



Legislative Breakfast 2017

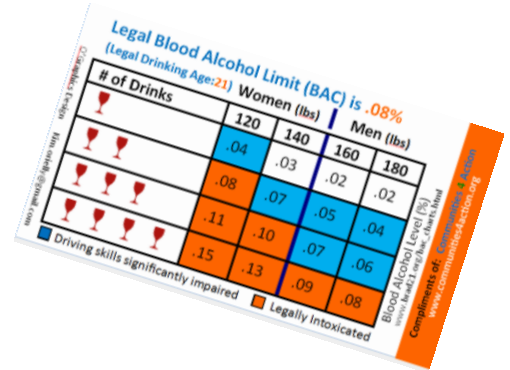
Monday December 18

9:30 AM to 11:30 AM

Jewish Community Center

1035 Newfield Ave.

Stamford, CT 06905



Topic: Alcohol Awareness

“Understanding and adhering to safe or low-risk drinking guidelines, moderating alcohol intake to insure a blood alcohol content (BAC) that is legal for driving or limiting alcohol intake for other health, safety and personal reasons all involve accurate tracking of alcohol intake”.¹

FACTS:

- In the United States, one "standard" drink contains roughly 14 grams of pure alcohol, which is found in: 12 ounces of regular beer (5% alcohol), 5 ounces of wine (12% alcohol), and 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits, (40% alcohol).²
- The average person metabolizes alcohol at the rate of about one drink per hour.³
- Legal Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) is 0.08. However, even a small amount of alcohol can affect driving ability. In 2016, there were 2,017 people killed in alcohol-related crashes where drivers had lower alcohol levels (BACs between 0.01 and 0.07 g/dL).⁴
- **Recommended drinking guidelines:** For women, low-risk drinking is defined as no more than 3 drinks on any single day and no more than 7 drinks per week. For men, it is defined as no more than 4 drinks on any single day and no more than 14 drinks per week.⁵
- *Heavy drinking* is defined as consuming fifteen or more drinks per week for men or eight or more drinks per week for women.⁶



PROBLEM:

- Drinkers have difficulty defining and pouring standard drinks, so that over-pouring is the norm and intake volume is typically underestimated.⁷ This supports what our Communities 4 Action members are hearing when we hand out the BAC cards that we created (i.e., in general, people are unaware of how much they drink, so that one glass could contain the amount of alcohol in 2 standard drinks).
- CDC data indicates that excessive alcohol consumption is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States and is a risk factor for many health and societal

problems. Excessive drinking includes binge drinking, *heavy drinking*, and any drinking by pregnant women or people younger than age 21 (CDC 2015).⁸

- Binge drinking is a serious public health issue and one that communities are addressing through a variety of strategies. However, *heavy drinking* is also a concern and one that can get overlooked.
- An estimated 18% of American adults drink excessively. Rates can vary greatly from state to state and city to city. CT: "Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk is the only metro area in Connecticut in *which more than 1 in every 5 adults drinks excessively*. Excessive drinking in a community does not necessarily increase the likelihood of drunk driving, but high alcohol consumption may partially explain such risky behavior in the Bridgeport area. Some 34.6% of roadway fatalities in the metro area involve alcohol, higher than both the state and national rates."⁷
- In CT, MADD statistics from 2015 indicated:
 - Drunk driving fatalities (0.08 BAC or higher): 103 representing 0.39% of all total traffic deaths, a 6.2% increase from the previous year.
 - DUI arrests: 8,148⁸

QUESTION:

- What are your thoughts on requiring restaurants and bars to state portion sizes of poured wine and beer on menus and/or receipts to help gauge intake?

This would help people ensure that they do not drive with BAC>0.08.

This would also increase awareness for those who may not realize that they are drinking more than the recommended drinking guidelines (i.e., heavy drinking).

CONSIDER in restaurants and bars:

- Glasses and mugs come in all different shapes
- Portion sizes can vary, from 3 to 12 oz. for wine, 10-22 oz. for beer. This makes it difficult to judge how much alcohol has been consumed
- At \$10.00 per 5 ounce pour, a glass of wine costs \$256 a gallon. \$2.50 per gallon of gas is more closely regulated for size.
- Menus will often state the size of some food items (e.g., a 10 oz. filet).
- CT regulations state the sizes of permitted "samples" (Sec. 30-6-A33. Free samples of liquor: 1 liter of wine, 16 oz. of beer).
- CT regulations state the sizes of permitted "tastings" (Sec. 30-6-B21a. Tastings: 1 ounce of wine, 2 ounces of beer).
- New FDA rules require that restaurants with 20 or more branded locations state calorie amounts as a means of promoting responsible caloric intake.

RESOURCES/REFERENCES:

- 1.,7. <https://www.thecut.com/2014/06/people-underestimate-how-much-they-drink.html>
2. <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol.../what-standard-drink>
3. Source: Michigan State University, Basic Alcohol Information, 2003
4. <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunken-driving>
- 5.,6 <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol.../moderate-binge-drinking>
8. CDC 2015
7. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2017/11/21/alcohol-abuse-drunkest-city-every-state/884359001/>
8. Backgroundchecks.org