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Nebraska Women Binge Drink at Higher Rate than National Average

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Lincoln—Nebraska women binge drink at a rate higher than the average in the rest of the country, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

CDC data indicate that in 2011, 15.7 percent of women age 18 or older reported binge drinking in the state, compared to 12.5 percent nationally.

"This is an area where we don't want to be Number One," said Scot L. Adams, director of the Division of Behavioral Health at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

For women, four or more drinks during a single occasion is considered binge drinking. For men, it's five or more drinks.

Nebraska men also report binge drink at a higher rate than the national average—30.2 percent, compared to 24.2 percent nationally.

"For women, binge drinking is especially concerning because it increases the risk for breast cancer, heart disease and stroke—leading causes of death in women—as well as other health problems," said Dr. Joseph Acierno, Chief Medical Officer and Director of the Division of Public Health.

"Binge drinking isn't healthy on many levels. There's a risk of alcoholism," Adams said. "There's a risk of drunk driving. There's a risk of social behaviors you don't want to face the next day."

The Division of Behavioral funds community coalitions in Nebraska to combat underage and binge drinking, as well as drunk driving and prescription drug abuse. Strategies include responsible beverage server training, education in schools and media campaigns designed to raise awareness, and change social norms.

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