

PREVENTION WORKS!

Mission: To build a safe and healthy Vermont for us all by organizing prevention advocates to work collaboratively on issues of policy, practice and attitude related to substance abuse.

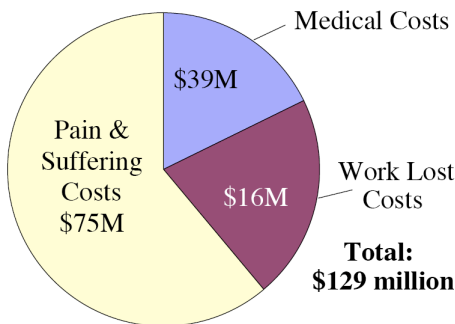
Vision: All of Vermont's communities will be safe and healthy.

A PW! Briefing on the MLDA

VERMONT'S MINIMUM LEGAL DRINKING AGE

18 MLDA = DANGEROUS CONSEQUENCES: Individuals who start drinking earlier than age 21 are more likely to be a driver in a motor vehicle crash, be injured, and be in a physical fight, according to a recent study. The younger the individual, the more likely he or she will experience these outcomes after drinking.¹

Costs of Underage Drinking
Vermont 2007



WE ALL PAY FOR UNDERAGE DRINKING: Underage drinking costs Vermont \$129 million in 2007 (see chart below), or \$2,038 per Vermont youth, according to a study from the Pacific Institute of Research and Evaluation.² These costs will only increase if Vermont's MLDA is lowered.

21 HAS REDUCED CRASHES: Prior to raising the drinking age, 18-20-year old drivers who drank in Vermont were over-

represented by 200 percent among the total number of drivers in alcohol-related crashes.

That number has dropped by half under the 21 MLDA.³ In the continental United States in the 1980s, data showed that a lower MLDA produced an 11 percent increase in fatalities among youth, according to motor vehicle fatality data.⁴

THE EUROPEAN MYTH: The majority of European countries – where the drinking age is lower than in the United States – have higher rates of intoxication among young people than does the United States. Less than one quarter of European countries have intoxication rates lower or equivalent to those in the United States.⁵ Europe has two times the number of alcohol-related diseases as the United States, according to WHO.⁶

U.S. MILITARY SUPPORTS 21: Fort Bliss, located in New Mexico, was the last U.S. military base to adopt the 21 MLDA in 2008. This was done to reduce high rates of alcohol-related problems like drunk driving crashes, fights, domestic violence, and sexual assaults.⁷

¹ Hingson, R. et al., "Age of Drinking Onset and Injuries, Motor Vehicle Crashes, and Physical Fights After Drinking and When Not Drinking"

² Pacific Institute of Research & Evaluation.

³ Center for Science in the Public Interest; Alcohol Policies Project Fact Sheet; Jim Hall, Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board, at press conference on the National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month, Washington, DC December 18, 1997.

⁴ Cook, PJ & Tauchen, G, "The Effects of Minimum Drinking Age Legislation on Youthful Auto Fatalities, 1970-1977". Journal of Legal Studies, 15(4): 159-162, 198.

⁵ U.S. Dept. of Justice (2005) Youth Drinking Rates and Problems: A Comparison of European Countries and the United States. Prepared by Joel Grube, PhD. Prevention Research Center, Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation.

⁶ World Health Organization (2006) Framework for alcohol policy in the WHO European Region. Copenhagen, Denmark.

⁷ Caldwell, A., Associated Press, 06/01/2008, http://www.militarytimes.com/news/2008/05/ap_fortbliss_drinkingage_052908/.

PW! Goals

- Age 21 remains the Minimum Legal Drinking Age in Vermont.
- The public is provided with the facts about responsible drinking behaviors, the effects of alcohol on adolescent brain development, the European myth, and the financial losses to Vermont's economy due to underage drinking.
- Parents and others who are working to reduce and prevent underage drinking and its consequences are supported in their efforts.
- Evidence-based programs are implemented, and resources are allocated to Vermont's colleges to assist their efforts to reduce underage and excessive drinking on their campuses.

For more information about the details of this publication, or to learn more about Prevention Works!, please contact Christine Peterson at (802) 479-7378 or teenleadaa@myfairpoint.net, or visit preventionworksvt.org.