



# Health Capsules

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

## Region to Address Significant Economic Consequences Associated with Having Obese/Overweight Populations

In a study recently published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it was found that medical costs associated with overweight and obesity accounted for over nine percent of the nation's total medical expenditures in 1998. Of that nine percent – which is an estimated \$78.5 billion dollars - nearly half of the expenses were paid by Medicaid and Medicare and only \$12.8 billion dollars came from personal out-of-pocket expenses. Regionally, spending varied slightly across the board. Maryland, with a combined 6 percent obese/overweight population, ranked 17<sup>th</sup> out of 52 (the study also included the District and Puerto Rico) in total state spending. Maryland spent \$1.5 billion dollars, with \$368 million coming from Medicare and \$391 million coming from Medicaid. Virginia, with a combined 5.7% obese/



overweight population ranked just ahead of Maryland at 15<sup>th</sup> overall with a little over \$1.6 billion of state money being spent on such medical expenditures (\$320 million from Medicare and \$374 million and Medicaid). The District came in at 37<sup>th</sup> with only \$372 million being spent on the obese (\$64 million from Medicare and \$114 million from Medicaid). The national high was California with roughly \$7.7 billion dollars allotted for obesity-related medical expenses. The national low was Wyoming with only \$87 million dollars spent.

For more information about the cost of obesity, visit: [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/economic\\_consequences.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/economic_consequences.htm)

### Regional Expenditure on Obesity

State	Total Population (%)	(Millions \$)	Medicare Population (%)	(Millions \$)	Medicaid population (%)	(Millions \$)
Maryland	6	\$1,533	7.7	\$368	12.9	\$391
Washington, DC	6.7	\$372	6.5	\$64	12.5	\$114
Virginia	5.7	\$1,641	6.7	\$320	13.1	\$374

### Follow-up Planned to COG Obesity Conference

On November 16 the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and Virginia Tech hosted a forum, "Obesity: Tipping the Scales Towards Crisis," to recommend regional strategies to reduce the community burden of obesity, and to examine current and potential impacts, barriers, and practices. Each session and resulting discussion was led by prominent members of the Human Services Policy Committee. Facilitators included Montgomery County Council President George Leventhal, Arlington County Board Member Walter Tejada, and District of Columbia Council Chair-Elect Vincent Gray. Alexandria Mayor William Euille highlighted his own struggles and successes of weight loss. Participants included elected officials, planning Board members, school representatives, private sector representatives, and foundations. In interactive sessions the group discussed the economic impact of obesity in metropolitan Washington, the results of a Virginia Tech survey across the region, and best practices throughout the country and the region including nutrition programs in Fairfax County public schools and vending policies in six participating secondary schools in the District. The attendees also looked at national strategies and how they relate to regional and local efforts to combat obesity. In response to the developments of the conference, the Human Services Policy Committee plans to work out a long term plan. The committee will also take three immediate actions steps, which will be decided at their next meeting.

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## The Effect of High Volumes of Liquor Retail Outlets on Neighborhood Crime

The Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) - a Washington, DC based research group on prevention research- has found that high volumes of locations alcohol outlets is the number one factor in violent crimes related to alcohol. It has long been a well known fact that alcohol and violence correlate with one another but this new information helps to highlight the agent that attributes the most. According to research, volume of alcohol distribution ranks higher than a community's economic status, ethnic makeup, and age of residents.

Different case studies mentioned in the research reflect the importance of the quantity of alcoholic retail outlets. Youth violence was more prevalent in impoverished minority neighborhoods. This is backed by the fact that youth are more likely to buy alcohol from stores than from bars or restaurants. Areas that had retailers that sell high-alcohol beer and spirits were shown to have more cases of violent assault. Concurrently, night clubs were shown to have more cases of violent assault amongst customers than any other type of retailer. In a six year study of rural and urban areas of California, as the volume of bars and other alcoholic outlets increased so did the rate of violence.

Another interesting point that the study found was the effect different environments have on the type of violence. Although there is a difference between a college town with a row of bars and an impoverished neighborhood with liquor retail shops on each corner, studies showed that violence still increases with the addition of more stores. In the aforementioned California study, impoverished minority communities saw this increase in crime the most, as much as four times greater than the statewide sample.

Research on what exactly accounts for this correlation between outlet



density and violence has thus far been inconclusive. One potential explanation offered by PIRE is that alcohol outlets can help cause social disorder. Another explanation is that having many outlets attracts more people who may be under the influence of alcohol and therefore more prone to violent behavior and at the same time unable to provide self-defense. Also, broken bottles and litter outside of bars and outlets maybe give patrons the impression that rules of orderly conduct are not enforced. It is also possible that all of these explanations are partially correct.

With all this in mind, there is plenty that government agencies can do to help alleviate potentially dangerous outlet volume. PIRE suggests establishing laws that set a minimum distance between alcohol retailers. New licenses can be limited for areas that already have an abundance of liquor retailers. Prohibiting a business from obtaining a new license after it goes out of business can also help curb volume. Lastly, government agencies can shut down outlets that violate liquor laws multiple times. Enforcing some of these policies can help promote safer neighborhoods and improve the quality of life for all members of the community.

For further information please contact the PIRE Prevention Research Center:

[www.resources.prev.org](http://www.resources.prev.org)

## Reports and Resources of Interest

- Chronic Diseases: Heart Disease, Stroke, and Cancer are listed as the leading causes of death in Maryland  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/publications/factsheets/ChronicDisease/maryland.htm>
- Maryland Arthritis Information: More than 1 Million Marylanders have arthritis. Check this website for a more detailed information regarding the impact arthritis has on Maryland.  
[http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/state\\_programs/programs/maryland.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/state_programs/programs/maryland.htm)
- Maryland Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Information - <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/grants/Maryland/mdcontact.htm>

- Virginia Tobacco Control: An overview on the steps Virginia is taking in order to align with CDC's *Best Practices*-  
<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sustainingstates/virginia.htm>
- CDC-Funded Women's Health Programs for the State of Virginia: This website has information regarding various support programs endorsed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention-  
<http://www.cdc.gov/women/programs/virginia.htm>



- CDC- Funded Diabetes Support Programs for the District of Columbia - <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/states/dc.htm>
- Qualitative Assessment of Risk for Monkeypox Associated with Domestic Trade in Certain Animal Species, United States: This USDA Study, conducted in College Park, MD, surveys the likelihood of the transmission of the disease to humans from rodents.- <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol12no12/06-0454.htm>



# REGIONAL HEALTH STUDIES

## State-Specific Prevalence of Current Smokers

Virginia has the region's highest percentage of smokers over the age of 18 at 20.6 percent, shows a new study from the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

According to the survey, 21.9 percent of men and 19.7 percent of women in Virginia are smokers. That is much higher than Maryland (19.7 percent male, 18.4 percent female; 19.0 percent total) and the District of Columbia (22.9 percent male, 17.6 percent women; 20.1 percent total). Virginia was also one of 15 states to report smoking restrictions inside the home and workplace. Virginia reported 74.6 percent of homes and 75.4 percent of workplaces have complete smoking restrictions. The national averages are 73.7 percent and 73.4 percent, respectively.

The CDC study assessed the state-specific prevalence of current smoking among adults in the U.S. and the portions of adults who report having smoke-free home and workplace rules. Information from the study was collected from the 2005 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). BRFSS is a state-based, random-digit—dialed telephone health survey of the noninstitutionalized, U.S. civilian population ages 18 and above. The study included all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

## Shorter Treatment for Latent Tuberculosis Infection Better

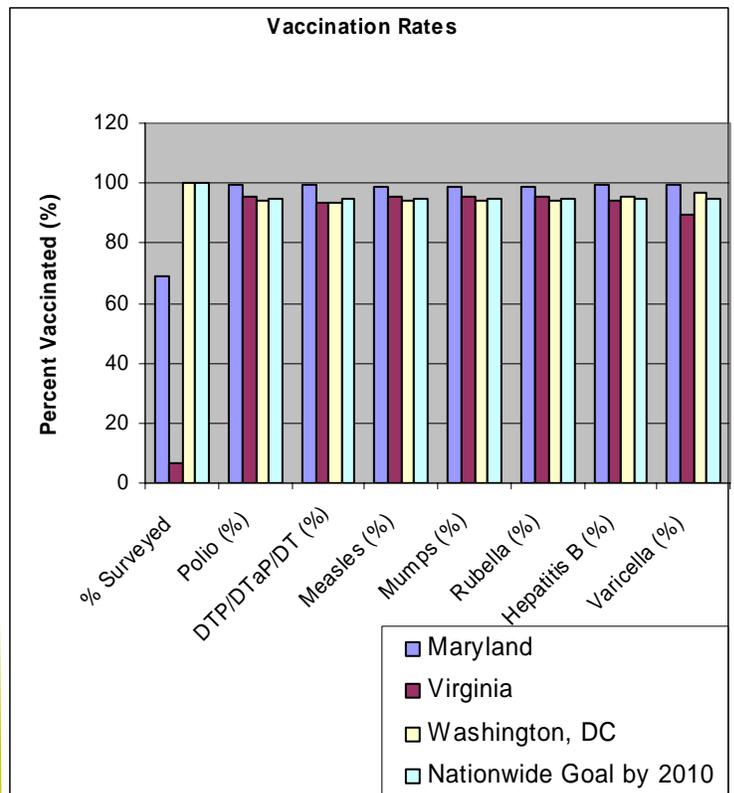
An Arch Intern Med (volume 166) original investigation shows that a four-month regimen of Rifampin (4-RIF) has been proven to be more effective than nine-month regimens of Isoniazid (9-INH). Although it is not extensively studied or heavily used, the use of Rifampin correlated strongly with the percentage of patients who completed treatment and showed less signs of clinically recognized adverse conditions. Latent Tuberculosis infection is a component of tuberculosis and therefore must be eliminated as efficiently as possible. Isoniazid has an initial effectiveness rate around 90 percent but do to the fact that the treatment often fails to go to completion, it's adjusted effectiveness lowers to about 25 percent. Not only does the shorter time frame allow for a higher effectiveness, Rifampin is also potent against *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The Prince Georges County Health Department was one of the first to prescribe 4-RIF more than 9-INH back in the late 1990s due to the lack of the previous treatments ability to finish effectively.

[www.archinternmed.com](http://www.archinternmed.com)

## Region Close to 2010 Vaccination Goals

Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Virginia are all near or have met the nationwide objective of having 95 percent or more of all children from kindergarten to first grade vaccinated from several prevalent diseases. In 2010, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Health People 2010* initiative calls for an at least 95 percent vaccination rate for the following diseases:

- Hepatitis B
- Diphtheria and tetanus toxids and pertussis
- Diphtheria and tetanus toxids and acelluar
- Poliovirus
- Diphtheria and tetanus toxids
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Varicella



Source: [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/5541a3.htm?s\\_cid=mm5541a3e\\_e](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/5541a3.htm?s_cid=mm5541a3e_e)



# Virginia Ranks 46<sup>th</sup> Highest Among States in Underage Drinking Costs

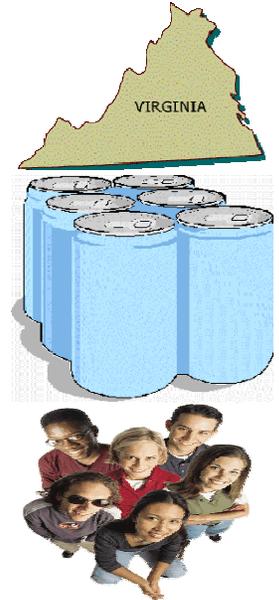
Underage drinking cost the state of Virginia \$1.1 billion dollars in 2001, according to a study published by the International Institute for Alcohol Awareness. The number is equal to \$1,696 per youth per year.

### Facts About Teen Drinking in Virginia:

Approximately 287,000 underage youth in Virginia drink each year.

- 76.6 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> graders and 66.8 percent of 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported having used alcohol at some time.
- 51.9 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> graders and 36.8 percent of 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported having used alcohol in the past 30 days.
- 28.8 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> graders and 19.1 percent of 10<sup>th</sup> graders reported consuming five or more drinks in a row within the past two weeks.
- In 2001, underage drinkers consumed 13.8 percent of all alcohol sold in Virginia, totaling \$324 million in sales. This resulted in a profit of \$159 million to the alcohol industry.

Problem	Total Costs (in millions)
Youth Violence	\$619.60
Youth Traffic Crashes	\$300.10
High-Risk Sex, Ages 14-20	\$84.90
Youth Property Crime	\$57.60
Youth Injury	\$40.00
Poisonings and Psychoses	\$17.40
FAS Among Mothers Age 15-20	\$17.50
Youth Alcohol Treatment	\$8.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,146.00</b>



Information courtesy of [www.beawarenow.org](http://www.beawarenow.org)

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments is the association of 21 local governments working together for a better metropolitan region. COG provides a focus for action and develops sound regional responses to such issues as the environment, affordable housing, economic development, health and family concerns, human services, population growth, public safety and transportation.

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