



# MICAP RECAP

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*Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems  
Celebrating its 111<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2016*

## **Alcohol Awareness - Highlighting Alcohol Issues is a Serious Year-Around Challenge**

**By Vern Smith, Vice President, MICAP Board of Directors**

### **AADIF/MICAP**

(517) 999-0013  
[info@micap.org](mailto:info@micap.org)

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April is Alcohol Awareness Month, a time to highlight how alcohol impacts our communities, families and personal lives.

April opened with news reports of two sports celebrities arrested for driving while drunk, underscoring how alcohol-related problems affect everyone, regardless of status. NFL football star Troy Smith, the 2006 Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback, was arrested April 3<sup>rd</sup> in Ohio for a DUI. Later the same day, arrested for a DUI in Portland, Oregon was Olympic soccer star Abby Wambach, the USA's all-time leading scorer who earned Olympic Gold medals in 2004 and 2012 and led the U.S. Women's National Team to victory in the 2015 World Cup.

Recognizing the seriousness of her mistake, Abby Wambach posted an apology: "This is all on me. I promise that I will do whatever it takes to ensure that my horrible mistake is never repeated."

Abby Wambach and Troy Smith join over a million Americans whose "horrible mistakes" this year will not make national news, but whose lives will be forever impacted by a fateful choice to drink and drive. The statistics are startling. Last year, over 1.4 million Americans were arrested for drunk driving, with over 1.1 million individuals newly convicted.

The extent of DUI arrests makes drunk driving the foremost substance abuse crime in the U.S. One out of every six persons on probation is being supervised for a DUI.

An arrest for driving after drinking not only wreaks havoc in the lives of individuals and their families, in too many cases impaired driving results in the injury or death of others. Last year, over 32,000 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes on U.S. roads, and 2.3 million persons were injured. Alcohol-impaired driving deaths accounted for 31% of these fatalities, a total of 9,967 in 2014, according to the most recent data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which also reports that alcohol-impaired motor vehicle crashes cost more than \$37 billion annually.

In Michigan alone, over 900 persons died in traffic accidents, and of these, 215 deaths were classified as "alcohol-impaired driving fatalities."

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## Alcohol Issues is a Serious Year-Around Challenge

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Alcohol also contributes to serious health problems. Alcohol is well known for how it can cause cirrhosis of the liver, but it is also linked to other serious illnesses and causes of death. “Habitual drinking increases the risk of cancer,” said Dr. Jurgen Rehm at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health at the University of Toronto.

Other conditions linked to chronic drinking include anemia, dementia, depression, seizures, gout, high blood pressure, infectious disease due to the suppression of the immune system, nerve damage and pancreatitis. Alcohol can also interfere with medications prescribed for these conditions.

Women who are pregnant or are trying to become pregnant face major alcohol issues. Drinking when pregnant can harm the baby’s brain, heart, kidneys and other organs and can cause growth and behavior problems. Experts say, “There is no safe amount of alcohol when you are pregnant.”

Alcohol Awareness 2016 focuses particularly on young people. According to NCADD, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, “Alcohol used by young people is extremely dangerous – both to themselves and to society, and is directly associated with traffic fatalities, violence, suicide, educational failure, alcohol overdose, unsafe sex and other problem behaviors, even for those who may never develop a dependence or addiction.” NCADD notes that:

- Alcohol is a primary factor in the four leading causes of death for persons aged 10-21.

- Alcohol is the most commonly used addictive substance in the United States.
- Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking at age 21.
- The typical American child will see 100,000 beer commercials before he or she turns 18.
- Kids who drink are more likely to be victims of violent crime, to be involved in alcohol-related traffic crashes and to have serious school-related problems.
- A supportive family environment and consistent and sustained parental attitudes, are associated with lowered rates of alcohol use for adolescents.
- Kids who have conversations with their parents and learn about the dangers of alcohol and drug use are 50% less likely to use alcohol and drugs than those who don’t have these conversations.

Andrew Pucher, President of NCADD, encourages parents to talk to their children about alcohol. He says alcohol use “is very risky business for young people and parents can make a difference. The longer children delay drinking, the less likely they are to develop any problems associated with it.”

Article prepared by Vernon K. Smith, PhD, based on materials available at: [www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org); <http://www.nhtsa.gov/impaired>; [www.cdc.gov/ARDI](http://www.cdc.gov/ARDI); [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov).

## Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking, 2015

“Underage drinking and its associated problems have profound negative consequences not just for underage drinkers, but also for their families, their communities, and society as a whole. Underage drinking contributes to a wide range of costly health and social problems, including motor vehicle crashes (the greatest single mortality risk for underage drinkers), suicide, interpersonal violence (e.g., homicides, assaults, rapes), un-

intentional injuries (e.g., burns, falls, drowning), brain impairment, alcohol dependence, risky sexual activity, academic problems and alcohol and drug poisoning. On average, alcohol is a factor in the deaths of approximately 4,300 youths in the United States per year, shortening their lives by an average of 60 years (Centers for Disease Control

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# Effects of Illegal Drugs on the Heart - Part 1

We are fortunate to receive information from other agencies who are also trying to inform constituents regarding the perils of alcohol and drug abuse. The following is such an article. Given the length, we will be publishing parts of it in future RECAP newsletters.

Illegal drug abuse and addiction are very serious problems that can affect people of all ages, ranging from adults to infants born of mothers who regularly used drugs. Illegal drugs are drugs that are sold, often for recreational purposes, even though they are not legally approved. These drugs are typically dangerous, with many of them causing health problems, including problems with the heart. The type of heart complications or problems a person may potentially suffer from depend on the drug itself as well as other factors. These problems may include worsening of current heart problems, a change in heart rate that is either slower or faster, or even heart failure or death.

## Opium

Opium is a highly addictive narcotic with a long history. It is derived from the opium poppy, which was referred to as the "Joy Plant" by the Sumerians as far back as 3400 B.C. Like heroin, it is an opiate; however, it is an opiate in its crudest form. It comes from the sap of the opium poppy seed, which is a milky fluid. Exposure to air changes the opium so that it is hard and dark brown or black. At this point, it may be smoked, or some may take it orally. It is very similar to heroin in that the user often feels relief from anxiety or pain and may have an increased feeling of being relaxed. Side effects may include an impairment of coordination, nausea, constipation, and constricted pupils. Opium use may affect one's heart by reducing one's heart rate.

- Opium (<http://goaskalice.columbia.edu/opium>)
- Opiates (<http://www.lsuhs.edu/orgs/campushealth/docs/opiates.pdf>)
- ISATE: Opiate (<http://www.isate.memphis.edu/opiate.html>)
- Substance Abuse - Stimulants/Inhalants/Opioids/Anabolic Steroids/Designer and

Club Drugs ([http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/Health\\_Center/adolhealth/content/b8subs3.html#opioids](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/Health_Center/adolhealth/content/b8subs3.html#opioids))

- The Relationship of Opium Addiction with Coronary Artery Disease (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3075529/>)

## Heroin

Heroin is a form of opium-based drug that is related to morphine. Short-term effects of using heroin include euphoria and a relaxed state, which are what attract certain people to use it illicitly. Other short-term effects include dry mouth, slower breathing, and weakness of the muscles. Long-term effects of heroin use include addiction, decreased liver function, and the risk of kidney disease or failure. This drug also impacts the body's immune system, leaving it more vulnerable to diseases such as tuberculosis and pneumonia. Heroin users may also suffer from infections to the lining and valves of the heart, and there is also the risk of overdose and death. Addicted users may experience vomiting, diarrhea, and pain in the muscles and bones when attempting to stop using the drug.

- Drug Facts: Heroin (<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/heroin>)
- Heroin (<http://www.udel.edu/chem/C465/senior/fall00/DrugAddiction/Opiates.html>)
- Health Risks Associated with the Use of Illicit Drugs and Alcohol (<http://www.cabarruscollege.edu/content/students/HealthRisksDrugsAlcohol.pdf>) (PDF)
- Drug Guide: Heroin (<http://www.drugfree.org/drug-guide/heroin>)
- Heroin's Damage to Lungs and Heart (<http://www.narconon.org/drug-abuse/heroin/damage.html>)

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# MICAP/AADIF

Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems  
American Alcohol and Drug Information Foundation  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 10212, Lansing, MI 48901

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## Report to Congress

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and Prevention [CDC], 2014a).” Source: *Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking 2015, Introduction, Vol.1, p.2.*

**The Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking 2015** is

available. Included in the downloadable files is a profile for each state. Here is the link: <https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/resources/reporttocongress/rtc2015.aspx>

This report was published in December 2015.

## Donation to MICAP Would be Wonderful

MICAP is a small non-profit organization with a mission to provide information about the consequences of alcohol abuse, and to promote public policies that address these issues. It is a big task, and we are committed to doing our part.

For this work, MICAP depends 100% on gifts from people like you. Our work year-around depends directly on these gifts. MICAP could not do its work without your financial support, which truly makes a difference in this important work.

MICAP is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Your gift to MICAP is tax deductible to the extent allowed by the tax code. Please use the enclosed envelope, or send your check to: MICAP, P.O. Box 10212, Lansing, MI 48901. From the bottom of our heart, we thank you.