



# THE MARYLAND COLLABORATIVE

TO REDUCE COLLEGE DRINKING AND RELATED PROBLEMS

## News Release

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### **MARYLAND COLLEGES RELEASE RESULTS FROM NEW ALCOHOL SURVEY *PRESIDENTS TAKE ACTION***

A statewide collaborative led by 10 college and university presidents released the results today of the first annual Maryland College Alcohol Survey (MD-CAS), providing a comprehensive look at excessive drinking among Maryland college students and the risk factors that contribute to it.

“This survey represents a unique effort by several colleges to measure college student drinking and its consequences in a standardized way,” said Amelia Arria, the University of Maryland College Park professor who led the design and implementation of the survey. “The data can be used to refine existing interventions that target specific risk factors, like high-risk off-campus drinking, false ID use or parental influences.”

A Governance Council of 10 college presidents co-chaired by University System of Maryland Chancellor Brit Kirwan and Johns Hopkins University President Ron Daniels leads the [Maryland Collaborative to Reduce College Drinking and Related Problems](#), which is staffed by public health experts at the University of Maryland College Park and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Nine colleges participated in the survey, to which 4,209 students across the state responded. The survey explored student alcohol use, related problems and the role of four sets of risk factors in excessive drinking: access and availability, attitudes and expectations about use of alcohol and its perceived benefits, early exposure to alcohol and parental influences.

Nearly half (47%) of students surveyed in MD-CAS engaged in binge drinking (defined as five or more drinks in a row or within two hours for males and four or more for females) at least once during the past month, reflecting a rate of binge drinking similar to the national average.

“These numbers show the rate of student drinking on the campuses within the *Maryland Collaborative* is no better or worse than at other colleges, and we are determined to be better,” said Brit Kirwan, University System of Maryland Chancellor. “This survey gives us the necessary information to build on what colleges are already doing with new, more

targeted strategies and develop interventions tailored to the specific needs of each school in our Collaborative.”

Students who drank excessively were more likely to experience negative consequences. The heaviest drinkers were also more likely to have started drinking before coming to college, and to report that their parents had permissive attitudes towards drinking in high school and were less disapproving of drinking during college. These results underscore what many other studies have found: the earlier young people start drinking, the more likely they are to develop alcohol problems.

Regardless of drinking level, the overwhelming majority (90%) of students reported that alcohol is easy or very easy to access. Two-thirds of student drinkers drank at off-campus house parties, one in five took advantage of happy hour promotions at local bars, while one in 10 underage drinkers bought alcohol during low-priced promotions such as ladies’ nights or drink specials.

The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine encouraged universities to adopt and promote comprehensive prevention approaches, including screening and brief intervention strategies on campus and environmental changes that limit access in the larger community. Last fall, the *Maryland Collaborative* released a [Guide to Best Practices](#) that emphasized similar strategies.

“Universities in the *Collaborative* are already actively working to implement these and other evidence-based strategies across our campuses and in communities across this state,” said Johns Hopkins President Ron Daniels. “We are optimistic that the strategies emerging through this partnership will help us make measurable progress in reducing excessive drinking among our students.”

The *Maryland Collaborative to Reduce College Drinking and Related Problems* addresses excessive drinking among college students as a statewide public health problem, provides public health expertise and support to implement effective interventions and policies, and offers a forum for sharing information and support among colleges statewide.

Colleges and universities participating in the survey were: Allegany College of Maryland, Frostburg State University, Johns Hopkins University, Loyola University Maryland, McDaniel College, Notre Dame of Maryland University, Towson University, University of Maryland Baltimore County, University of Maryland College Park and University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

More information on the *Maryland Collaborative* may be found at [www.marylandcollaborative.org](http://www.marylandcollaborative.org).

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