

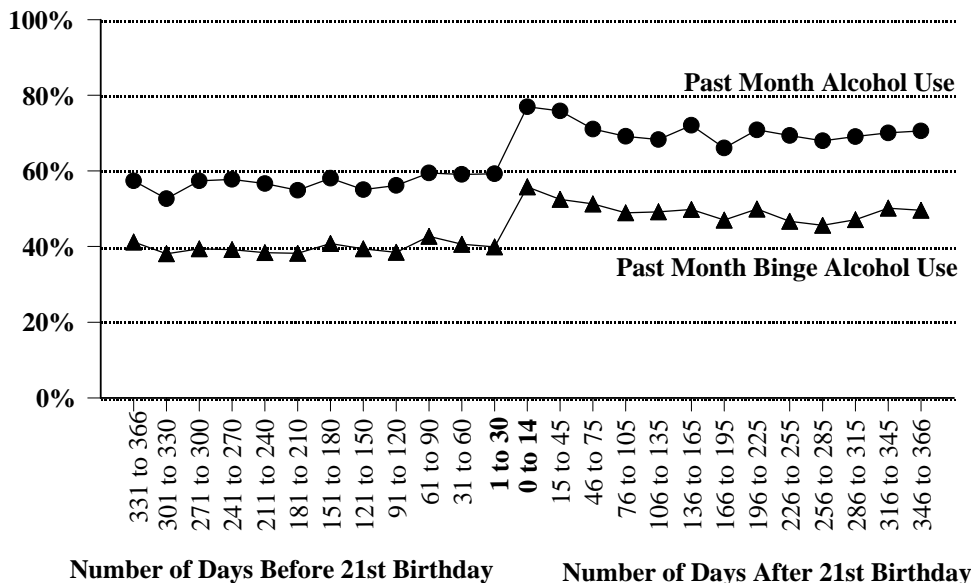
## A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

### *Alcohol Use and Binge Drinking Increase in Two Weeks After 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday; Remain at Higher Rates After Turning 21*

Rates of past month alcohol use and binge drinking are higher among young adults who have recently turned 21 than among those who are still 20 years old, according to data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). Nearly 60% of young adults reported past alcohol use and approximately 40% reported binge drinking in the year before their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. These already high rates of alcohol use and binge drinking among minors increase sharply in the 14 days after their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, to 77% and 56%, respectively (see figure below). Furthermore, both past month alcohol use and binge drinking rates remained higher among young adults after their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

**Percentage of U.S. Young Adults Reporting Past Month Alcohol Use and Binge Drinking, by Number of Days Surveyed One Year Before or After 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday, 2002 to 2008**



NOTE: Past month binge drinking is defined as drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past 30 days.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), "Alcohol Use Before and After the 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday," *The NSDUH Report*, December 10, 2009. Available online at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k9/138/138AlcBefore21stBday.cfm>.