquor

license for the Hustler Club, a "go-go bar" connected to the [controversial Club Omaha](#), a sexually-oriented business (SOB). Project Extra Mile presented to the Council a number of reasons for opposing the license:

## 1. A questionable business plan

Given the shared ownership between the two businesses, their physical adjoinment, and the nature of the shared business plan, it is essentially one business with two sections, rather than two discrete locations. This configuration raises several questions related to how the business can operate in accordance with Nebraska liquor laws:

- How would the business ensure that alcohol is not carried from the licensed Hustler Club to the unlicensed Club Omaha?
- Would there be two different sets of security personnel, one for each club? Or one set of security staff? How will security under these circumstances handle alcohol-related problems (intoxicated patrons, etc.)?
- How would the business guard against the provision of alcohol to underage patrons of Club Omaha - whether through direct sales or social supply?
- How would the business manage the different hours of operation - with the Hustler Club closing at 2 a.m. and Club Omaha closing at 4 a.m.?
- What would prevent the business from engaging in aggressive cross-promotion - promoting alcohol consumption and SOB activities?

Moreover, the record of Hustler Club franchises in other cities does not lend confidence that this business would operate responsibly and in the best interest of the neighborhood.



*Club Omaha when it first opened*

## 2. The mixing of sexually-oriented businesses (SOBs) and alcohol consumption tends to be problematic

Key research findings in this area include:

- SOBs that serve alcohol present increased opportunities for crimes like assault and disorderly conduct. Proactive policing strategies are also less effective for SOBs that serve alcohol.
- Working at an SOB puts women at a greater risk for victimization, especially when combined with alcohol use.
- SOBs tend to be lax when enforcing alcohol and drug rules, when they enforce them at all.

- Alcohol and other drug use makes exotic dancers at higher risk for sexually-transmitted infections (STIs), where they are at high risk already. Keep in mind that Douglas County's STI rates are among the highest in the nation.

### 3. Alcohol consumption fuels violence against women, especially when combined with the objectification of women:

Public health and public safety research has consistently linked increased alcohol consumption with higher risks of violence against women:

- Approximately one-half of all cases of sexual assault involve alcohol consumption by the perpetrator, victim, or both.
- Sexual objectification makes even lighter drinkers more likely to be sexually aggressive.
- There are higher rates of sexual violence against young women in contexts characterized by elements like a belief in male sexual conquest, strong male bonding, and high alcohol consumption.

The proposed location of this business, formerly Rehab Lounge, has been a constant source of problems for law enforcement. Time will tell if the City Council's approval of this license is a sensible ["truce"](#) or if instead this license will lead to more problems for this area of West Omaha.

## Drinking problems go beyond the drinker

**Alcohol policies should reflect the fact that excessive drinking hurts everyone**

A [major new study from the Alcohol Research Group](#) builds on research showing the true range of alcohol-related harm in the U.S. It challenges the idea that excessive drinking is a private problem that only hurts the drinker. To the contrary many Americans are negatively affected by the alcohol use of family, friends, neighbors, and strangers.

The researchers surveyed a large number and asked them if they had experienced harm in the last 12 months due to "someone who had been drinking." The categories of harm included:

- **Harassment/threats:** being harassed, bothered, called names, or otherwise insulted / feeling threatened or afraid
- **Property ruined/vandalism:** having clothing or belongings ruined / having house, car, or other property vandalized
- **Physical aggression:** being pushed, hit, or assaulted; being physically harmed
- **Driving related:** being in a traffic accident; being a passenger in a vehicle with a drunk driver
- **Family/financial:** having family problems or marriage difficulties / having financial trouble

Based on the responses from the survey participants, the researchers determined that a startling number of Americans - about 53 million adults - have suffered harm from someone else's drinking in the past year.

Type of second-hand alcohol harm	Number of Women Affected	Number of Men Affected
Harassment/threats	20.3 million	19.4 million
Property ruined/vandalism	5.2 million	7.1 million
Physical aggression	4.0 million	5.5 million

Driving related	6.9 million	8.3 million
Family/financial	7.0 million	3.3 million
All types of harm	26.2 million	27.1 million

*Modified version of Table 1 from Nayak, M. B., Patterson, D., Wilsnack, S. C., Karriker-Jaffe, K. J., & Greenfield, T. K. (2019). Alcohol's secondhand harms in the United States: New data on prevalence and risk factors. Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, 80(3), 273-281.*

The study's authors conclude: "These data are vital for informing and supporting the introduction of evidence-based alcohol control measures." [One of the authors adds](#) that "control policies, such as alcohol pricing, taxation, reduced availability, and restricting advertising, may be the most effective ways to reduce not only alcohol consumption but also alcohol's harm to persons other than the drinker."



## NEWS BRIEFS



### Alcohol and Wellness: More Misleading Marketing

A number of media outlets have reported that alcohol producers are churning out beverages focused on "personal wellness" trends. Examples include:

- [Mezcal \(agave-based liquor\) with damiana](#), a "natural anti-depressant, mood regulator, and organ tonic ... used to promote overall sexual well-being in both men and women."
- [Vitamin-infused vodka](#)
- Wines which are touted as "[sugar-free ... paleo-friendly, keto-friendly, and low carb-friendly, as well as 'pure, artisanal, and deliciously clean'](#)"
- A [post-workout beer infused](#) with protein, nutrients, and anti-oxidants

It should be noted that none of the health and wellness claims of these beverages have any scientific backing.

The one element common to all of these products is alcohol - a toxin, a potent carcinogen, and an oxidant. [Adding anti-oxidants to an alcohol beverage does not protect tissues against alcohol-induced oxidative damage.](#)

In other words, no beverage with alcohol could ever be considered a wellness drink.

Of course, marketers don't just follow trends. They help to shape trends in order to maximize their profits. In some cases, those marketing efforts are fairly harmless. In this case they are promoting alcohol - one of the leading preventable causes of death in Nebraska.

That makes this marketing dangerously misleading.

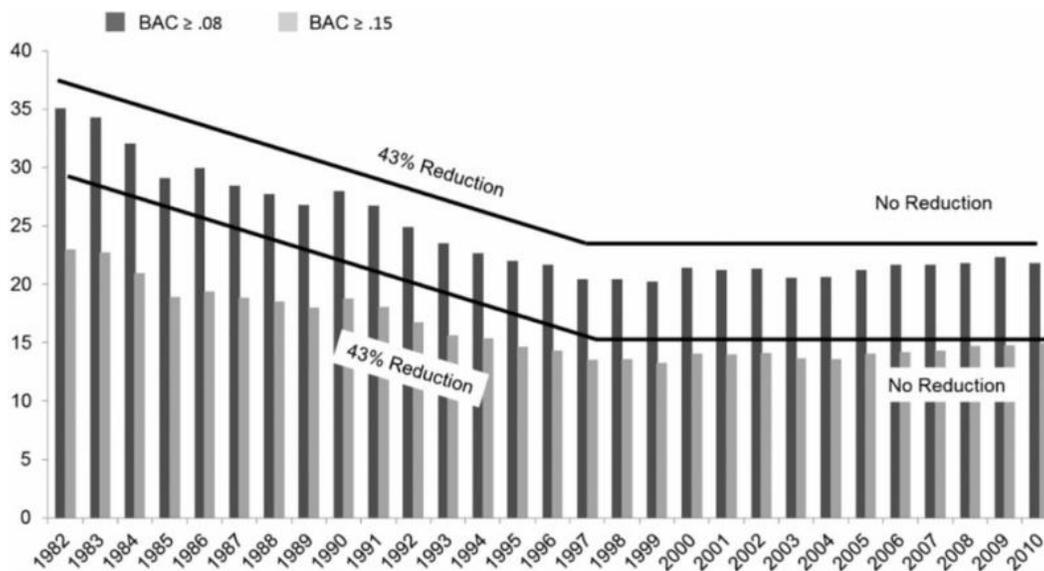
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### More on-premise outlets = More DUIs

Nebraska and other states continue to struggle with stagnating rates of alcohol-related car crashes after several consecutive years of falling rates. Complacency and focus on individual behavior may be contributing to the impasse.



Common lines of thinking incorrectly believe that if drivers are just educated and motivated about the dangers and consequences of alcohol-impaired driving, they would stop driving under the influence. If only it were that simple. Instead, [alcohol and policy environments](#) - including the price, availability, and marketing of alcohol - have a large influence on DUI rates.

A recently-published [geographic analysis study](#) based on Indiana data helps to illustrate this concept. The researchers found that more on-license alcohol outlets (bars, taverns, alcohol-serving restaurants, etc.) in a given area led to more alcohol-related crashes, even when controlling for other factors.

The authors note that the specific nature of on-license drinking establishments contributes to higher risk: "Patrons of bars and other similar establishments consume alcohol at the establishment and eventually need to travel home, putting themselves at risk of an alcohol-related crash."

While that notion may seem obvious, local officials and regulators do not appear to take it into consideration when deciding on liquor license approval. Instead, they view only in terms of short-term economic impact.

A more balanced, comprehensive approach would benefit Nebraska neighborhoods in terms of health, safety, and longer-term economic sustainability.



## Omaha Metro Coalition Meeting

Wednesday  
**August 14, 2019**  
9:00 a.m.

For more information:  
(402) 963-9047  
www.projectextramile.org  
info@projectextramile.org



We invite you to join us for  
**coffee and conversation**  
as we welcome our



## **Guest Speaker**

**Kerry Kernen**

Douglas County Health Department,  
to discuss the 2020 CHIP and  
their efforts to address alcohol misuse.

Thank you for your involvement!

*Jennifer Pollock*

Jennifer Pollock, Coalition Chair



**MEETING LOCATION:**  
National Safety Council  
**Board Room**  
11620 M Circle, Omaha NE  
Use Upper Level, East Entrance

**2019**

**RECOGNITION DINNER**

6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 19, 2019

Champions Run

