



# Underage Drinking in Louisiana

May 2011

Louisiana faces a serious problem in regards to underage alcohol use. Alcohol is still the clear number one substance of choice by Louisiana youth, and alcohol use among Louisiana youth is widespread. In 2010, 65% of 10th graders and 74% of 12th graders indicated alcohol use during their lifetime, and 35% of 10th graders and 46% of 12th graders indicated use in the past 30 days<sup>1</sup>.

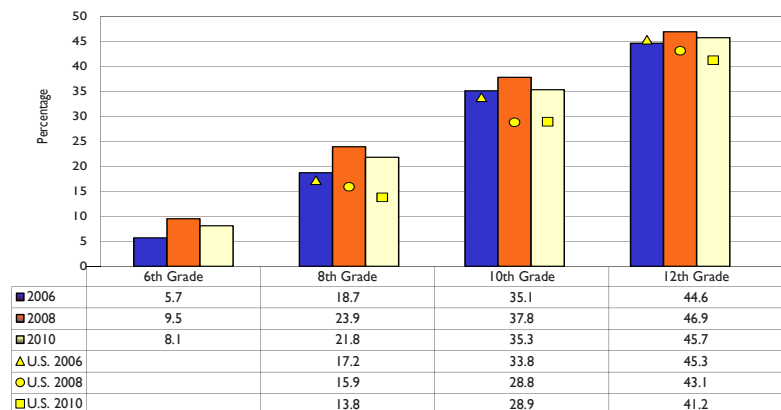
While surveys indicate that Louisiana adults use alcohol at lower rates than the nation (48% vs. 54%, respectively in 2009)<sup>2</sup>, data also reveals that Louisiana youth consume alcohol at higher rates than their national counterparts. This data brief provides a snapshot of underage alcohol use as well as some of the consequences and possible contributing factors.

## Youth Alcohol Consumption

Survey data show that Louisiana youth consistently report higher alcohol use rates than the nation regardless of whether it comes to lifetime use (ever used in your lifetime), past 30-day use, or binge drinking (5 or more drinks in a row during the past 2 weeks). As seen in the figures, use rates for Louisiana youth exceeded national rates for every grade<sup>3</sup>. Alarming, the largest difference in rates was observed in 8th grade students, where in 2010, Louisiana youth reported rates of 30 day alcohol use and binge drinking that were more than 50% higher than national rates. For 12th graders, Louisiana use rates were still higher, but more similar to the nation (approximately 11% higher than the nation for both 30-day use and binge drinking). In absolute terms, the data suggest that almost 1-in-4 8th grade students in Louisiana reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days, and nearly 1-in-8 reported binge drinking in the past 2 weeks. For 12th graders, the picture is more startling, with nearly 1-in-2 reporting 30-day use of alcohol, and 1-in-4 reporting binge drinking.

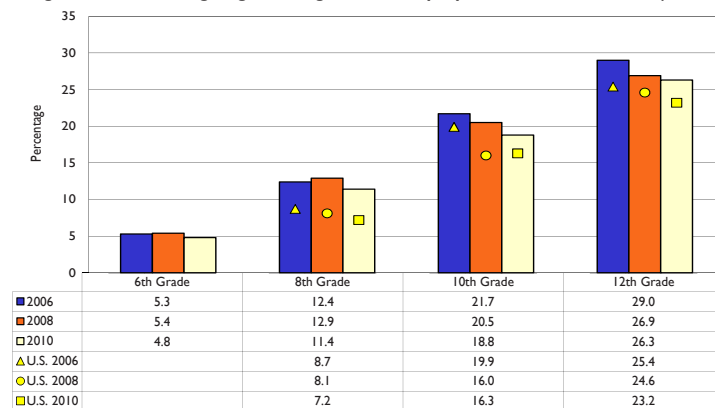
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Percentage of Youth Indicating Any Alcohol Use in Past 30 Days by Grade, Louisiana vs. U.S. (2006-2010)



Source: Louisiana Data from Caring Communities Youth Survey - U.S. Data from Monitoring the Future Survey

Percentage of Youth Indicating Binge Drinking in Past 30 Days by Grade, Louisiana vs. U.S. (2006-2010)



Source: Louisiana Data from Caring Communities Youth Survey - U.S. Data from Monitoring the Future Survey

<sup>1</sup> Youth survey data presented in this brief are from the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Behavioral Health's Caring Communities Youth Survey

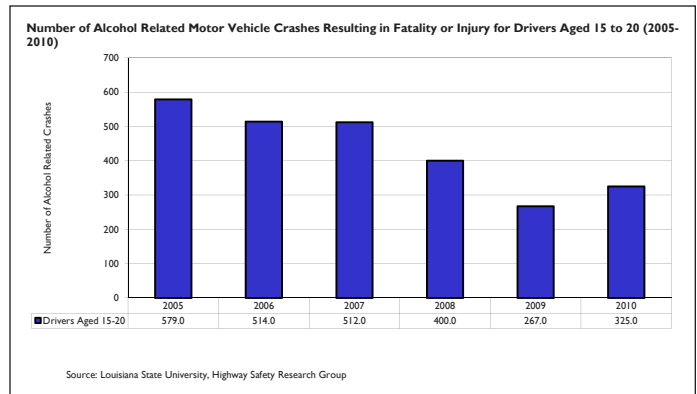
<sup>2</sup> Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (<http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/index.htm>)

<sup>3</sup> National data from Monitoring the Future is not available for 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

# Alcohol Related Consequences

Alcohol is associated with a broad range of negative consequences including health and safety, school related, and mental health issues. One of the most frightening underage alcohol related consequences that concerns parents is alcohol related motor vehicle crashes. Alarming, survey data indicated that more than 15% of 12th graders indicated driving after drinking alcohol in the past 30 days in 2010, and about 30% of students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 indicated riding with a driver who had been drinking. Motor vehicle crash data<sup>4</sup> reveals that drivers aged 15-20 were involved in 325 alcohol related crashes resulting in fatalities or injury (15 fatal and 310 injury) in 2010. The rate of alcohol related (fatal or injury) crashes for this age group was 155 crashes per 100,000 licensed drivers, which exceeded the overall state rate of 133 per 100,000 licensed drivers.

While alcohol related motor vehicle crashes may be the most high profile consequence of underage alcohol use, they represent only one of many consequences of concern. Alcohol dependency and abuse is another serious issue, and exacts a heavy toll on individuals, families and society as a whole. In 2010, nearly 10% of 12th graders and 7% of 10th graders were estimated as needing treatment for alcohol based on survey data. Moreover, these data may only tell part of the story of alcohol dependence for Louisi-



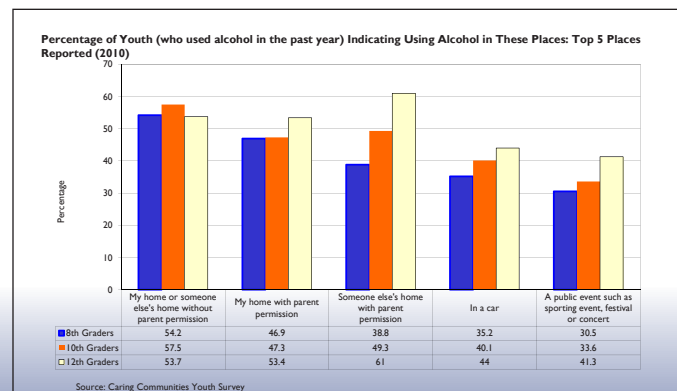
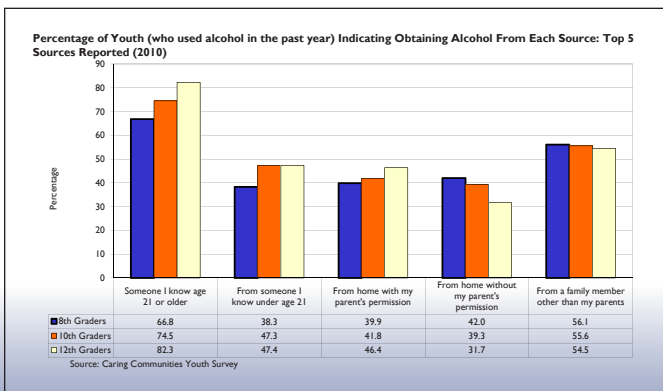
**“15% of 12th graders indicated driving after drinking alcohol in the past 30 days in 2010, and about 30% of students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 indicated riding with a driver who had been drinking.”**

iana youth. Alcohol dependence in adulthood has been linked to age of first alcohol use. The younger an individual is when they start using alcohol, the more likely they are to become dependent or abuse alcohol in adulthood. Given the greater percentage of younger youth in Louisiana (see 8th grade data presented above) who indicate using alcohol, the need for treatment data for 12th graders may only tell part of the story regarding the relationship between underage alcohol use and later dependency.

# Causes and Contributing Factors

There are a multitude of causal and contributing factors that lead to problem underage drinking. However, a good starting point for understanding underage drinking is examining how youth get their alcohol and where they use it. The figures below present the five most frequently reported sources of alcohol and places alcohol were used in the past year among 10th and 12th graders who reported alcohol use in the past year. The top two sources of alcohol identified by 12th graders were: someone I know over age

21 and a family member other than my parents. The top two places alcohol was consumed by 12th graders were someone else’s home with parent permission and my home or someone else’s home without parent permission. Youth frequently reported that their home was both a source of alcohol and a place where they consumed alcohol, either with permission or without permission from their parents. An alarming 46% of 12th graders who consumed alcohol indicated getting alcohol from home with their parent’s permission, and 53% indicated drinking alcohol at home with their parent’s permission.



4 Source: Louisiana State University, Highway Safety Research Group (<http://lhsc.lsu.edu/reports/default.asp>)

This data brief is brought to you by the Governor’s Office Safe and Drug Free Schools & Communities, the Office of Behavioral Health – Addictive Disorders, and the Louisiana State Epidemiological Workgroup as part of the Governor’s Initiative to Build a Healthy Louisiana (<http://gov.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&mp=home&cpID=121>). To find data related to substance use and abuse, please visit the State Epidemiological Workgroup Online Data system at [www.bach-harrison.com/lasocialindicators](http://www.bach-harrison.com/lasocialindicators) or go to <http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/newsroom/detail/1394> to download Caring Communities Youth Survey reports.

