



Addiction Prevention &
Treatment Services

CAPITAL HEALTH

ALCOHOL

counting the cost

THE HUMAN AND FINANCIAL COSTS OF ALCOHOL

Alcohol is often viewed as a source of revenue for government, but it's time to take a closer look. Each year in Nova Scotia, \$419,000,000 is spent on alcohol-related harm.¹ Alcohol-related harms are costing us all and putting a strain on government programs, healthcare services and law enforcement agencies. Moreover, statistics are unable to convey the misery, pain and loss that many Nova Scotians suffer as a result of over-consumption of alcohol.

HEAVY DRINKING IS ALL TOO COMMON

- **One in four** Nova Scotians report drinking heavily in the last 30 days, and **more than half of 19- to 24-year-olds** report drinking heavily in the same time period.²

CHILD DRINKING IS THE NORM

- Nova Scotian children are drinking at a younger age than ever before, with **nine out of ten** children under the legal drinking age reporting alcohol consumption.³
- Approximately **one-third of Grade 7-12** students report experiencing alcohol-related harm. **Five percent** of Grade 7 students report being drunk in the last 30 days, a number that rises to nearly **50%** by the time students reach grade 12.³

DRINKING AND OUR HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

- Each year in Nova Scotia, **3,100 hospital admissions** are alcohol-related, and **42,000 hospital days** can be attributed to alcohol annually in this province.¹
- **60 different medical conditions and injuries** are related to alcohol use.⁴
- In Nova Scotia, **one in seven** early morning emergency department visits are alcohol-related.⁵
- **9,344 Nova Scotians** are living with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.⁶

DRINKING AND CRIME

- Annual law enforcement costs associated with alcohol-related offences in Canada are **\$78 million**.¹

DRINKING-RELATED DEATHS

- In 2009, **one in four** highway deaths in Nova Scotia involved alcohol,⁷ and each year the deaths of more than **220 Nova Scotians** are alcohol-related.¹

Citations

1 Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, 2006
3 Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey, 2007
5 Dr. John Ross, *Chronicle Herald*, Nov. 20, 2008
7 Minister Bill Estabrooks, *Chronicle Herald*, Nov. 2009

2 Nova Scotia Culture of Alcohol Study, 2008
4 World Health Organization
6 Roberts, 2008

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