

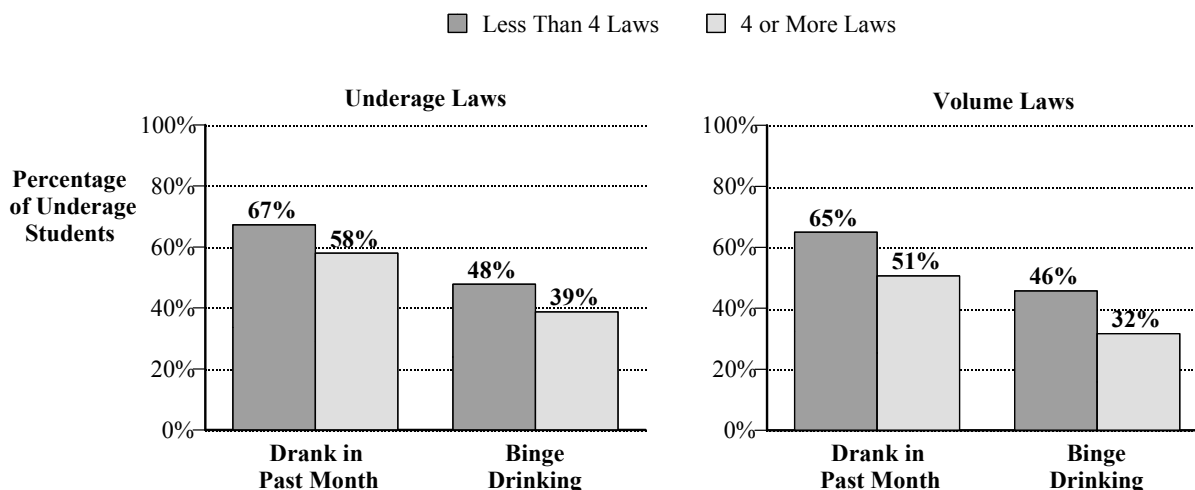
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Laws Restricting Underage and High-Volume Drinking Reduce Alcohol Consumption by Underage College Students

Underage students attending colleges in areas that have underage and high-volume drinking laws are significantly less likely to drink, according to data from the 2001 College Alcohol Study. Nearly one-half (48%) of all alcoholic drinks college students consume are drunk by students under the legal drinking age. However, underage students attending colleges in areas that had four or more underage drinking laws (e.g., minimum age to sell, fake ID) were less likely to report drinking in the past month (58% vs. 67%) and binge drinking (39% vs. 48%). Similar results were found for students in areas that had four or more laws limiting the purchase of alcohol for high-volume sales and consumption (e.g., happy hour restrictions, keg registration). The authors conclude that “controlling the ways in which alcohol is sold in a college community will probably have beneficial effects in curtailing excessive drinking and drunkenness and limiting the numbers of underage students who drink” (p. 235).

Percentage of Underage College Students Reporting Past Month and Binge Drinking, by Existing Underage and Volume Laws, 2001



NOTE: Data are from a survey of students at a sample of 4-year colleges and universities in 38 states and the District of Columbia.

SOURCES: Adapted by CESAR from Wechsler H., Lee J.E., Nelson T.F., Kuo M. “Underage College Students’ Drinking Behavior, Access to Alcohol, and the Influence of Deterrence Policies,” *Journal of American College Health* 50(5):223-236. Available online (<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/cas/Documents/underminimum>).

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

The theme for the 2002 Alcohol Awareness Month is “Recovery: It’s a Family Affair—and Everyone’s Invited!” For more information visit the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence website (www.ncadd.org).