

# ALCOHOL PREVENTION ENHANCEMENT SITE

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## ALCOHOL OUTLET DENSITY FACT SHEET

**Alcohol outlet density refers to the concentration of retail alcohol establishments; including bars, restaurants, liquor stores and package stores, per area or population.**

A report from the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH) published in the journal *Preventing Chronic Disease* provides four ways states and localities can reduce alcohol outlet density:

- 1) Limit the number of alcohol outlets per specific geographic unit;
- 2) Limit the number of outlets per population;
- 3) Establish a cap on the percentage of retail outlets per total business in a specific area; and
- 4) Limit alcohol outlet locations and operating hours. (1) JHSPH, CAMY, 2013; (2) JHSPH, CAMY, CADCA, Nov. 2011; (3) CDC, 2017

### Outlet Density and Alcohol-Related Harm

- An increase in alcohol outlet density is associated with increased levels of alcohol consumption among adolescents, increased levels of assault, and other harm such as homicide, child abuse and neglect, self-inflicted injury, and road traffic injuries. (4) World Health Organization, 2010; (5) Alcohol Justice, 2014
- The density of alcohol outlets is associated with increased consumption leading to: binge drinking, motor vehicle crashes, violence, other crime, health problems, hospitalizations, and child abuse. (6) American Journal of Preventative Medicine, 2009, 37:6: pps. 567-569
- In a study conducted between 2003 to 2008 for each of British Columbia's 89 local health areas, each additional private liquor store per 1,000 residents 15 years or older increased local alcohol-related mortality by 27.5%. (7) Addiction, 2011; (5) Alcohol Justice, 2014

### Outlet Density and Homicide, Violence and Other Crimes

- Alcohol outlet density is the single greatest predictor of violent crime in neighborhoods, greater than other social and economic factors. One study found reducing violent crime by 1% could be achieved by reducing alcohol outlet density by less than 1%. (8) Journal of Public Health Policy, 1998; (5) Alcohol Justice, 2014
- In Los Angeles County, researchers estimated every additional alcohol outlet was associated with 3.4 incidents of violence per year, and in New Orleans, researchers predicted a 10% increase in the density of outlets selling alcohol for off-premise consumption would increase the homicide rate by 2.4%. (1) JHSPH, CAMY, 2013; (2) JHSPH, CAMY, CADCA, Nov. 2011; (3) CDC, 2017
- Community problems related to high on-premise alcohol outlet density are noise and disorderly conduct, traffic problems, property damage, and violent crime. Community problems related to high off-premise alcohol outlet density are loitering and drug sales. (9) Sparks, Michael, MA., 2013

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## Outlet Density and Underage Drinking

- Alcohol retailers are more likely to sell alcohol to minors if other alcohol outlets are nearby. (10) *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 2009; (5) *Alcohol Justice*, 2014
- Youth living in census tracts with the greatest off-site outlet density have about an 80% increased risk for attempting and successfully buying alcohol. They are also at a 220% increased risk of reporting frequent drinking. (11) *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 2011; (5) *Alcohol Justice*, 2014

## Outlet Density and Suicide, Child Abuse and Neglect

- Cirrhosis deaths, suicide, and assaults all increase when alcohol outlet density increases. (12) *American Journal of Prevention Medicine*, 2009
- Suicide rates among boys ages 15-19 have been shown to increase by up to 12% when alcohol outlet density increases. (13) *Journal of Mental Health Policy and Economics*, 2003; (5) *Alcohol Justice*, 2014
- Areas with more retail alcohol outlets have been found to have higher rates of child abuse. Areas with more bars have been found to have higher rates of child neglect. A researcher in this study, Dr. Bridget Freisthler of the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, during the 2013 Alcohol Policy 16 Conference commented a “reduction of 1 outlet per 1,000 people, [equates to a] 4% decrease in probability of severe physical abuse.” (14) *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 2004; (5) *Alcohol Justice*, 2014

## Outlet Density, Social Disadvantage and Health Disparities

- Greater concentrations of off-premise alcohol outlets are found in areas of social disadvantage; exposing disadvantaged populations to excess risk for problems such as assault, child abuse and intimate partner violence. Not only are disadvantaged populations exposed to more outlets, the outlets to which they are exposed sell cheaper alcohol. (15) *Drugs and Alcohol Review Social Disadvantage and Exposure to Lower Priced Alcohol in Off-Premise Outlets*, 2015
- A study of alcohol outlets in Baltimore found a disproportionate concentration of alcohol outlets in African American neighborhoods; and a shorter life expectancy, higher homicide rates, and greater poverty in communities with the highest concentration of liquor outlets. (16) *Social Science Med.* 51(4) *Health risk and inequitable distribution of liquor stores in African American neighborhood*, August 2000; (17) Morris-Compton, Sarah, MPP, 2013
- Alcohol availability is significantly higher around residences of minority and low-income families. Within 0.1 mile, the average number of alcohol outlets surrounding White residences = 0.21; Black residences = 0.24; Asian/Pacific Islander residences = 0.33; Hispanic residences = 0.39. (18) *American Journal of Public Health* 99(2), 2009; (5) *Alcohol Justice* 2014

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## Alcohol Outlet Density Fact Sheet Citations

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- 11) Reboussin, B. A., Song, E.-Y., & Wolfson, M. (2011). The Impact of Alcohol Outlet Density on the Geographic Clustering of Underage Drinking Behaviors within Census Tracts. *Alcoholism, Clinical and Experimental Research*, 35(8), 1541–1549. Retrieved January 24, 2018, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3132245/>
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