



Underage Drinking Fact Sheet

- ◆ Alcohol is the No. 1 drug of choice among teens in America. (SAMHSA, 2004)
- ◆ Alcohol kills more young people than all illicit drugs combined. (Grunbaum, 2002)
- ◆ More than 6,000 youth ages 15-20 die each year due to underage drinking-related consequences including homicides, suicides and alcohol-related crashes and other unintentional injuries. (Hingson and Kenkle, 2004)
- ◆ In 2005, 6,100 youth ages 15-20 were killed in traffic crashes—of those, 2,035 youth (33 percent) died in crashes involving alcohol. (NTSHA, 2006)
- ◆ Although young drivers make up a mere 6.3 percent of the total driving population in the U.S., they constituted 12.6 percent of the drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2005. (NHTSA, 2005)
- ◆ The more youth drink, the more likely they are to drink and drive, or ride in a car where the driver has been drinking. (Hingson, et al, 2001)
- ◆ Nationally, two out of three children killed in alcohol-related crashes were riding with a drinking driver from 1997 to 2002. (CDC, 2003)
- ◆ Chicago youth had the highest rate of binge drinking at 25.7 percent among the top 15 U.S. metropolitan areas and above the national average of 22.7 percent. (The National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2006)
- ◆ The brain does not finish developing until a person is at least in their early 20s, and one of the last regions to mature is intimately involved with the ability to plan and make complex judgments. (Kuhn 1998, White 2001, Giedd 1999, 2004)
- ◆ In 2006, a national survey established that alcohol has been tried by approximately 40.5 percent of eighth graders, 61.5 percent of tenth graders, and 73 percent of twelfth graders. (Monitoring the Future, 2006)
- ◆ In 2006, 73 percent of high school seniors have used alcohol; in comparison, 47 percent have smoked cigarettes; 42 percent have used marijuana, and 8.5 percent have used cocaine. (Monitoring the Future, 2006)
- ◆ The total cost attributable to the consequences of underage drinking was \$61.9 billion per year in 2001 dollars. This is \$5.4 billion in medical costs, \$14.9 billion in work loss and other resource costs, and \$41.6 billion in lost quality of life. (PIRE, 2005)