

# The Extra Mile

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

## Where Will Nebraska Draw the Line on Alcohol Sales?

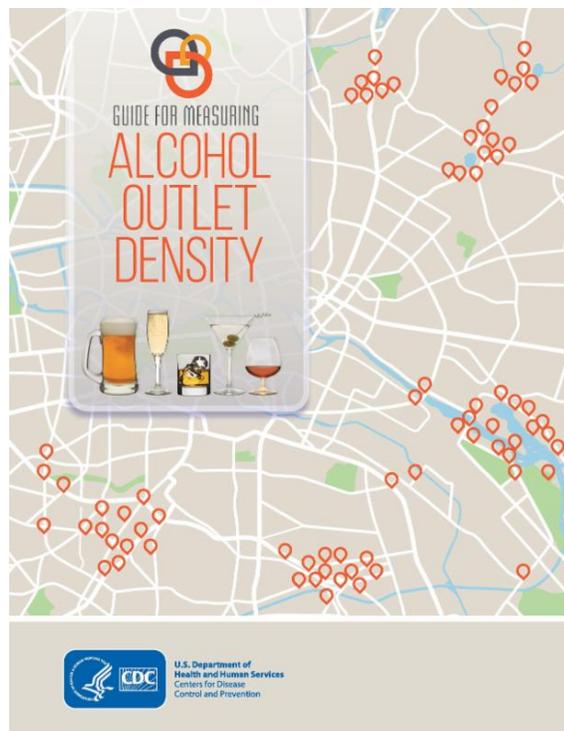
Action on outlet density needed to address binge drinking and DUI rates

"You can buy alcohol pretty much anywhere in our state nowadays, including conventional retail outlets like bars and restaurants; questionable locations like grocery stores; and mind-boggling spots like gas stations (we have the second-worst DUI rate in the country), shopping malls, nail salons, shooting ranges, axe-throwing businesses and now furniture stores," Project Extra Mile Executive Director Chris Wagner noted in a recent [opinion piece](#).

Nebraska Furniture Mart (NFM) began offering beer and wine to customers in their store in late November. Margie Magnuson has been working more than a decade to address the harms associated with outlet density in her neighborhood. She shared her concerns about those making light of the furniture store's decision in the Omaha World-Herald's [Public Pulse](#): "Alcohol is regulated for a reason; it has the ability to cause great harm, and we should not take lightly the effects it can have on us as a society."

Individuals like Magnuson, communities, and states across the country are focusing more on alcohol outlet density as part of efforts to reduce excessive drinking and its negative health and social consequences. Regulating outlet density -- the concentration of retail alcohol outlets in a given geographic area -- is considered one of the most effective approaches to address excessive alcohol use.

A high concentration of alcohol outlets is associated with violence, alcohol-impaired driving, and a variety of public nuisances. A review of more than 88 scientific papers by the [Community Preventive Services Task Force](#) (CPSTF) concluded that "greater outlet density is associated with increased alcohol consumption and related harms." The Task Force also noted that state and local policy changes that increase outlet density and alcohol availability (including



allowing sales of new beverages) can significantly increase alcohol consumption and related problems.

In Nebraska, the Liquor Control Commission has continued granting liquor licenses to a variety of kid-friendly, family-oriented venues. Allowing alcohol sales to be a part of these types of environments doesn't make sense from a public health perspective. The number of permanent and temporary liquor licenses has steadily climbed over the last several years in Nebraska, with no corresponding increase in population.

There are nearly 5,000 annual [retail liquor licenses](#) in the state or approximately one license for every 400 people. The density of licenses is much more concentrated in some neighborhoods and entertainment districts throughout the state, particularly in Lincoln and Omaha. Research has shown that reducing clustering (or the proximity of outlets to one another) is an important consideration for municipalities and states because it impacts alcohol price and consumption.

Across Nebraska, the public health impact of alcohol use can be observed, in part, by our state's health outcomes. Nebraska's health ranking continues to decline, dropping two more places from 13th to 15th best in 2019. This is largely due to a lack of progress in addressing our excessive drinking rate, both among adults and youth. If we hope to improve our binge drinking rate from 5th worst in the country, we're going to have to begin addressing the availability, price, and marketing of alcohol.

The document [Regulating Alcohol Outlet Density: An Action Guide](#) highlights the case study "The Tale of Two Cities in Nebraska" where municipalities and community members have made some headway at the local level to begin addressing alcohol outlet density. Project Extra Mile also offers [ACTION Guides](#) on addressing liquor licensing and excessive alcohol use and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has prepared a [guide](#) for communities on measuring outlet density.

Additional community engagement is needed as we continue to shine a spotlight on the problem of alcohol outlet density in Nebraska. Wagner concluded, "Until we elevate the public interest over special interests by basing our decisions on research over industry scaremongering, our state is going to continue to lose innocent lives and suffer the social and economic costs from our industry-friendly policies."

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## Help Make a Difference in Your Community in 2020

**Evidence-based tools available to reduce alcohol-related harms**

Are you interested in making a positive impact in your community?

**ACTION Guides** are easy-to-use tools for communities looking to improve their quality of life. Five topic-specific Guides are available at no cost to interested community members and organizations working to reduce alcohol-related harms. They contain current information and statistics on issues that are relevant to alcohol misuse and its harms, as well as strategies for creating change. ACTION Guides are a starting point for community members who are willing to go the extra mile in preventing alcohol-related harms in their community.

Each ACTION Guide includes one PowerPoint presentation, an issue brief, and a list of supplemental resource materials. The presentation consists of a blank slide where you may add any relevant local data to tailor the information to your community. Our goal is that individuals and organizations will use the Guides to learn more about topics of interest and raise awareness about alcohol use at the

state and local levels.

ACTION Guide topics include:

**Advocacy 101:** Provides tips for anyone who would like to address an issue by organizing their community, as well as engaging with key decisionmakers. It outlines different avenues for advocating, distinguishes advocacy and lobbying, and provides tips for both the seasoned and new advocates.

**Civics 101:** Provides information on the lawmaking process at the city, county, state, and national levels. This ACTION Guide also provides information about how to build effective relationships with policymakers and become a resource on a topic.

**Excessive Alcohol Consumption:** Identifies evidence-based strategies that communities can implement to prevent and reduce excessive alcohol consumption and its related harms. This is critical since excessive alcohol consumption is the third leading preventable cause of death in the U.S.

**Liquor Licensing 101:** Explains the liquor licensing process in Nebraska at every stage, focusing on how community leaders can get involved locally to keep their neighborhoods safe. The guide also outlines the role of the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission and how concerned citizens can address problems even after a liquor license has been issued.

**Underage Drinking:** Offers essential information about the state of underage drinking in Nebraska, why it warrants community involvement, and what strategies can be undertaken to ensure that this harmful behavior is reduced and even eliminated.

To obtain an ACTION Guide, click [here](#) and fill out the form at the bottom of the page.



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## Link Between Alcohol-Related Cancer Deaths and Alcohol Policies

**More restrictive policies were associated with a lower risk of cancer mortality**

Researchers at [Boston Medical Center and Boston University](#) recently studied the relationship between more stringent alcohol policies and the number of alcohol-related cancer deaths per state from 2006 to 2010, specifically cancers of the esophagus, mouth and throat, liver, prostate (among men) and breast (among women).

Each state was given an Alcohol Policy Scale score based on twenty-nine different alcohol regulations, including restrictions on the physical availability of alcohol (outlet density), state alcohol tax laws, and other policies. The [study](#) found that for all cancers combined, more restrictive policies were associated with a reduced risk of cancer mortality. A 10 percent increase in the strength of alcohol policies based on their Policy Scale Scores was associated with an 8.5 percent relative decrease in cancer deaths.

"When thinking about cancer risk and cancer prevention, the focus tends to be on individual-level risk factors rather than environmental determinants of cancer, like public policies that affect the consumption of alcohol or tobacco," said Timothy Naimi, MD, MPH, one of the study's authors. "Implementing effective policies to reduce alcohol consumption is a promising means of cancer prevention that merits further investigation."

An additional [study](#) examined how public health policies on alcohol and tobacco implemented from the 1960s affected cancer deaths in Australia. Researchers found that public health policies on alcohol and tobacco introduced from the 1960s to 2013 are related to reductions in mortality rates for various cancers. Researchers estimate the policies have prevented more than 5 percent (36,000) of total cancer deaths in Australia.

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## Industry Involvement Undermines Prevention Efforts

### Public health measures should be made "independent of commercial interests"

The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned against collaborating with the alcohol industry when developing and implementing public health measures. A [report](#) issued by WHO and other global partners concluded, "In this regard, any involvement of the alcohol industry in public health decisions has substantial risks with limited or no benefits. Alcohol industry activities related to marketing, education, corporate political activities, and funding of research can undermine public health efforts by hedging them against more effective interventions and distorting the research agenda."

A recently published Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) report highlighted drunk drivers with high BACs. Funding for the report, [High-Risk Impaired Drivers: Combating a Critical Threat](#), was provided by the Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility (Responsibility.org). The Foundation was established by the distilled spirits industry in 1991.

In early December, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) issued a [statement](#) in response to the report. "ALL drunk drivers are high risk. The alcohol industry funded the GHSA report to distract from that undeniable fact and it is damaging to efforts nationwide to eliminate the No. 1 killer on America's roads. According to the CDC, the average drunk driver has driven drunk 80 times before getting caught, and a first-time drunk driver with a .08 BAC is just as dangerous as a driver with a higher BAC. Classifying drunk drivers as "high-risk" or "hard core" is a tired debate that was settled years ago . . ." An older [study](#) found that an impaired driver may have anywhere from 200 to 2000 violations to statistically generate one arrest.

[Research](#) published in 2018 in *The BMJ* reviewed alcohol industry efforts focusing on social responsibility initiatives and found that almost all of them (97 percent) did not have scientific backing. The study warned that alcohol producers benefited from brand exposure while the public health benefits of their efforts are likely to be minimal. Study authors found that eleven percent of the industry efforts had the potential for harm by increasing alcohol consumption and the

likelihood of alcohol-impaired driving.

**"Research on drinking and driving should be funded only by sources that are independent of commercial and other vested interests."**

**-Babor et al., 2018**



### Omaha Metro Coalition Meeting

Wednesday, January 22, 2020

9:00 a.m.

Please join us for Coffee and Conversation as we discuss

**Critical Issues for 2020,  
as well as discuss the upcoming  
Legislative Session.**

*Policy Work Group Meeting  
Following the Coalition Meeting*

**Thank you for your involvement!**

Jennifer Pollock, Coalition Chair

**MEETING LOCATION:**

National Safety Council

Lower Level

11620 M Circle, Omaha NE

Use Lower Level, West Entrance

For more information:

(402) 963-9047

[www.projectextramile.org](http://www.projectextramile.org)

[info@projectextramile.org](mailto:info@projectextramile.org)



## Coalition Meetings

Please join us in 2020 to help protect our communities from alcohol-related harms.



Mark your calendar now to attend the  
2020 Recognition Dinner  
and help us celebrate 25 years!  
Thursday, November 12, 2020



## 2020 Meeting Dates

January 22nd

February 12th

March 11th

April 15th

May 13th

June 10th

August 12th

September 9th

October 14th

November 4th

December 9th

Meetings are held at the  
National Safety Council  
Lower Level Room 101  
11620 M Circle, Omaha NE 68137



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