



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## Binge Drinking in Vermont Above National Average

For Immediate Release: October 7, 2010  
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BURLINGTON – Binge drinking rates among adults in Vermont (17%) are above the national average (15%), according to a new report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

National data from CDC shows that almost one in three adults, and two in three high school students who drink alcohol also binge drink. Binge drinking is defined as five or more drinks within a few hours for men, and four or more drinks for women.

“We know that binge drinking is a serious problem in our state, and this report shines a new light on the problem,” said Barbara Cimaglio, deputy commissioner of health for alcohol & drug abuse programs. “The majority of Vermonters who go into treatment for substance abuse are admitted with a primary diagnosis of alcohol abuse. Over time, binge drinking disrupts lives and leads to life-threatening health conditions: liver disease, certain cancers, heart disease, stroke and other chronic diseases.”

Youth alcohol abuse is an ongoing area of concern, Cimaglio said. While the rate of youth alcohol use has declined in the last decade, 39 percent of Vermont students in grades 9 to 12 report they drank alcohol at least once in the last 30 days, and 23 percent reported binge drinking. Approximately one out of five students in Vermont try alcohol before the age of 13.

Vermont's approach to the problem of binge drinking has been to fund and support community coalitions to make local assessments and create and share local solutions. Early intervention by health care providers through screening and counseling is also a proven way to prevent high-risk drinking.

“If a screening demonstrates high-risk drinking,” Cimaglio said, “helping a patient access treatment can slow the progression of alcohol abuse and avoid further medical costs down the road.”

The Health Department also manages public education campaigns such as ParentUp, launched in April 2010. ParentUp offers proven steps parents can take such as setting clear rules, limiting access to alcohol, and refusing to host underage drinking parties.

For more information on about the ParentUp campaign visit [ParentUpVT.org](http://ParentUpVT.org) or <http://healthvermont.gov>, or dial 2-1-1.

To access the CDC report, which is based on 2009 Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System data, and from the 2009 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey on binge drinking, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/>

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