

Aging, Alcohol & Drugs



Older Adults in Community

June 13, 2017





The Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS)

Bureau of the MA Department of Public Health in the Executive Office of Health and Human Services

- Licenses addictions treatment programs and counselors
- Tracks statewide substance use trends
- Develops and implements policies and programs
- Funds and monitors prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery support services
- Provides access to addictions services for the uninsured
- Supports the addictions workforce





Alcohol and Aging Bodies

- Increased sensitivity
- Lowered tolerance
- Slowed metabolism
- Effects experienced more quickly and for longer time

“When you’re young, you have a lot of plasticity in how you respond to things that are toxic. You lose some of that as you get older.”

George Koob, Director of NIH National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Lower amounts = bigger effect





Alcohol and Falls



- Alcohol affects
 - Coordination
 - Reaction time
 - Alertness
- Use may lead to
 - Drowsiness
 - Poor judgement/Risky situations
 - Orthostatic hypotension (head rush)





Alcohol doesn't mix....

Medications with **significant** alcohol interactions

- Benzodiazepines & Other sedatives
- Opiate/Opioid Analgesics
- Some anticonvulsants
- Some psychotropics
- Some antidepressants
- Some barbiturates

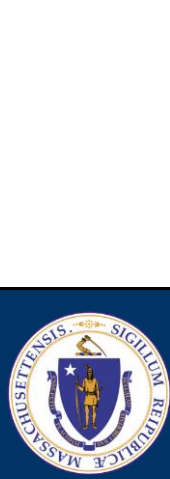


Bucholz et al., 1995; NIAAA, 1998



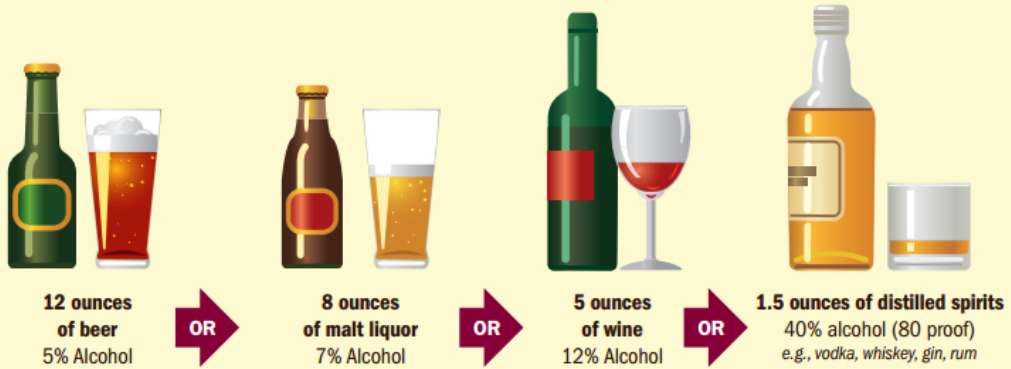
What Is a Drink?





What is a drink?

What is a “standard drink” in the US?



2

SOURCE: National Institute for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.





'Safe Levels' for healthy elders

Men AND women age 65+:

- **No more than 1 drink/day**

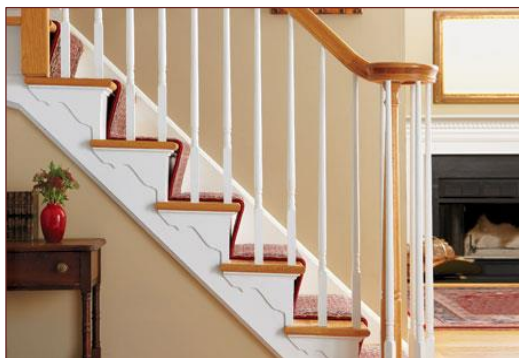
AND

- **No more than 7/week**





Older Adults and Binge Drinking



- Older Men:
 - **4** or more standard drinks on a drinking occasion
- Older Women:
 - **3** or more standard drinks on a drinking occasion

Massachusetts binge rate: 9% for ages 65+



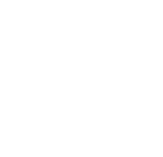


Between 2000-2001 and 2012-2013 Alcohol Use, Risky Drinking and AUDs...

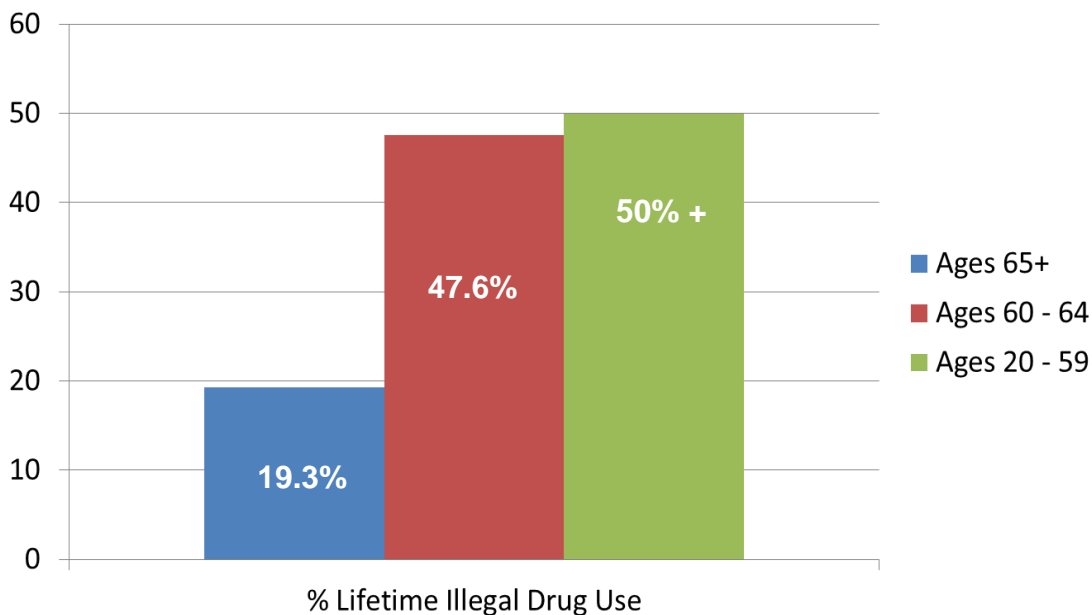
- ↑ Increased - especially among women, **older adults**, racial/ethnic minorities and those who are economically disadvantaged
- ↑ ‘Substantial and unprecedented’ increases in older adult use:
 - 12-month alcohol use increased by 22.4%
 - High risk drinking increased by 65.2%
 - Alcohol Use Disorder increased by 75%

Grant BF, et al. Prevalence of 12-month alcohol use, high risk drinking and DSM-IV alcohol use disorder in the United States, 2001-2001 to 2012-2013. JAMA Psych 2017; DOI: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2017.2161.





Lifetime Illegal Drug Use More exposure and earlier use



National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2012

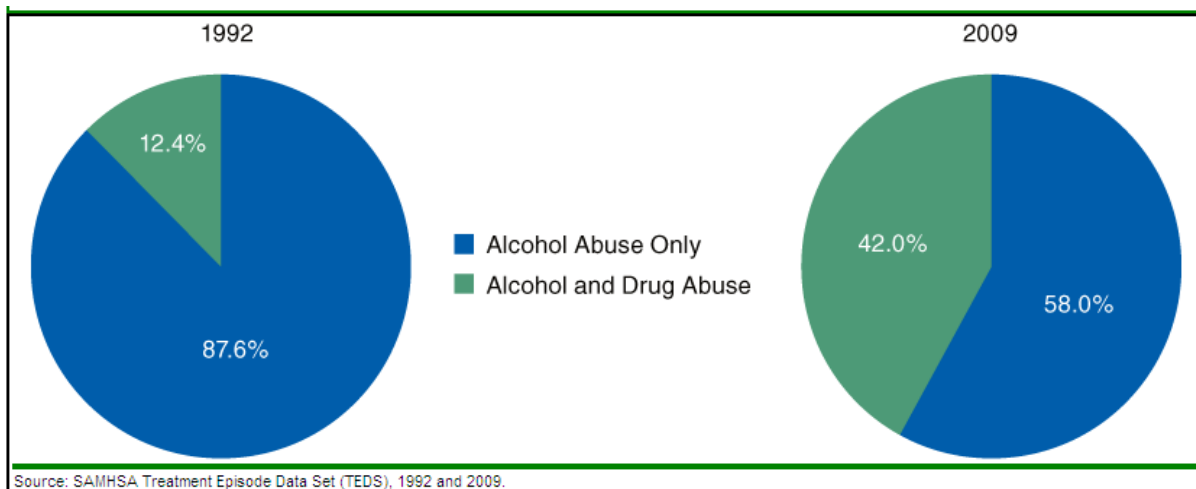




Changes in Older Adult Use

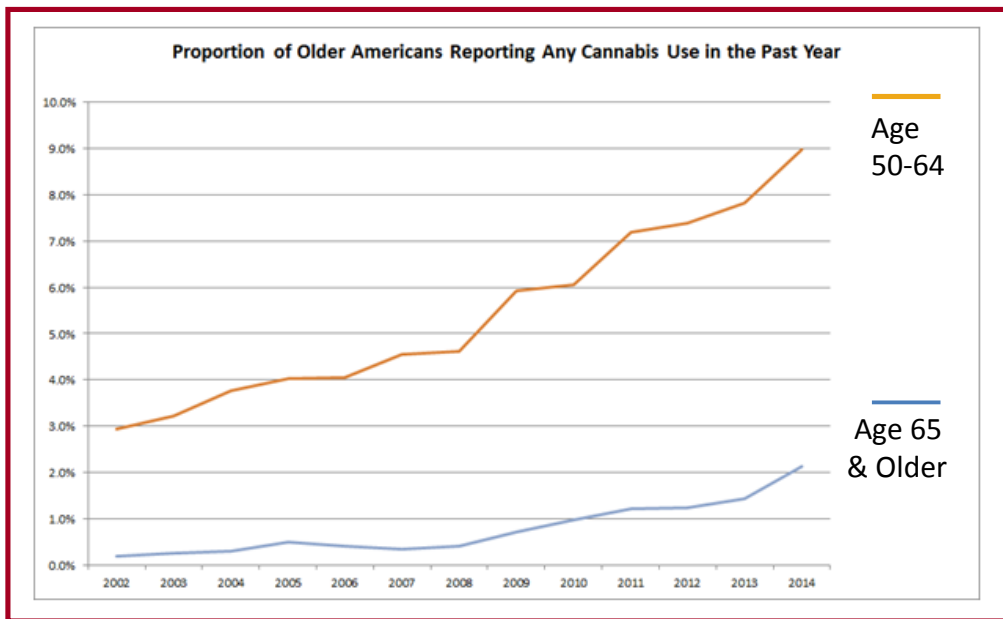


Alcohol Admissions: Ages 50 and older reporting alcohol abuse only and combined alcohol and drug use: 1992 and 2009





Growing Marijuana Use



NSDUH 2002-2014 --- National Survey of Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)





Marijuana

- The most widely used (illicit) drug; active ingredient – tetrahydrocannabinol or THC
- Chronic use may affect ability to learn new information
- Not safe with medications that already affect memory, thinking and coordination

“For somebody who is older, the effects may be the same but the baseline is different.”

Susan Weiss, scientific advisor to NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse
Director on marijuana

Huffington Post 12/07/2012 | Updated Mar 26, 2013

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana/how-does-marijuana-use-affect-your-brain-body>





Marijuana

- May cause
 - Orthostatic hypotension/head rush
 - Functional cognitive impairment
- When inhaled heart rate speeds up
- Other drugs in system may amplify effect



Volkow ND, Swanson JM, Evins AE, et al. Effects of Cannabis Use on Human Behavior, Including Cognition, Motivation, and Psychosis: A Review. *JAMA Psychiatry*. February 2016. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2015.3278.





Smoke is Smoke

- Marijuana smoke irritates throat and lungs; can cause heavy cough while using
- Associated with
 - Airway inflammation
 - Chronic bronchitis
- May reduce respiratory system immune response → respiratory infections → pneumonia



National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. *The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: The Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24625>.





Polypharmacy

‘America’s Other Drug Problem’: Copious Prescriptions For Hospitalized Elderly’

Nearly 20% of older adults discharged
had a medication complication within
45 days of discharge

- ~ 35% preventable
- ~ 5% life threatening



Kanaan A et al. Adverse Drug Events After Hospital Discharge in Older Adults: Types, Severity, and Involvement of Beers Criteria Medications. *J AM Geriatr Soc.* 2013; 61(11):1894-9. Epub 2013 Oct 1.





Growing Problem

- ~20% (1 in 5) of US adults shared pain meds with someone else - friend/family member



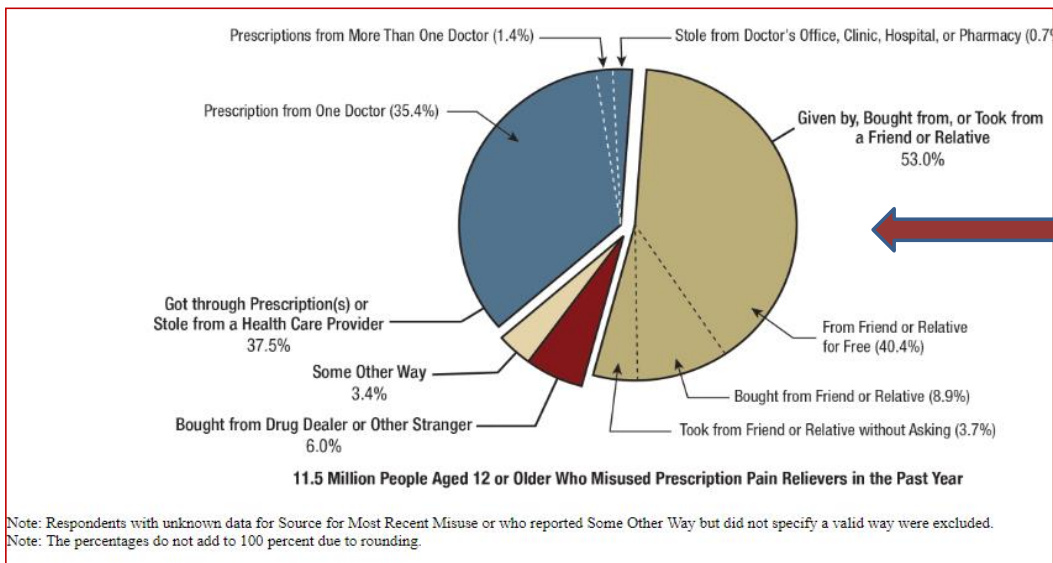
Kennedy-Hendricks, et al. Medication Sharing, Storage, and Disposal Practices for Opioid Medications among US Adults. *JAMA Intern Med.* 2016;176(7):1027-1029.
doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2016.2543.





Access to Pain Meds

Over **half** who misused prescription painkillers got them from a friend or relative **for free**



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2017). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. SMA 17-5044, NSDUH Series H-52). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>





Safe Storage





Dispose of Unused Meds

Got Drugs?

Most abused prescription drugs
come from family and friends.
You could be a drug dealer
and not even know it.

Visit www.dea.gov
for more information.



DEA Take Back Days twice each year
Also check local, safe, drop boxes

And check **FDA Unused Medicines** web
page for disposal tips





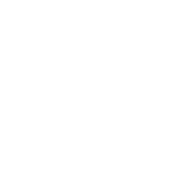
Opioid Use: What We Know Nationally (all ages)

- Roughly 21 - 29% of patients prescribed opioids for chronic pain misuse them
 - Between 8 - 12% develop an opioid use disorder
 - Only about 4 - 6% who misuse prescription opioids transition to heroin
- About 80% of those who use heroin first misused prescription opioids



<https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-crisis>

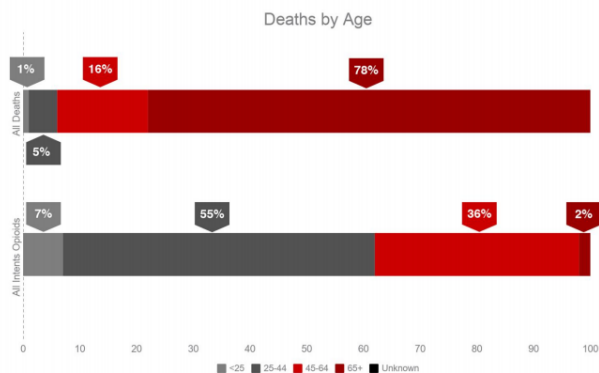




Massachusetts Confirmed Opioid¹-Related Deaths, All Intent Compared to All Deaths by Age: Jan – Dec 2017

Confirmed Opioid¹-Related Deaths, All Intent
Compared to All Deaths by Age: January 2017-December 2017

	0-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Unknown	Total
All Deaths	380	495	1,271	1,499	3,163	6,333	45,617	0	58,758
Confirmed Opioid ¹ -Related Deaths, All Intent	0	126	576	451	428	251	42	0	1,874



¹ Opioids include heroin, opioid-based prescription painkillers, and other unspecified opioids.

¹ Opioids include heroin, opioid-based prescription painkillers, and other unspecified opioids





Messages



- Use correct opioid dose and only for as long as prescribed;
- Ask about possible side effects and when to report;
- Read all medication-related information;
- Inform doctors and pharmacists about all medications, over-the-counter, and any alcohol use; and
- Tell the MD/NP/PA if a medication is not working. Other meds or non-pharmacologic approaches may be appropriate before opioid doses are increased.

SAMHSA and the Administration for Community Living (ACL)
(2012)





What Massachusetts is Doing

Limit initial prescription to 7 days or less

Prescribers & pharmacists must use Prescription Monitoring Program



Prescriber Training on Pain Medication/Signs & Symptoms

Make the Right Call



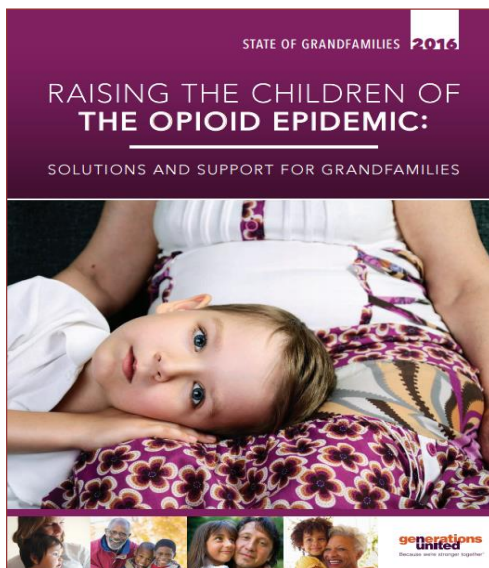
Safe community disposal sites



Health Care & Social Work Professional Core Competencies



A Serious Related Concern



Per 2013 census data :

- 34,000 MA Grandparents are raising grandchildren
- 20% increase since 2005

Approximately 80% of placements with grandparents are due to substance use issues

Survey conducted by the Commission on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren



Not All Grandchildren Are Small



- Pre-teen and adolescence: Ages when they or friends may think about experimenting
- These grandchildren have higher risk for substance use problems
 - Genetic predisposition
 - Possible trauma
 - Other environmental factors





Messages For ALL

- Keep pain and anxiety medications secure
 - Medicine cabinet NOT the safest place
 - Get and use a lock box
 - Don't share any meds
 - Properly dispose of meds when no longer needed
- Support people whose family members suffer from substance use disorders





Judgmental language perpetuates stigma



SAY	NOT
Substance misuse	Substance abuse
Substance use disorder	Drug habit
Person with a substance use disorder	Addict, drunkard, junkie, user, substance abuser
Person who uses drugs	
Person with an alcohol use disorder	Alcoholic
Person in Recovery	Former Addict
Substance Free	Clean

#StateWithoutStigMA



Resources & Help



<https://helplinema.org>

BSAS website – <http://www.mass.gov/dph/bsas>



Support for Family Members



- **Learn to Cope**

27 chapters statewide for family members

– (508) 738-5148 <http://learn2cope.org>



- **Allies in Recovery**

MA residents have free unlimited membership using their zip code

– <http://alliesinrecovery.net>



Questions?



Carol Girard
MA Department of Public Health
Bureau of Substance Abuse Services

Carol.D.Girard@state.ma.us

