

SUBSTANCE ABUSE INDICATORS

Health and Mortality

Prenatal exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs jeopardizes the developing fetus. Maternal use of these substances during pregnancy puts the newborn at risk for low birth weight, drug withdrawal, birth defects from fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, and mental retardation. The charts on page C-2 illustrate and provide trend data on reported prenatal exposure to these substances in Missouri since 1995. Studies have shown that these occurrences are substantially under-reported, and the actual number of exposed newborns is unknown. The reported number of newborns whose mothers drank alcohol during their pregnancies has gradually declined during the past several years. The number of drug-affected births reported by hospitals declined until 2001 but has been increasing in recent years. Reported births to women who smoked during their pregnancies have increased during each of the last four years, reaching 14,945 in 2006—18.4 percent of Missouri's live births.

Communicable diseases such as hepatitis and HIV/AIDS are often acquired through substance abuse. Page C-4 contains charts that have tracked hepatitis-B, hepatitis-C, tuberculosis, and HIV disease in Missouri since 1999. Newly diagnosed cases of hepatitis-B, hepatitis-C, and tuberculosis have fluctuated but not shown any consistent trends during the past few years. Among the 4,928 new HIV disease cases reported since 1999, 432 have involved injection drug use.

Medically related deaths due to substance abuse are estimated and shown in the trend charts on page C-5. The estimates are based on the documented medical conditions that caused the deaths and research-derived correlations of those conditions to use/abuse of alcohol, illicit drugs, and tobacco. The estimates do not include behavioral substance abuse deaths, such as alcohol related traffic crashes or homicides committed by impaired individuals. Annual alcohol induced deaths have remained fairly constant in Missouri since 1999, remaining under 400 per year. Drug related deaths, however, have been increasing each year—from 285 in 1999 to 808 in 2006. Smoking related deaths continue to number about 9,500 per year.

Emergency room and hospital services related to alcohol and other drug use are illustrated in the charts on page C-3. Each chart shows the number of episodes involving only emergency room treatment, emergency room services followed by hospitalization, and direct hospital admissions. The first chart provides a count of total emergency and hospital services and the others enumerate services for alcohol induced cirrhosis, other alcohol, and drug related conditions. Alcoholic cirrhosis episodes have increased in recent years, averaging over 3,500 for this chronic disease compared to about 3,000 at the beginning of the decade. Other alcohol related episodes have been trending upward—from under 40,000 in 1999 to over 50,000 in 2006. Services are first provided by emergency rooms in approximately three-fourths of these episodes. Emergency room and hospital services for drug abuse have increased steadily and dramatically, almost doubling from 22,464 in 1999 to 43,981 in 2006. Seventy percent of these episodes involve emergency room services.

Public Safety and Law Enforcement

Alcohol and drug related traffic crashes during the past ten years are summarized in the charts on pages C-6 and C-7. Alcohol related crashes have been trending downward in Missouri, dropping below 8,000 in 2005 and 2006. Intoxicated drivers were involved in 94 percent of these crashes and the remainder involved only intoxicated pedestrians. The number of people injured non-fatally in these crashes has been declining steadily—from 6,776 in 1997 to 5,157 in 2006. However, the number killed annually in alcohol related crashes has fluctuated only slightly from the 10-year average of 263. Drug related traffic crashes have increased sharply, reaching 1,024 in 2006

compared to 587 in 1997. The number killed in drug related crashes reached a record high of 45 in 2006, and an additional 671 were injured.

Missouri arrests for alcohol and drug impaired driving and boating are illustrated in the first two charts on page C-8. Impaired driving arrests totaled 39,809 in 2006, a large increase from the 35,551 reported in 2005. Arrests for impaired boating declined to 355 in 2006--considerably lower than the 562 reported in 2001. Drug arrests and confiscations of methamphetamine labs for years 2001-2006 are also displayed on page C-8. Drug arrests reached a record-high of 45,814 in 2006. Methamphetamine labs seizures remained lower in 2006 and 2007—at 1,284 and 1,285 respectively—than in previous years. However, Missouri continued to confiscate the largest number of methamphetamine labs in the nation.

Court and Corrections

Juvenile court data are provided in the charts on page C-9. The first chart shows Missouri court-ordered out-of-home placements of juveniles due to parental alcohol and drug abuse. Trends in juvenile alcohol and drug violations are summarized in the second chart. After reaching a record-high of 2,296 in 2005, out-of-home placements of children resulting from substance abuse by their parents declined to 1,968 in 2006—35 percent of total placements. Referrals for juvenile alcohol and drug offenses increased to 4,715 in 2006 after declining steadily during the four previous years. Alcohol offenses accounted for most of the increase and comprised one-third of the juvenile substance abuse violations.

The charts on page C-10 illustrate probation and parole openings and prison admissions for adult drug convictions and intoxicated driving convictions. Drug offenses declined in fiscal year 2007 yet accounted for 36 percent of new probation and parole cases and 33 percent of prison admissions. Convictions for driving while intoxicated brought increases in probation and parole openings and 1,277 state prison admissions—the highest number of new incarcerations for that offense since fiscal year 2001.