



Michigan Alcohol Policy Promoting Health & Safety

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Good morning, Chairman Carter and members of the regulatory reform committee,

My name is Mike Tobias, and I am representing Michigan Alcohol Policy Promoting Health and Safety (MAP). MAP was established in 2009 with a mission to advocate for laws and policies that reduce the illegal and harmful use of alcohol.

MAP is opposed to HB4201.

A basic prevention principle is that the more accessible and available alcohol is, the higher the chance for alcohol-related problems. With over 20,000 alcohol retailers, alcohol is very accessible and available in our state.

During the start of the pandemic, alcohol was made more accessible and available by:

- creating social drinking districts;
- allowing cocktails to go;
- creating temporary and permanent outdoors service areas;
- and increasing home delivery of alcohol.

This increased availability resulted in record sales of alcohol in 2020 in Michigan. Now we are seeing increases in alcohol use disorder. The following is a headline from a March 6, 2023 Michigan Radio news article by Kate Wells, "[Michigan hospitals saw 50% spike in alcohol-related liver disease during early COVID pandemic.](#)"

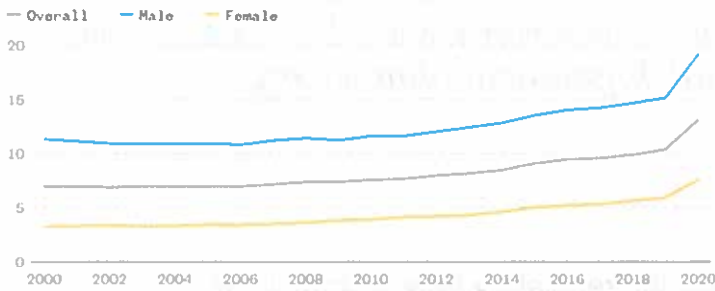
Additionally, there were 357 deaths in alcohol-involved crashes in 2021--up 27.0 percent from 281 in 2012.

Earlier this month on March 7, 2023, Farah Hanley, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Chief Deputy Director for Health, gave a presentation to the appropriations subcommittee on DHHS. She reported that in FY22, 63,000 individuals received treatment for substance use disorder. Of the 63,000 individuals receiving treatment, alcohol was the #1 substance from which people sought treatment.

Even before the pandemic the US had been seeing rises in alcohol attributable deaths. However, these deaths really began to take off after the pandemic. See chart on back page.

Alcohol deaths surged during the Covid pandemic's first year

Age-adjusted alcohol-induced death rate per 100,000 people.



Source: National Center for Health Statistics
Graphic: Nigel Chiwaya / NBC News

Michigan Numbers from the CDC:

- From 2015-2019, the average number of deaths from excessive drinking is more than 4,500 per year.
- \$8.2 billion or \$2.10 per drink sold - annual economic cost of excessive drinking due to lost productivity, criminal justice, and health care costs in 2010.
- 18% of Michigan adults binge drink (this is slightly higher than the national average).

Since allowing cocktails to go and delivery is fairly new, it would be irresponsible to make this practice permanent without looking at possible unintended consequences. Consequences such as minors getting access to these products, products not being properly sealed and labelled, and increases in drunk driving. If Michigan is going to make cocktails to go permanent, then we should make sure on the front end that the laws, rules, and regulations are followed and that this new policy change will not increase drinking and driving. Do the people who deliver alcohol check ID? Are cocktails to go properly sealed? Are people buying cocktails to go just before closing time and then getting in their cars to drive home? Below is a photo of a cocktail to go from a Bay City retailer.



Please do not support HB4201. At this time, no action is necessary. The sunset does not expire until January 1, 2026. People can get cocktails to go. Do not make these products permanent until we are certain these products are not being accessed by minors and that these products are not contributing to increased drinking and driver. Before making cocktails to go permanent, take the time to determine if any of these unintended consequences are occurring.

Thank you for hearing my concerns and let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Tobias
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