

# Excessive Alcohol Use in Colorado

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Excessive alcohol use, alcohol related harms, and alcohol availability in Colorado

Julia Stullken, MPH  
Alcohol Epidemiologist, Prevention Services Division,  
CDPHE

# Disclosures

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# Overview

- Background and context of the problem
- Data on excessive alcohol use, non-fatal alcohol-attributable hospitalizations, and alcohol-induced deaths
- Availability of alcohol in Colorado

## Excessive drinking includes:

**Binge drinking**  
**Women** **Men**  
**4** **5**  
or more drinks or more drinks  
**On one occasion**

**Heavy drinking**  
**Women** **Men**  
**8** **15**  
or more drinks or more drinks  
**In a week**



Any drinking  
during pregnancy



Any drinking by  
people younger than 21

[cdc.gov/alcohol](https://cdc.gov/alcohol)



Excessive drinking is not the same as alcohol use disorder

Most people who drink excessively do not have alcohol use disorder

# The importance of talking about excessive alcohol use

- Excessive drinking causes both injuries and chronic health problems
- The economic costs of alcohol-related problems is >\$5 Billion per year
- This is a leading preventable cause of morbidity and mortality

# Alcohol use increases risk of cancer and violence

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Alcohol is associated with at least 7 types of cancer:

- Mouth
- Voice box
- Throat
- Esophagus
- Breast (women)
- Liver
- Colon and rectum

2

Excessive alcohol use is associated with gun violence:

- Risky firearm behaviors
- Interpersonal firearm violence
- Self-harm

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Alcohol is linked to suicide:

- 31% of suicide decedents had alcohol present in their system
- 30% had a documented problem with alcohol

(data from 2012-2022)

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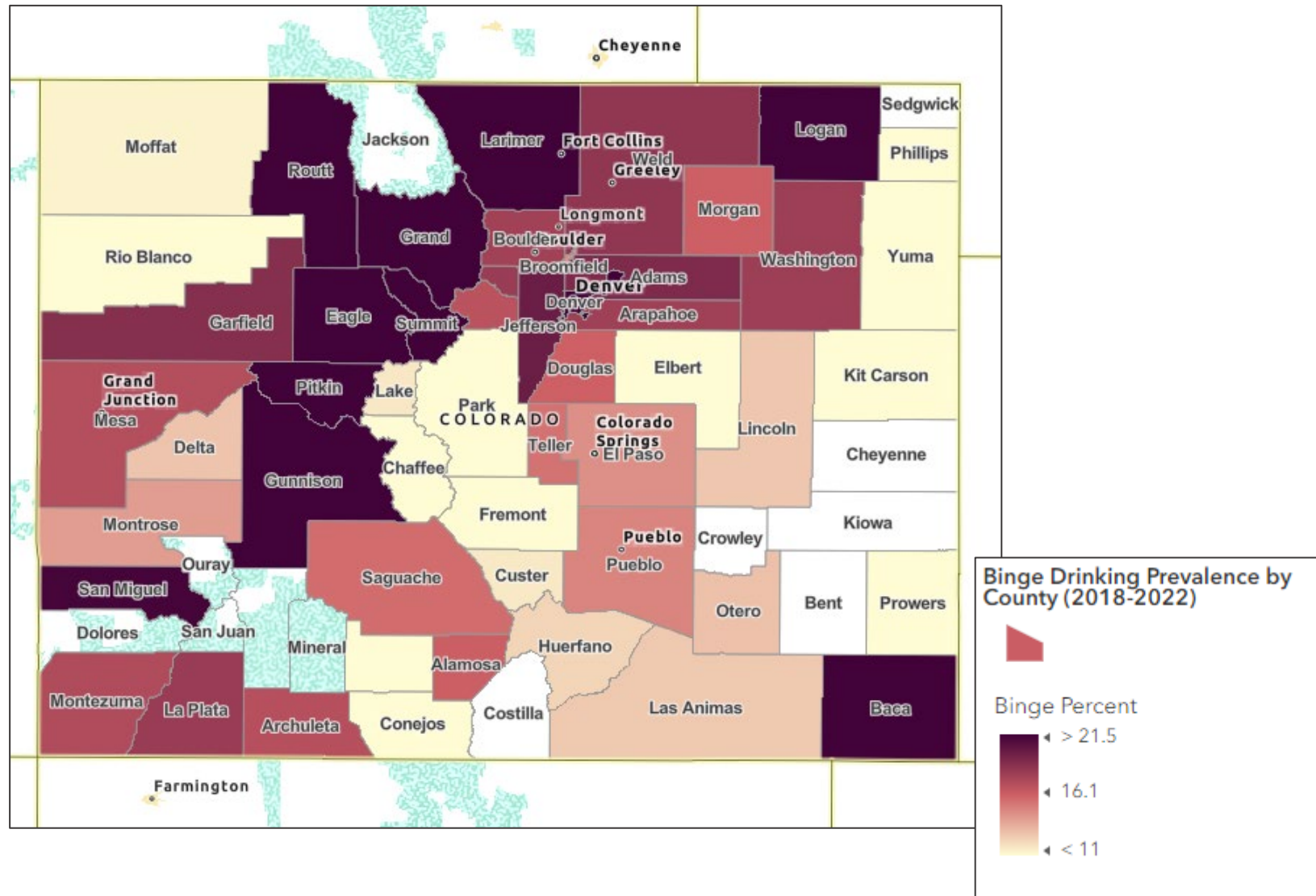
# Estimates of Excessive Drinking

# Excessive alcohol use is common among adults (18+) in Colorado

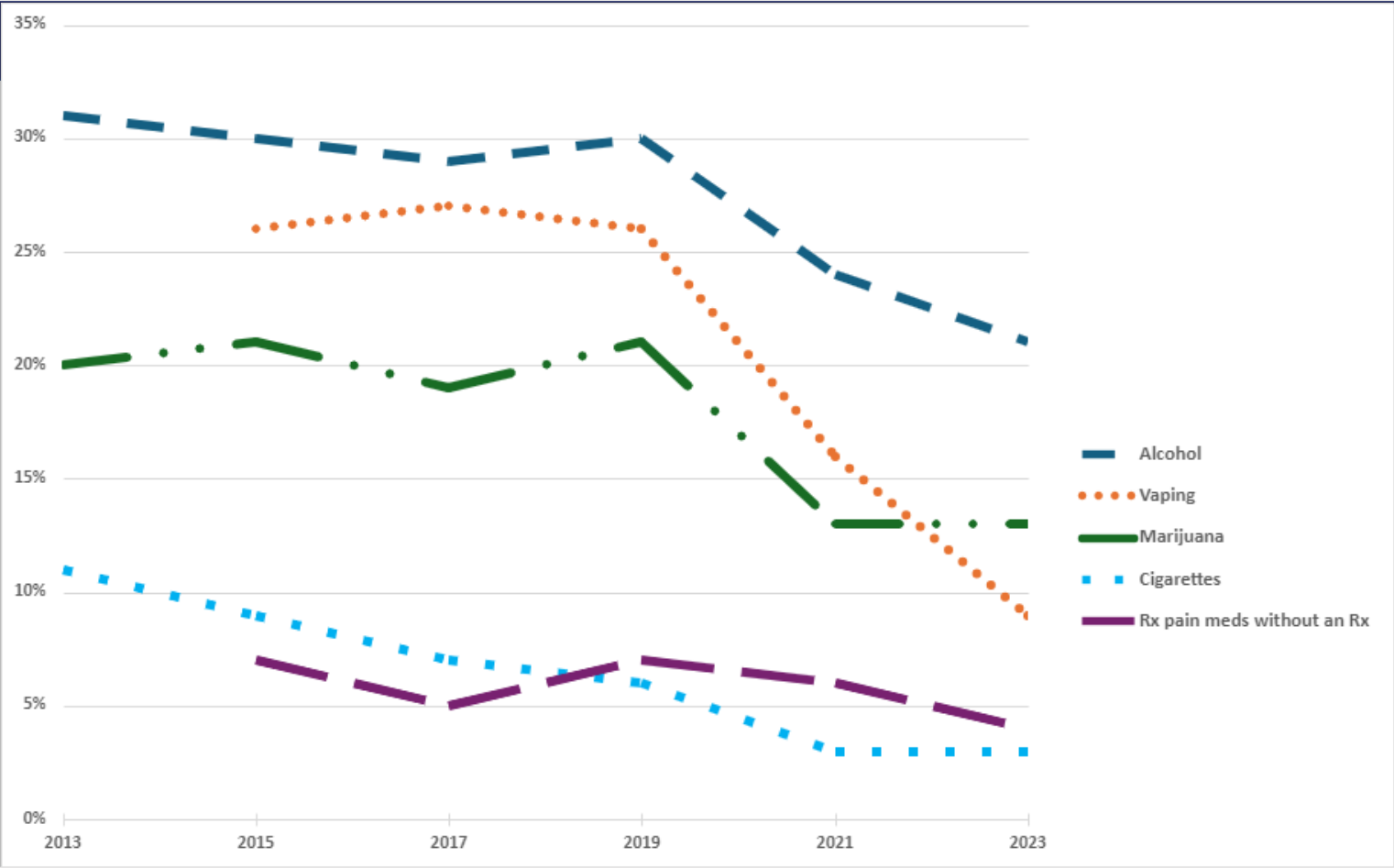
- 60% of Colorado adults drink alcohol, including 36% of Coloradans 18-20 years old
- 18% of adults 18 and older binge drink
- 25% of adults who binge drink have more than 7 drinks per occasion, and 4 or more binge occasions per month



# Differences in binge drinking prevalence by geography



# Past 30-day substance use among youth is declining, but alcohol still represents the most common substance used among public high school students



These HKCS results are representative of youth who attend public high school in Colorado. [For more data from HKCS, visit cdphe.colorado.gov/hkcs](https://cdphe.colorado.gov/hkcs)



# Alcohol Use Among Middle School Students

Indicator	2019	2021	2023
Ever had a drink of alcohol	17%	11%	24%
Had their first drink before age 11	7%	5%	14%
Drank alcohol within the last month	7%	4%	7%

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# Non-fatal Alcohol-Attributable Hospitalizations and Emergency Department Visits

# Non-fatal alcohol-attributable emergency department visits and hospitalizations among Colorado residents

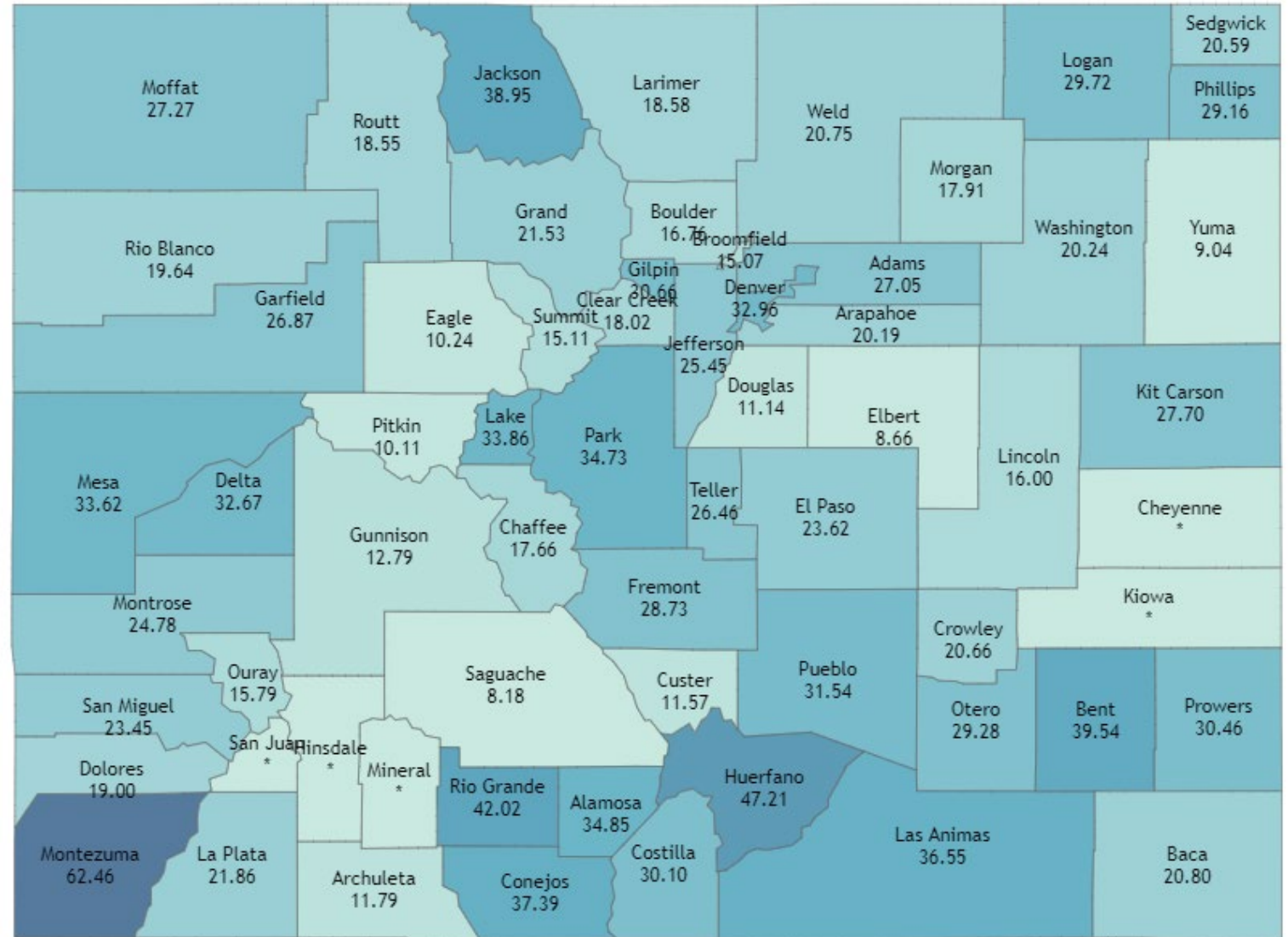
Year	100% Alcohol-Attributable Hospital Discharges (n)	Age-Adjusted Rate of Alcohol-Attributable Hospital Discharges	100% Alcohol-Attributable Emergency Department Visits (n)	Age-Adjusted Rate of Alcohol-Attributable Emergency Department Visits
2019	33630	549.76	33630	1221.55
2020	34336	561.88	34336	1167.53
2021	34247	560.74	34247	1125.30
2022	33839	554.83	33839	1143.02
2023	37217	613.29	37217	1175.73

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# Alcohol-induced Deaths

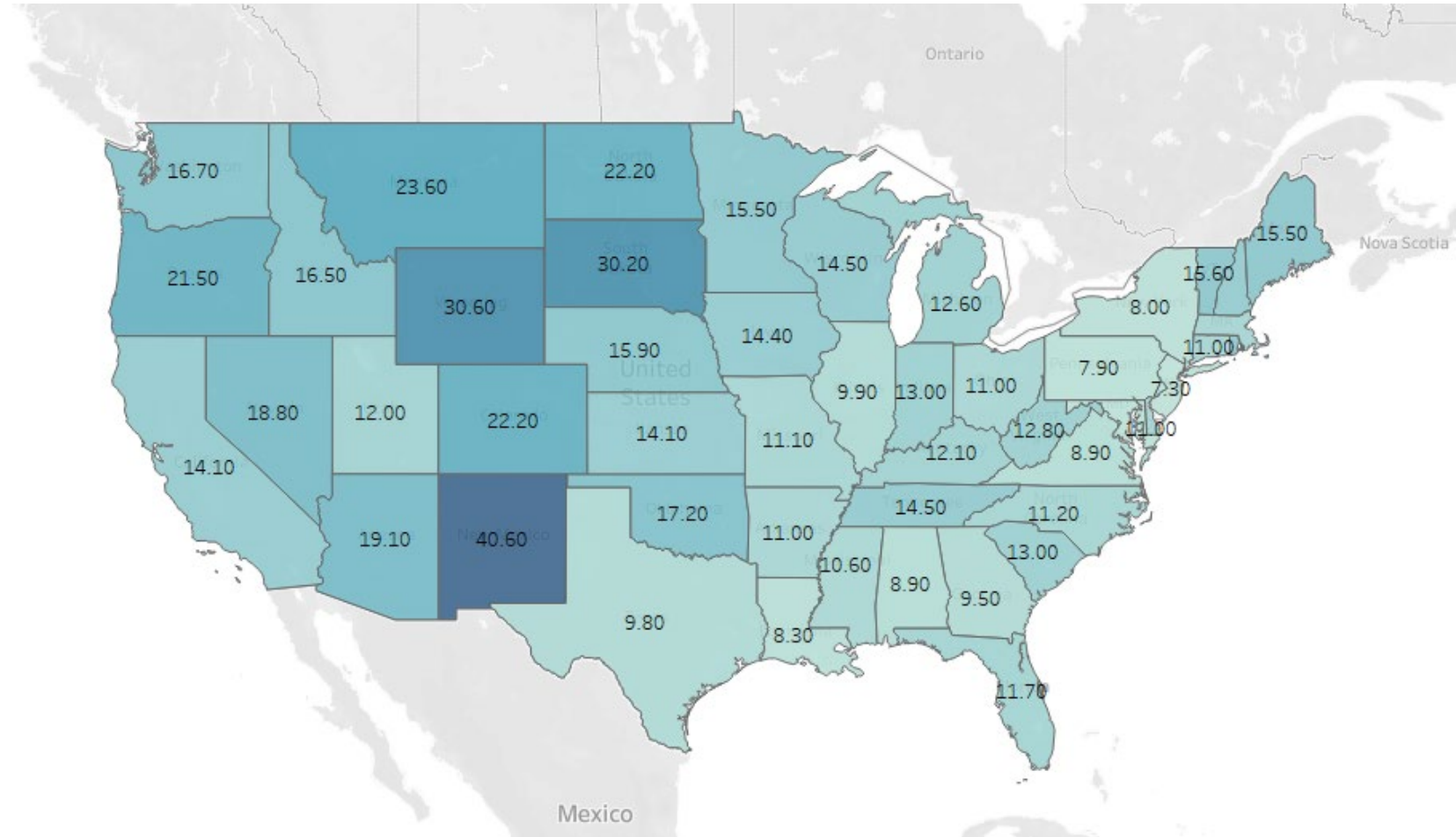
The age-adjusted rate of alcohol-induced deaths in Colorado from 2019-2023 is about **23 deaths per 100,000 people**

These represent only a fraction of the total deaths from excessive alcohol use



The average age-adjusted rate of alcohol induced deaths in the United States is **12.3 deaths per 100,000 people**

Colorado has the **7<sup>th</sup>** highest rate of alcohol-induced deaths



These rates represent the average rate from 2018-2022, and come from the National Vital Statistics System



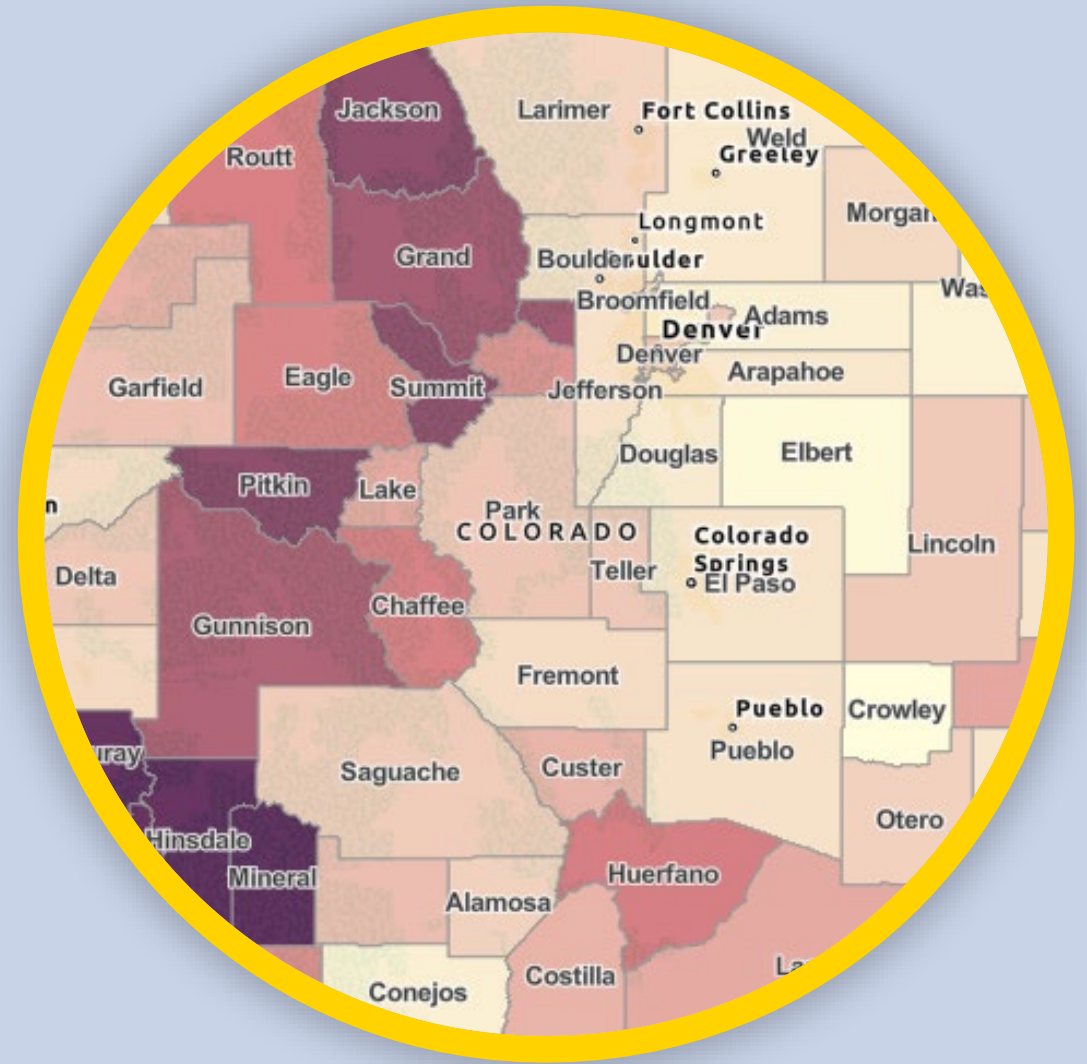
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# Alcohol Availability

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Alcohol outlet density is a measurement of the physical availability of alcohol in a certain geographic area. The Alcohol Outlet Density StoryMap is an interactive tool for viewing alcohol outlet density in Colorado

[cdphe.colorado.gov/alcohol-outlet-density](https://cdphe.colorado.gov/alcohol-outlet-density)

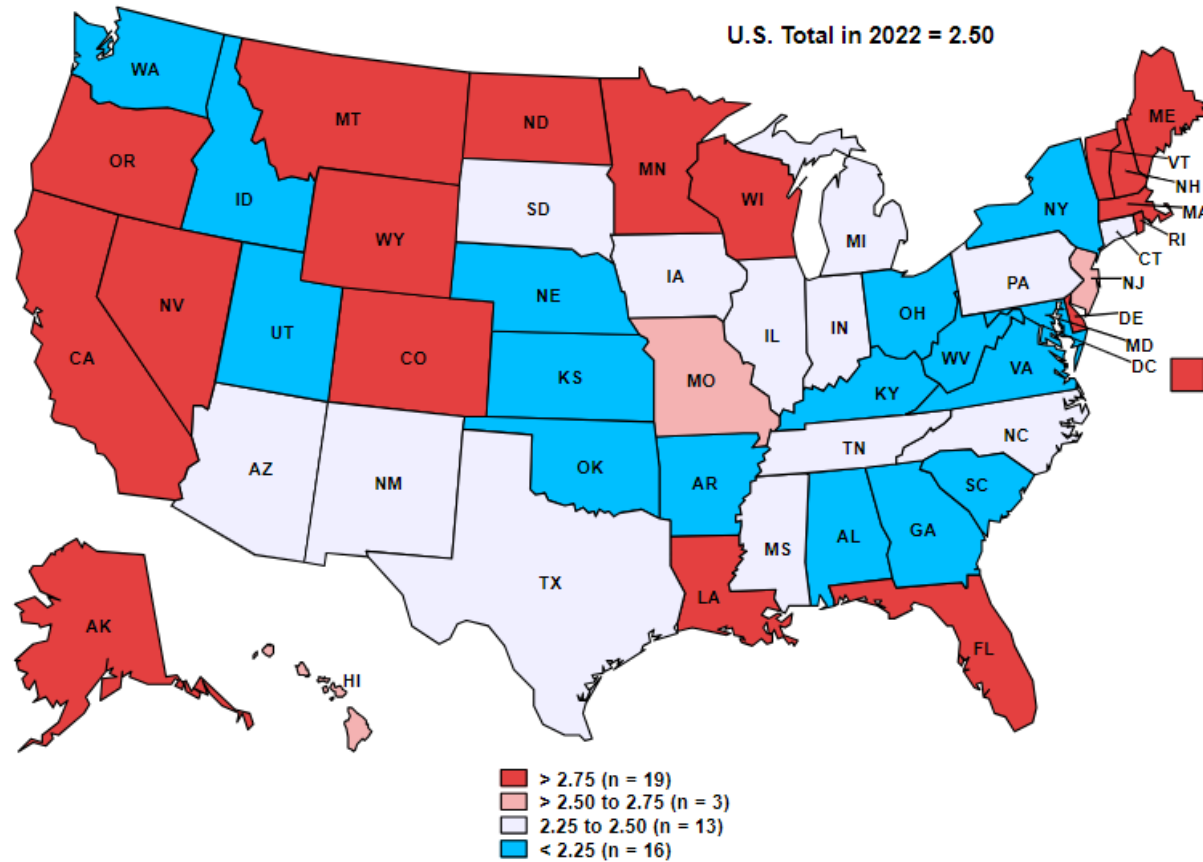


# The number of retail alcohol outlets is increasing

- 45 out of 64 counties in Colorado (70%) had an increase in the number of retail alcohol outlets since 2020
- There was an average of 5% increase in the rate of outlets per 10,000 residents across all counties between 2020 and 2024

# Colorado is among states with highest per capita alcohol consumption

Figure 4. Total per capita consumption of gallons of ethanol by State, United States, 2022.













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# Effective Prevention Strategies

There are several population level strategies for preventing alcohol-related injury, illness, and death

Interventions to Reduce Excessive Alcohol Consumption

Intervention	CPSTF Finding
Dram Shop Liability	 Recommended (strong evidence) March 2010
Electronic Screening and Brief Intervention (e-SBI)	 Recommended (strong evidence) August 2012
Enhanced Enforcement of Laws Prohibiting Sales to Minors	 Recommended (sufficient evidence) February 2006
Increasing Alcohol Taxes	 Recommended (strong evidence) June 2007
Maintaining Limits on Days of Sale	 Recommended (strong evidence) June 2008
Maintaining Limits on Hours of Sale	 Recommended (sufficient evidence) February 2009
Overservice Law Enforcement Initiatives	 Insufficient Evidence March 2010
Privatization of Retail Alcohol Sales	 Recommended Against April 2011
Regulation of Alcohol Outlet Density	 Recommended (sufficient evidence) February 2007
Responsible Beverage Service Training	 Insufficient Evidence October 2010

# Thank you

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Julia Stullken, MPH

Alcohol Epidemiologist, Prevention Services Division

CDPHE

Email: [julia.stullken@state.co.us](mailto:julia.stullken@state.co.us)