

## ALCOHOL: UNDERAGE DRINKING

### *Underage and Under the Influence*



Alcohol use among Iowa youth is a serious public health issue. The 2011-2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) estimated that in Iowa, 14.59 percent of 12 to 17-year-old and 67.11 percent of 18 to 25-year-old had used alcohol in the past month. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2012), alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States, more than tobacco and illicit drugs and is responsible for more than 4,700 annual deaths among underage youth. Today, studies show that children may even start to drink alcohol as early as 9 years old (SAMHSA, 2013). Community and peer norms concerning the use of alcohol and accessibility contribute to this public health problem.

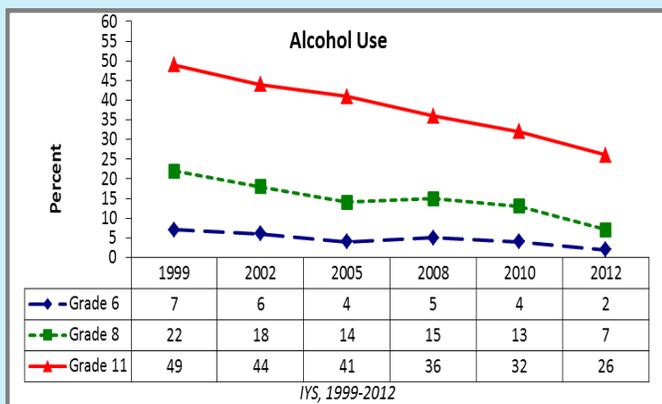
### IN BRIEF

- ◆ 16 percent of Iowa 8<sup>th</sup> graders reported drinking alcohol before turning 13.
- ◆ More than one in four 11<sup>th</sup> graders drank alcohol in the past month.
- ◆ Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States.
- ◆ A drink often refers to one half ounce of pure alcohol (one 12-oz beer, one 5-oz glass of wine, or one 1-oz of 100 proof distilled spirits).

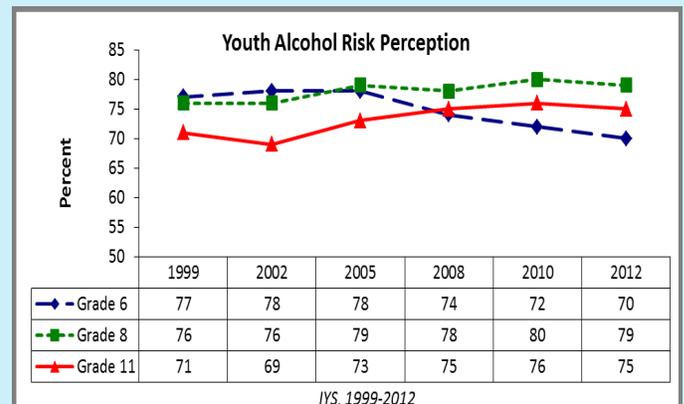
## ALCOHOL USE AND ABUSE

### *Iowa Youth Continue to Use Alcohol*

Youth alcohol use continues to be a major public health issue in Iowa. Although there was a significant drop in alcohol use among youth between 2005-2012, the health and social consequences of alcohol use continue to be a serious public health problem in Iowa. Approximately 16 percent of eighth graders surveyed in 2012 reported using alcohol before turning 13 (IYS, 2012). The IYS (2012) showed that 26 percent of 11 graders, 7 percent of 8 graders, and 2 percent of 6 graders reported alcohol use in the past 30 days (Figure 1). While current alcohol use has decreased for each grade reported in the Iowa Youth Survey since 1999, many youth continue to use alcohol. This could be attributed to youth alcohol risk perception. Research shows that as perception of risk decreases, alcohol use increases. The percentage of youth who perceived alcohol use as a moderate or great risk has been decreasing for 6<sup>th</sup> graders, but fluctuating for both 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders in the past 6 years (Figure 2).



**Figure 1:** Percent youth reporting alcohol use in the past 30 days, IYS



**Figure 2:** Percent of 6th, 8th, and 11th-Graders Reporting Perceiving Alcohol Use as a Moderate or Great Risk, IYS

## CONSEQUENCES OF UNDERAGE DRINKING

The consequences of youth alcohol use and abuse are associated with financial, social, interpersonal and legal difficulties. Alcohol and other drugs are second only to depression and other mood disorders as the most frequent risk factors for suicidal behavior (CDC, n.d.). In Iowa, between 2004-2012, the number of suicides averaged close to 360 suicides annually for the population-adjusted suicide rate. Young drivers ages 16-20 are 17 times more likely to die in a crash when they have a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 percent than when they have not been drinking (CDC, 2012). Youth who drink alcohol are more likely to use other drugs, miss more days of school, and experience poor or failing grades. The overall rate of suspensions and expulsions for alcohol in Iowa has been relatively stable at about 2.6 percent of students over the last three years (Iowa Department of Education, 2013).

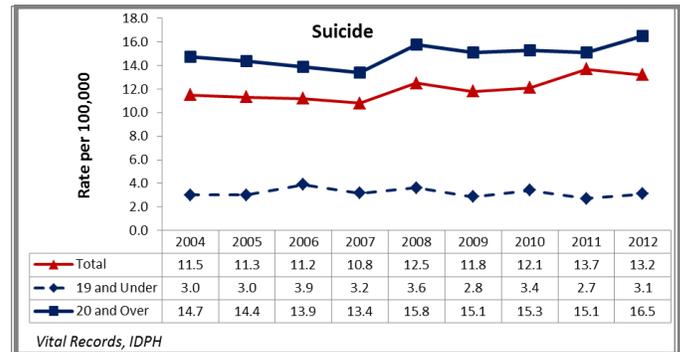


Figure 3: Age-Specific Suicide Rates, IDPH Vital Records

## CONCLUSIONS ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING IN IOWA



Underage drinking in Iowa is a serious public health problem. It is important to know that children as young as 9 years old may begin to use alcohol. Alcohol use has been associated with financial, social, interpersonal and legal problems. Additionally, alcohol use is a risk factor for suicidal behaviors. Although Iowa data shows alcohol use among 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders has been decreasing, more than 1 in 4 11<sup>th</sup> graders are reporting alcohol use monthly. In order to continue to reduce the use of alcohol among Iowa youth, current and future prevention efforts need to focus on improving communication among youth and between youth and caring adults, and most importantly, use evidence-based programs and policies.

efforts need to focus on improving communication among youth and between youth and caring adults, and most importantly, use evidence-based programs and policies.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information or to learn more about prevention and treatment resources, please contact the Iowa Substance Abuse Information Center at 1-866-242-4111 or visit [www.drugfreeinfo.org](http://www.drugfreeinfo.org).

This information was provided by the Iowa State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup. Visit us on the web at [http://www.idph.state.ia.us/bh/sa\\_epi\\_workgroup.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/bh/sa_epi_workgroup.asp)

### REFERENCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Alcohol and public health. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Teen drinking and driving. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/teendrinkinganddriving/>

Iowa Department of Education. (2013). The Annual Condition of Education Report. Retrieved from <https://www.educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/2013ConditionOfEducation.pdf>

Iowa Department of Public Health. (2012). Vital statistics of Iowa. Retrieved from [http://www.idph.state.ia.us/apl/common/pdf/health\\_statistics/2012/vital\\_stats\\_2012.pdf](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/apl/common/pdf/health_statistics/2012/vital_stats_2012.pdf)

Iowa Youth Survey. (2012). 2012 Iowa Youth Survey: State of Iowa Results. Retrieved from [http://www.iowayouthsurvey.iowa.gov/images/2012\\_State/IYS\\_State\\_Report\\_2012.pdf](http://www.iowayouthsurvey.iowa.gov/images/2012_State/IYS_State_Report_2012.pdf)

National Survey on Drug Use and Health. (n.d.). Appendix B: Tables of Model-Based Estimates (50 States and the District of Columbia) Retrieved from <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k10State/NSDUHsae2010/NSDUHsaeAppB2010.htm>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2013). Talk. They hear you. Retrieved from <http://www.samhsa.gov/underagedrinking/>