



Governor Dan McKee's Overdose Task Force

April 9, 2025

Richard Leclerc; Director, Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals
Jerome Larkin, MD; Director, Rhode Island Department of Health
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Cathy Schultz, MPH; Task Force Director, Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services

**RHODE
ISLAND**

Welcome and Announcements

**RHODE
ISLAND**



**South County
Prevention Coalition**

Member of Rhode Island Regional Coalitions



Rhode Island

RISAS

Student Assistance Services



**DEA NATIONAL ^{Rx}
TAKEBACK**

**Saturday,
April 26**

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

DEATakeBack.com



May Is Mental Health Month | mhari.org

May is Mental Health Month Kickoff Event

May 6; 2 p.m.-3 p.m.

Rhode Island State House, 82 Smith St., Providence

MHARI “One Step at a Time” Walkathon

May 31; 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Roger Williams Park, Providence



Second Act | WeAre2ndAct.org

Drop-In Space

WHEN: Every Tuesday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

WHERE: 2nd Space, 188 Valley St., Suite 206, Providence

ABOUT: Our doors are open! Come and use this time in whatever way serves you best.

- ☕ Relax with tea and a book
- 🤝 Connect with other peers/community health workers
- 🎨 Make art with our supplies
- 🧘 Meditate or simply unwind
- 💼 Meet with Ana Bess Moyer Bell for 1:1 professional development, supervision, or support.

Third Thursdays

WHEN: Every third Thursday; 10:00 a.m.–Noon

Drama Therapy Workshops: 4:30 p.m.-5:45 p.m. (**April 17 is the next Drama Therapy Workshop**)

WHERE: 2nd Space, 188 Valley St., Suite 206, Providence

ABOUT: An open creative space for peers, outreach workers, and community health workers to process work and life through drama therapy. Come early, settle in with tea, and connect.





Alcohol Use and the Overdose Epidemic

April 9, 2025

Governor Dan McKee's Overdose Task Force Meeting



Funding Statement

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Presentation Overview

- Background
- Alcohol Use and Overdose Data
- Key Takeaways

Background: Levels of Alcohol Consumption



Background

2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans on Alcohol Use

- To reduce risk of alcohol-related harm:
 - Adults of legal drinking age can choose to not drink or choose to drink in moderation.
 - Those who choose to not drink are not recommended to start.

US Standard Drink Sizes



12 ounces beer
5% ABV



8 ounces malt liquor
7% ABV



5 ounces wine
12% ABV



1.5 ounces distilled
spirits (gin, rum,
vodka, or whiskey)
40% (80 proof) ABV

Alcohol by volume (ABV) refers to the strength of the alcoholic beverage.

Drinking Less Alcohol Is Better for Your Health

Drinking alcohol increases your risks of:

- Certain cancers (e.g., mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, colon, breast (among women), and others)
- Injuries
- Alcohol poisoning
- High blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke
- Liver disease
- Violence
- Depression or anxiety
- Weakened immune system
- Alcohol use disorder

Background: Impacts of Excessive Alcohol Use

- Alcohol is the most used drug among adults in the US, with excessive alcohol use a leading preventable cause of death.
- During 2020 to 2021, approximately 600 deaths occurred in Rhode Island (per year) from excessive alcohol use.
- From 2019 to 2020, alcohol sales increased 29.7% in Rhode Island (inflation-adjusted, 2021 dollars).
- In 2022, Rhode Island ranked 18th in the US for per capita alcohol use.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Facts About U.S. Deaths from Excessive Alcohol Use*. Published August 6, 2024. Accessed March 10, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/facts-stats/index.html>

12 US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, and National Institutes of Health. *Apparent Per Capita Alcohol Consumption: National, State, and Regional Trends, 1977-2022*. Published April 2024. Accessed March 27, 2025. <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/surveillance-reports/surveillance121>



Alcohol Use and Other Drugs

- Using two or more drugs at the same time or within a short time of each other can be dangerous.
 - Includes cannabis, prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, and illicit drugs.
- Using alcohol with other drugs can increase the risk of overdose, injury, violence, and chronic disease.
- Using alcohol at the same time or within a few hours of other drugs like opioids or benzodiazepines can make it hard to breathe, which can damage the brain and other organs or cause death.



Alcohol Use and Overdose Data

Deaths from Excessive Alcohol Use, Rhode Island, 2020-2021

During 2020 to 2021: There was an average of about **600** deaths per year from excessive alcohol use in Rhode Island.

Harmful Effects	Overall	Males	Females
Chronic Causes	413	264	148
Acute Causes	186	139	48
Total All Causes	599	403	196

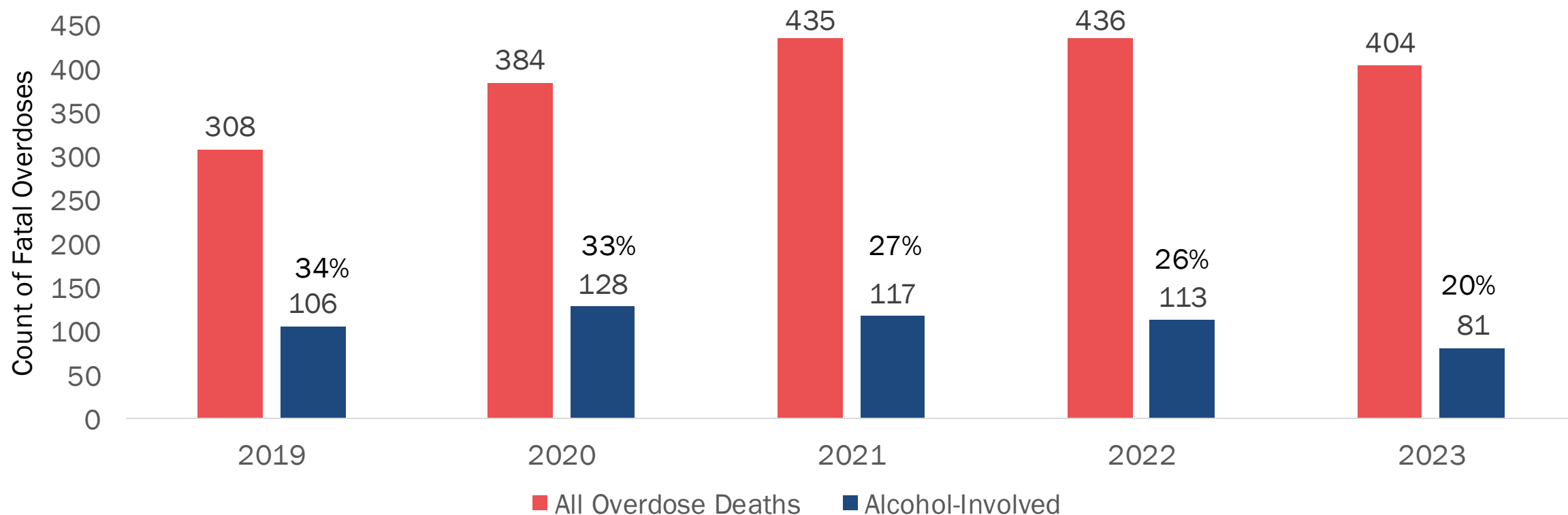


Alcohol Use and Overdose Deaths

- The Rhode Island Office of State Medical Examiners (OSME) overdose data capture drug overdose deaths that are ruled as accidental by the medical examiners (ME).
 - Based on toxicology testing, autopsy results, scene investigations, and medical history.
- Alcohol is a contributing cause of death if the ME determines alcohol was related to how the injury occurred, another acute significant condition, or the cause of death.

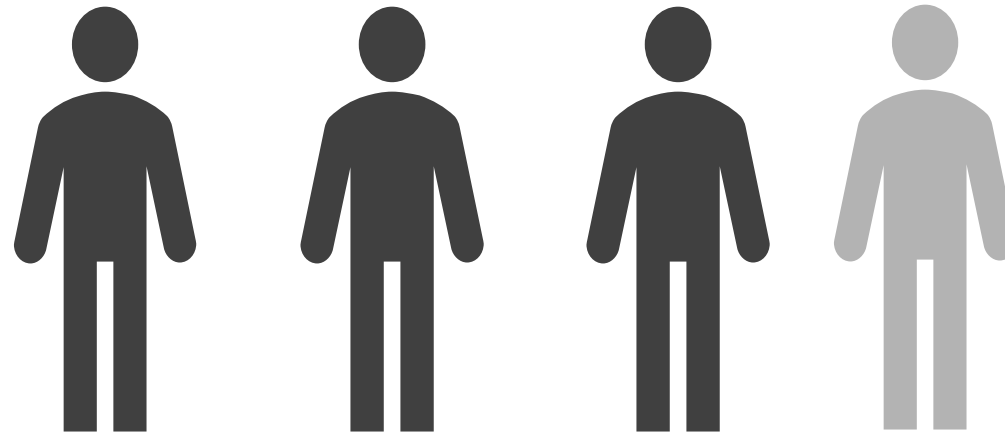
Alcohol-Involved Overdose Deaths, Rhode Island, 2019-2023

Both the number and percentage of alcohol-involved overdose deaths have **decreased** since 2020. In 2023, **20% of overdose deaths** were alcohol-involved.



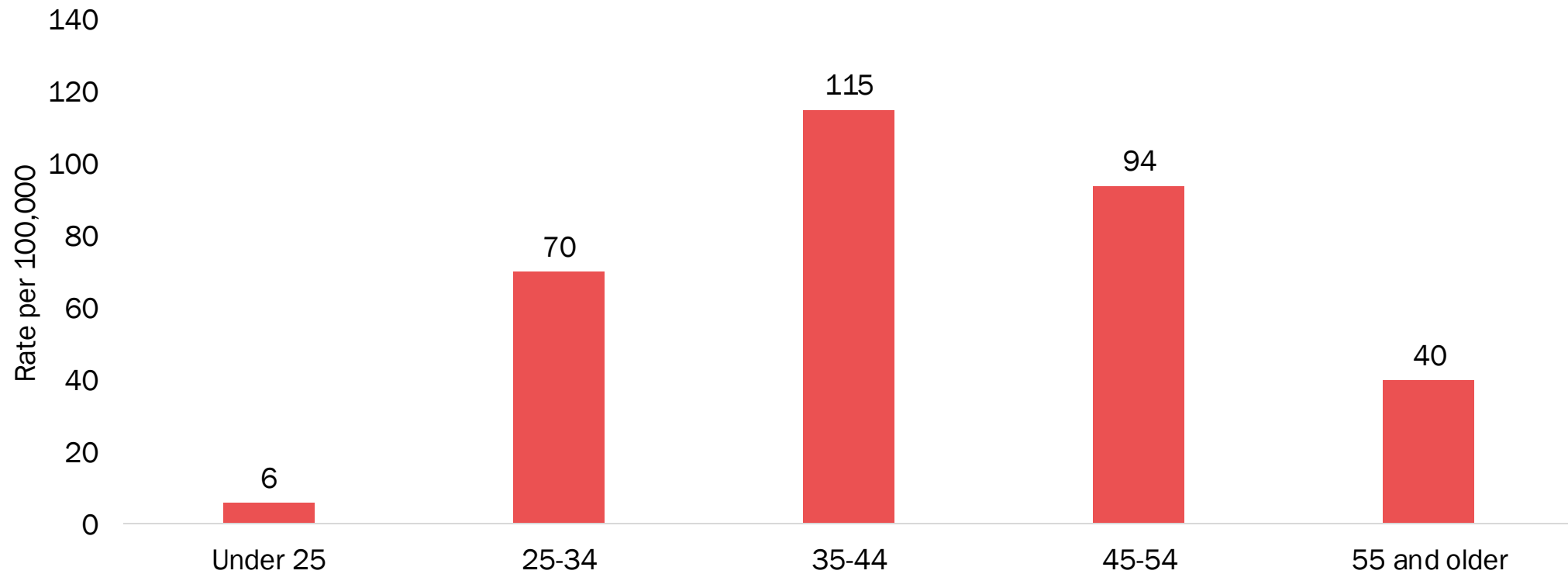
Proportion of Alcohol-Involved Overdose Deaths by Sex Rhode Island, 2019-2023

Most individuals who died from an alcohol-related overdose were **male** (75%).



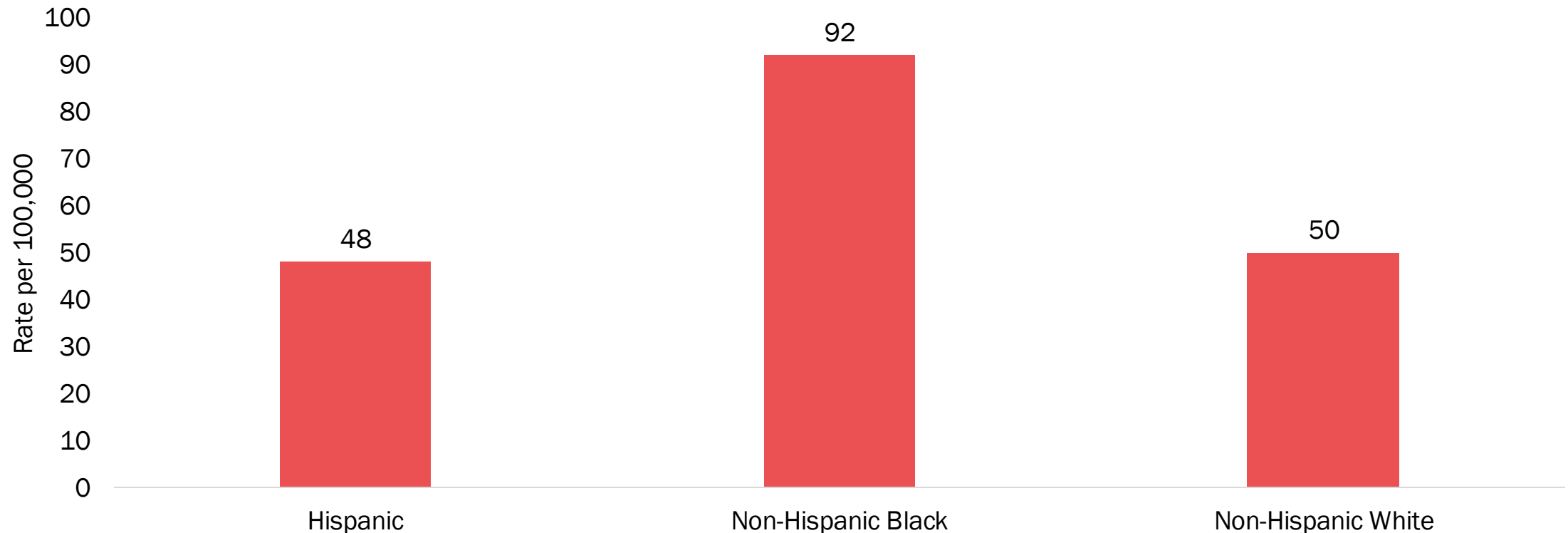
Alcohol-Involved Overdose Death Rate by Age Category Rhode Island, 2019-2023

The rate of alcohol-involved overdose deaths was highest in individuals **age 35 to 44** (115 per 100,000).



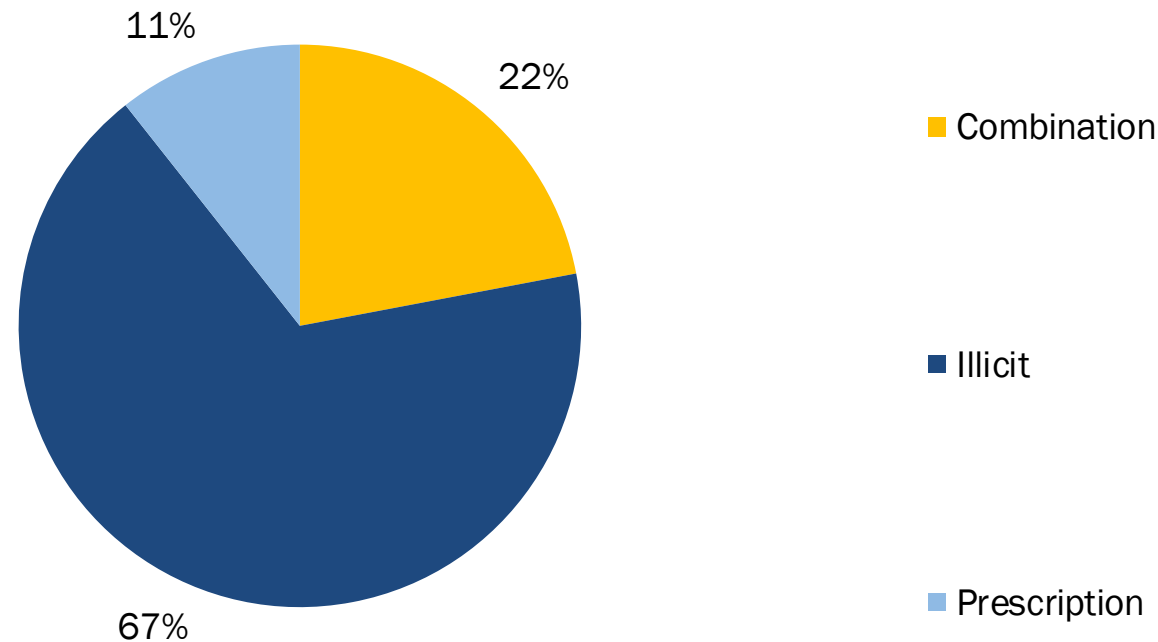
Alcohol-Involved Overdose Death Rate by Race and Ethnicity Rhode Island, 2019-2023

The rate of alcohol-involved overdose fatalities was highest among individuals identifying as **non-Hispanic, Black** (92 per 100,000).



Alcohol-Involved Overdose Deaths by Drug Type Rhode Island, 2019-2023

From 2019 to 2023, most alcohol-involved overdose deaths (67%) were from **illicit drugs**.

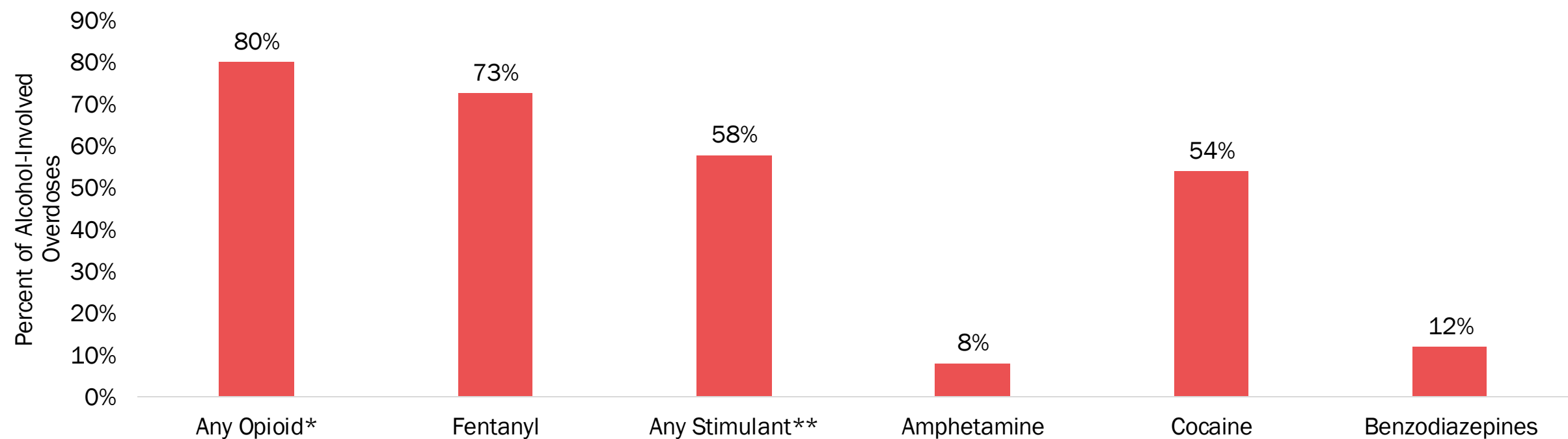


Prescription drugs can include:

- Antidepressants
- Antipsychotics
- Opioids, including Buprenorphine/Methadone
- Anticonvulsants
- Muscle relaxers

Substances Contributing to Alcohol-Involved Overdose Deaths Rhode Island, 2019-2023

From 2019 to 2023, approximately 3 in 4 alcohol-involved overdose deaths also involved fentanyl.



*Any opioid includes fentanyl-involved overdoses.

**Stimulant-involved overdoses include overdoses where cocaine, amphetamine, or methamphetamine contributed to cause of death.



Key Takeaways

- Including overdose deaths, there are about **600 deaths per year** from excessive alcohol use in Rhode Island from both acute and chronic causes.
- In 2023, 20% of overdose deaths were alcohol-involved.
- Most individuals who died from an alcohol-related overdose were male.
- The rate of alcohol-involved overdose deaths was highest in individuals age 35 to 44 and those identifying as non-Hispanic, Black.
- Illicit drugs and fentanyl were commonly seen in alcohol-involved overdose deaths.

RIDOH's Excessive Alcohol Use Surveillance Data Hub

For more information, visit RIDOH's Excessive Alcohol Use Surveillance Data Hub at health.ri.gov/od-datahub

- Introduction to Excessive Alcohol Use
- Adult Excessive Alcohol Use
- Alcohol Use Among Youth
- Traffic Crashes and Alcohol
- Reports and Resources



Introduction to
Excessive Alcohol
Use



Adult Excessive
Alcohol Use



Alcohol Use Among
Youth



Traffic Crashes and
Alcohol



Reports and
Resources

For more data, local resources, and access to free naloxone, visit PreventOverdoseRI.org.





Rhode Island Young Adult Survey



2024 Rhode Island Young Adult Survey

Presented by

Samantha R. Rosenthal, PhD, MPH

Epidemiologist Consultant

Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals



2024 Rhode Island Young Adult Survey

Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Partnerships for Success grant by the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals (BHDDH).

PFS II Project Director, Karen Flora

Karen.Flora@bhddh.ri.gov

For more information on survey methods and 2022 statewide data [click here](#).



Rhode Island Young Adult Survey



What is the RIYAS?

- The **Rhode Island Young Adult Survey (RIYAS)** is a behavioral survey administered to adults aged 18-25 years, residing in Rhode Island for at least part of the year.
- Recruitment and survey were offered in English.
- Recruitment included **paid Instagram and Spotify ads** (targeted to 18–25-year-olds geo-referenced in Rhode Island).
- Recruitment was supplemented by informal posts to **university digital marketing, flyers, and informal e-mail recruitment to institutions of higher education** in Rhode Island.
- A total of **N = 1,008** surveys were completed for 2024 administration, June through September.



Why is the RIYAS special?

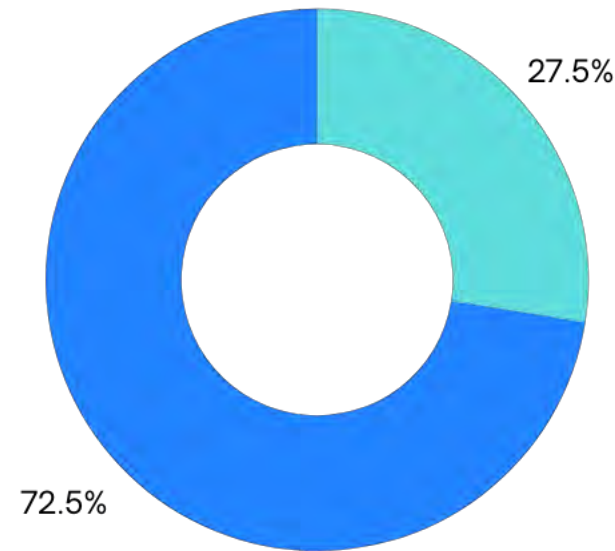
- Young adults aged 18-25 years have some of the **riskiest behaviors** in terms of substance use and tend to have **high rates of mental illness**.
- Young adulthood is also a developmental transition period in which long-term health outcomes and long-term behaviors are established.
- Rhode Island Young Adult Survey is the **largest behavioral survey** to date for young adults residing in Rhode Island for at least part of the year; also includes visiting college students unlike other surveillance systems.
- Prior behavioral estimates from this population have used much smaller samples for annual surveillance: **Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS; N<300)** and **National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH; N<100)**.



Demographics

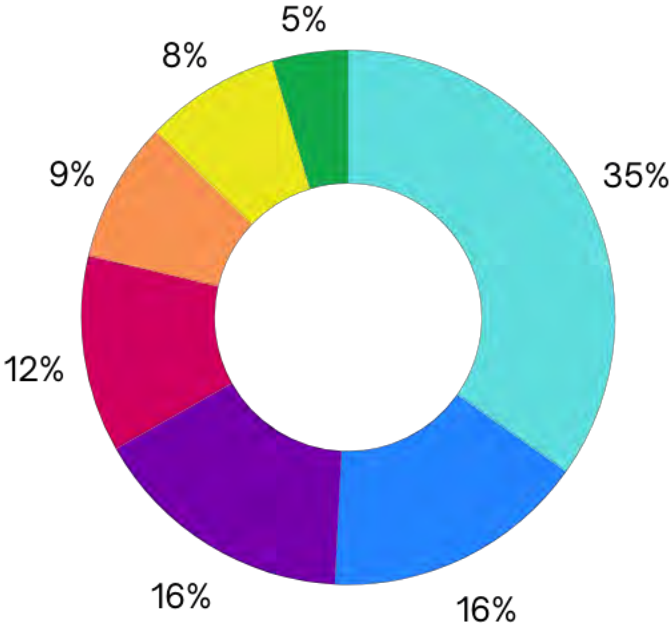


Residence in Rhode Island



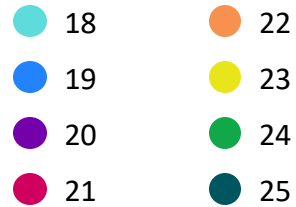
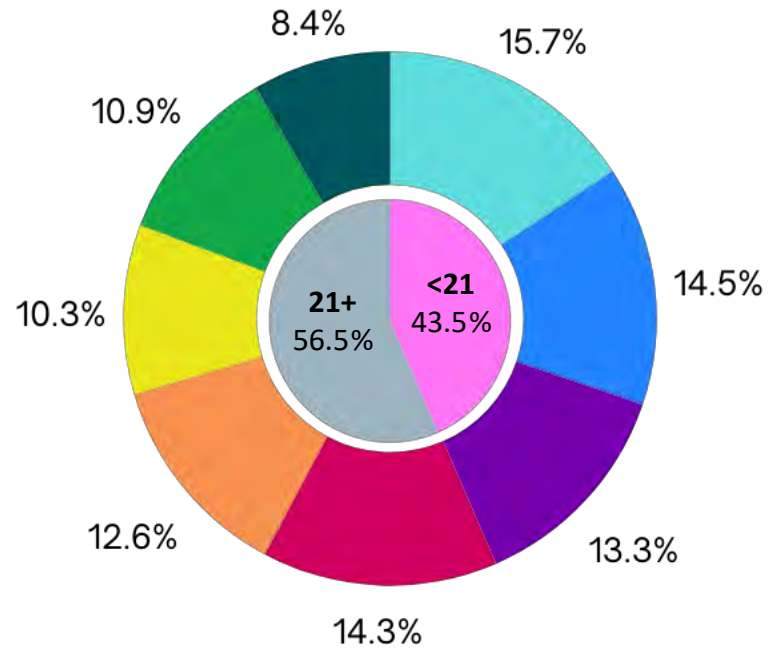
- Part Year
- All Year

Region of Residence

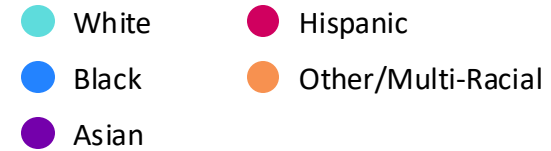
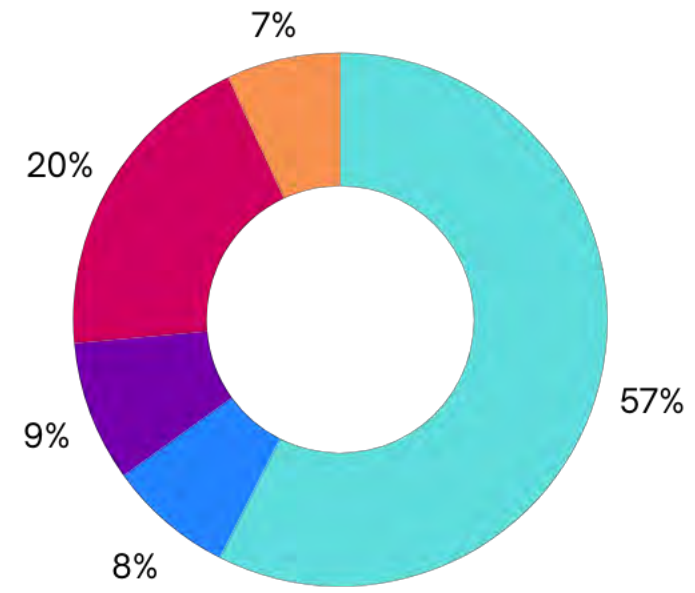


- Providence
- Southern Providence
- Blackstone Valley
- Kent County
- South County
- East Bay
- Newport County

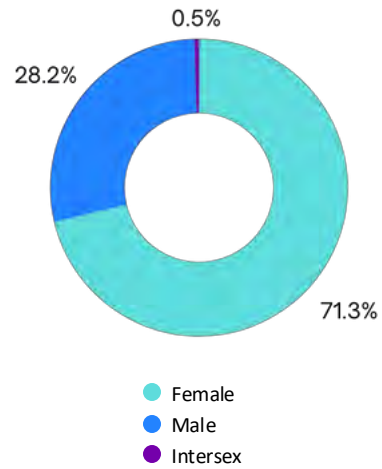
Age



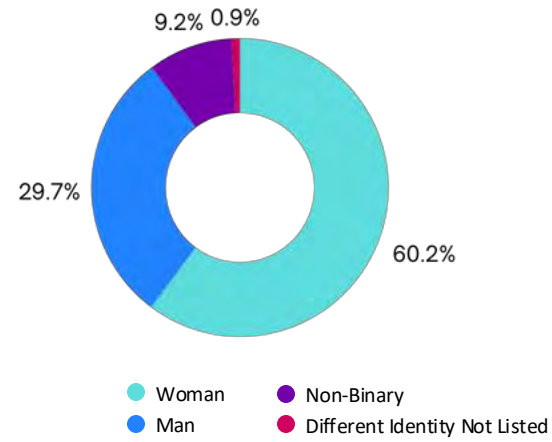
Race/Ethnicity



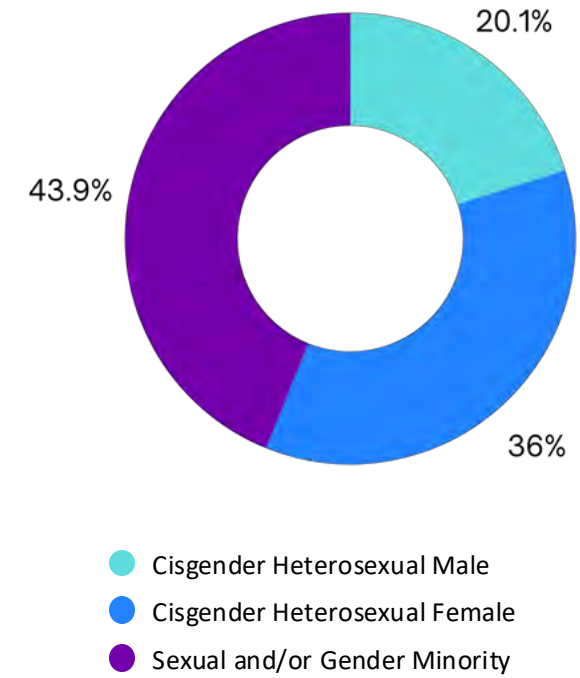
Sex Assigned at Birth



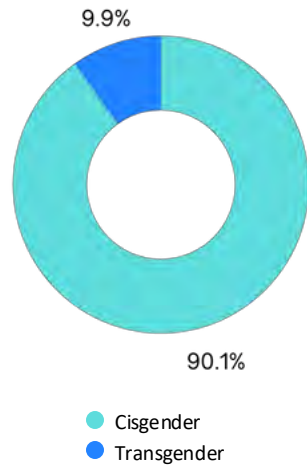
Gender Identity



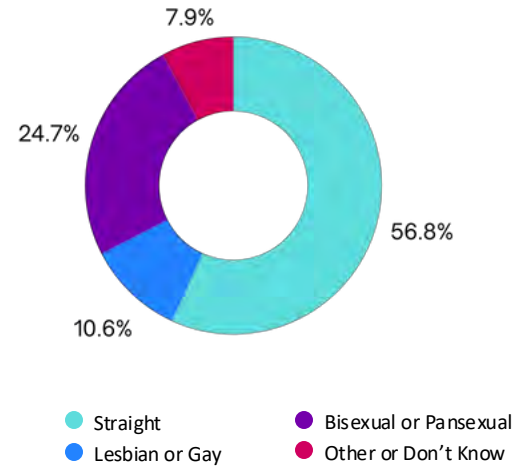
Sexual/Gender Identity



Gender Status



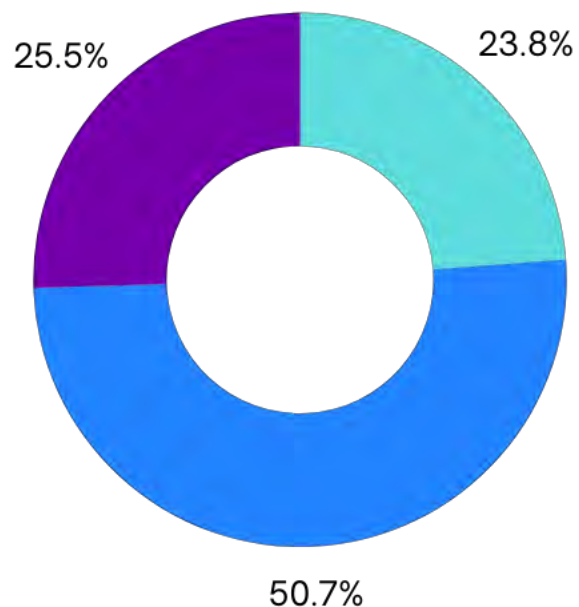
Sexual Orientation



Alcohol



↓ Ever Drank Alcohol



- No
- Yes, in the last month
- Yes, more than a month ago

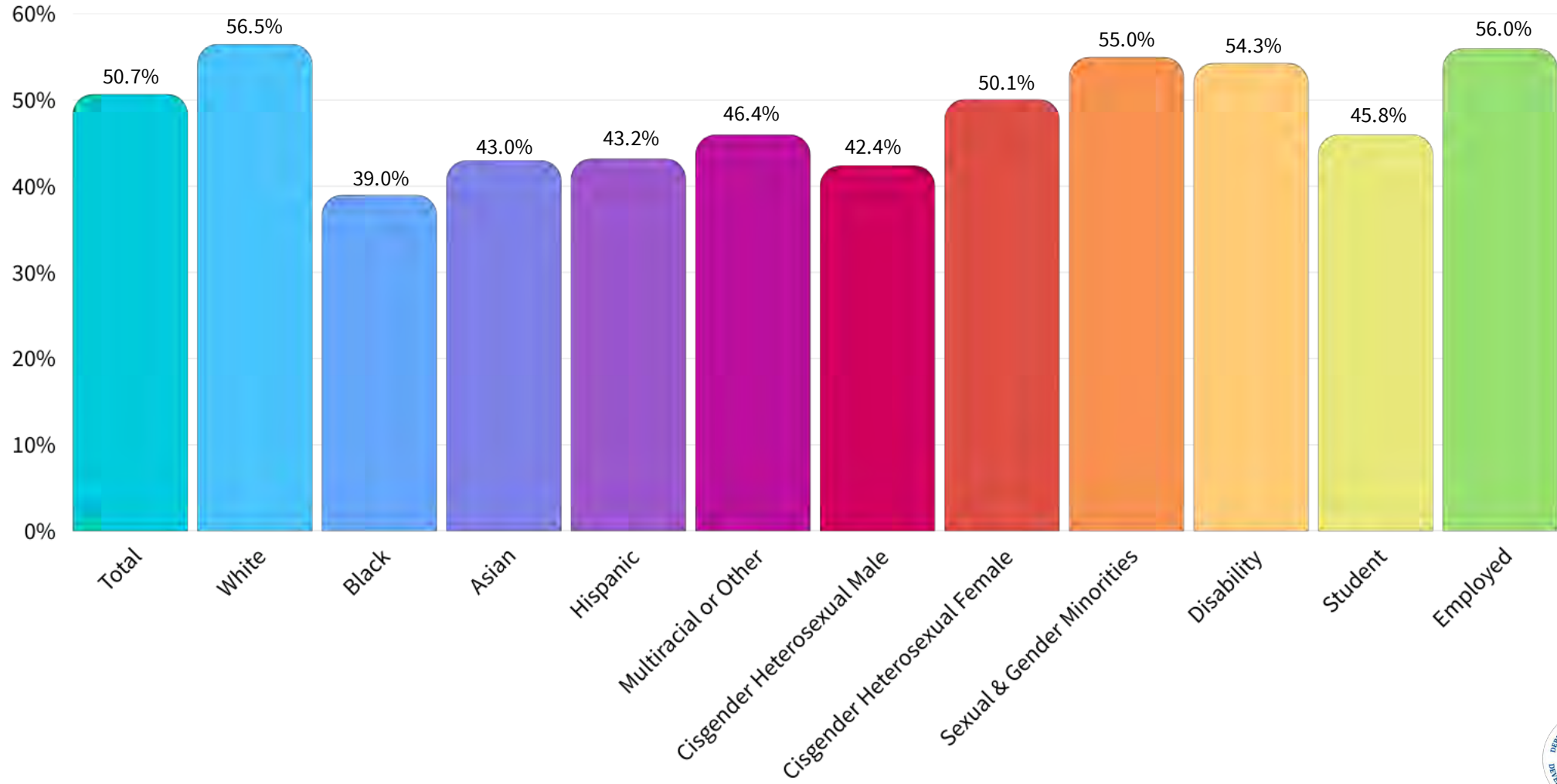
Among those who have drank alcohol (N= 751), the average age at first drink was

17.3



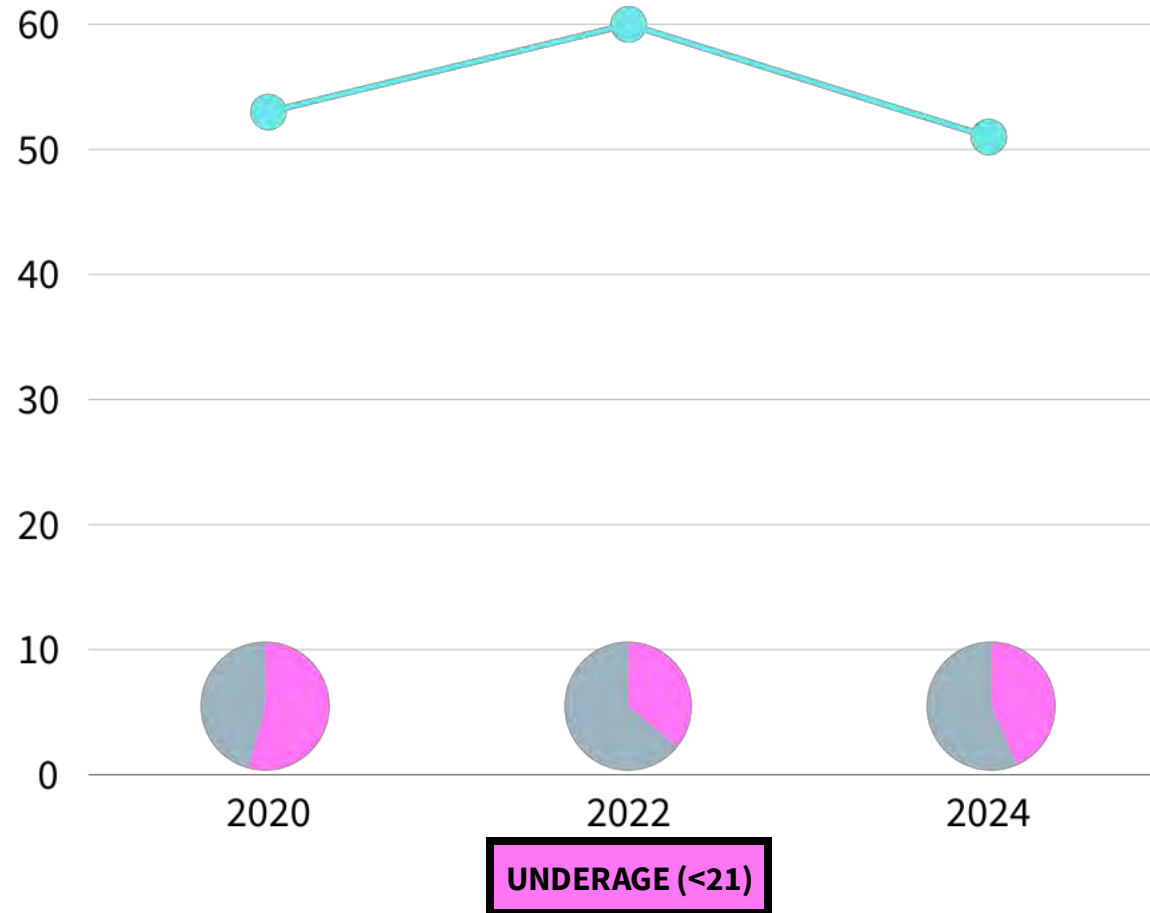
Past Month Drinking

NOTE: Percent varied by race/ethnicity ($p=0.001$), sexual/gender identity ($p=0.012$), disability status ($p=0.03$), student status ($p<0.001$), and employment status ($p<0.001$).



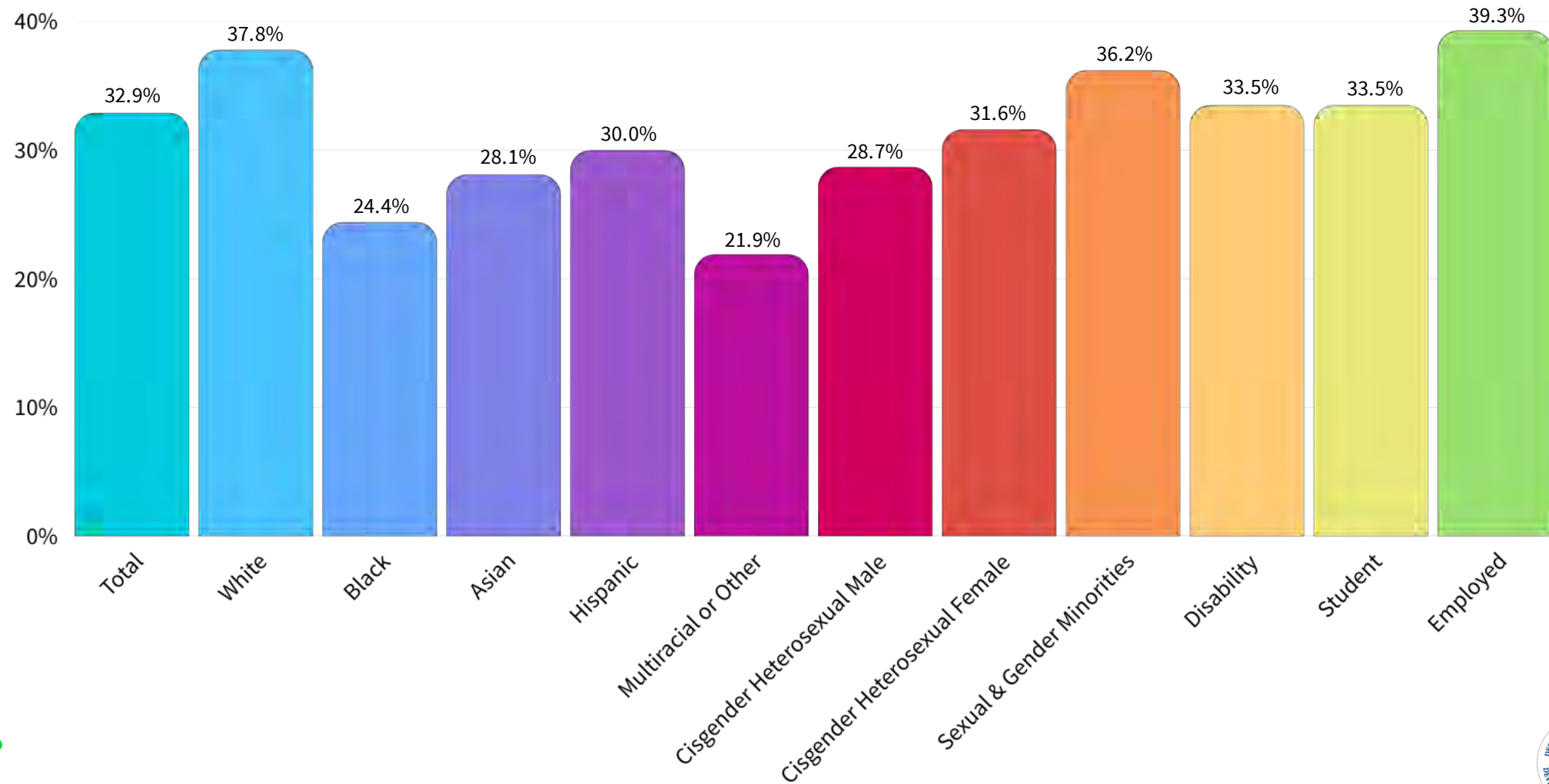
Past Month Drinking Over Time

NOTE: When considering the proportion of the sample that is underage in each RIYAS administration, there is a significant linear decrease in past month drinking over time, $OR=0.86$, $p=0.006$.



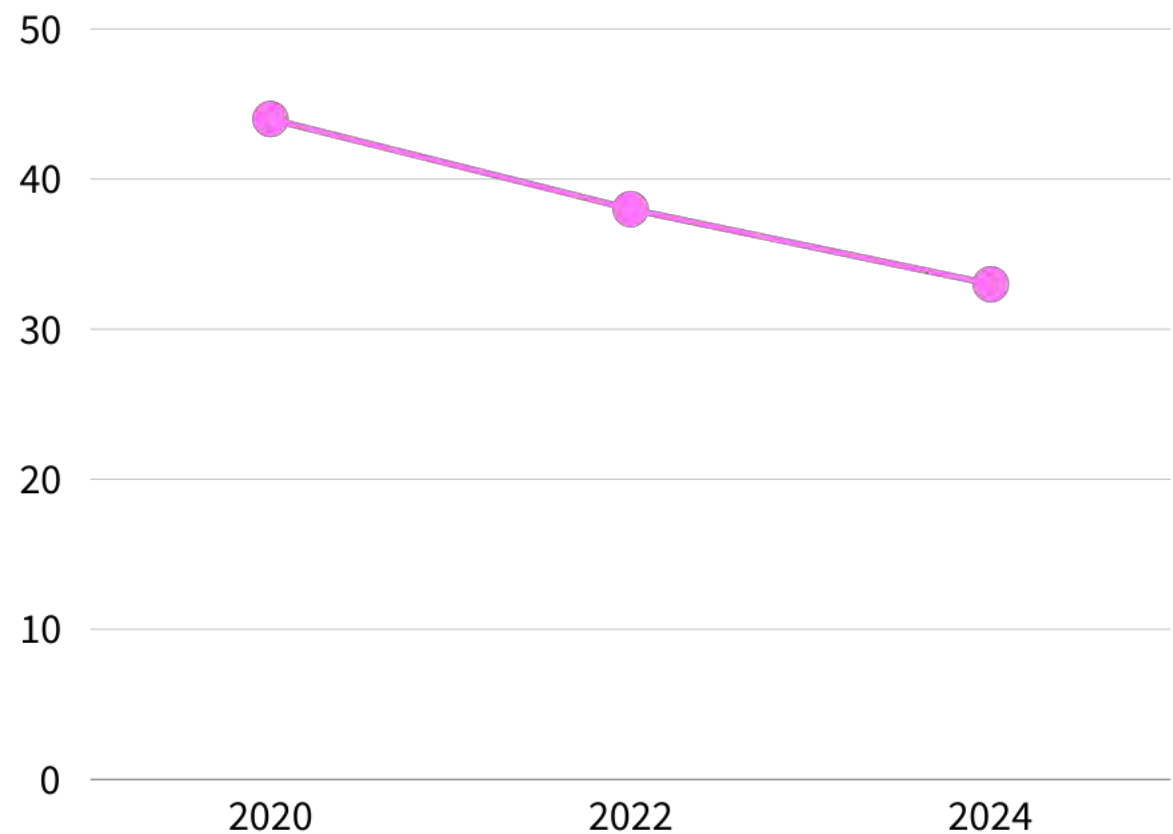
Past Month Underage Drinking

NOTE: Percent varied by employment status ($p < 0.001$).



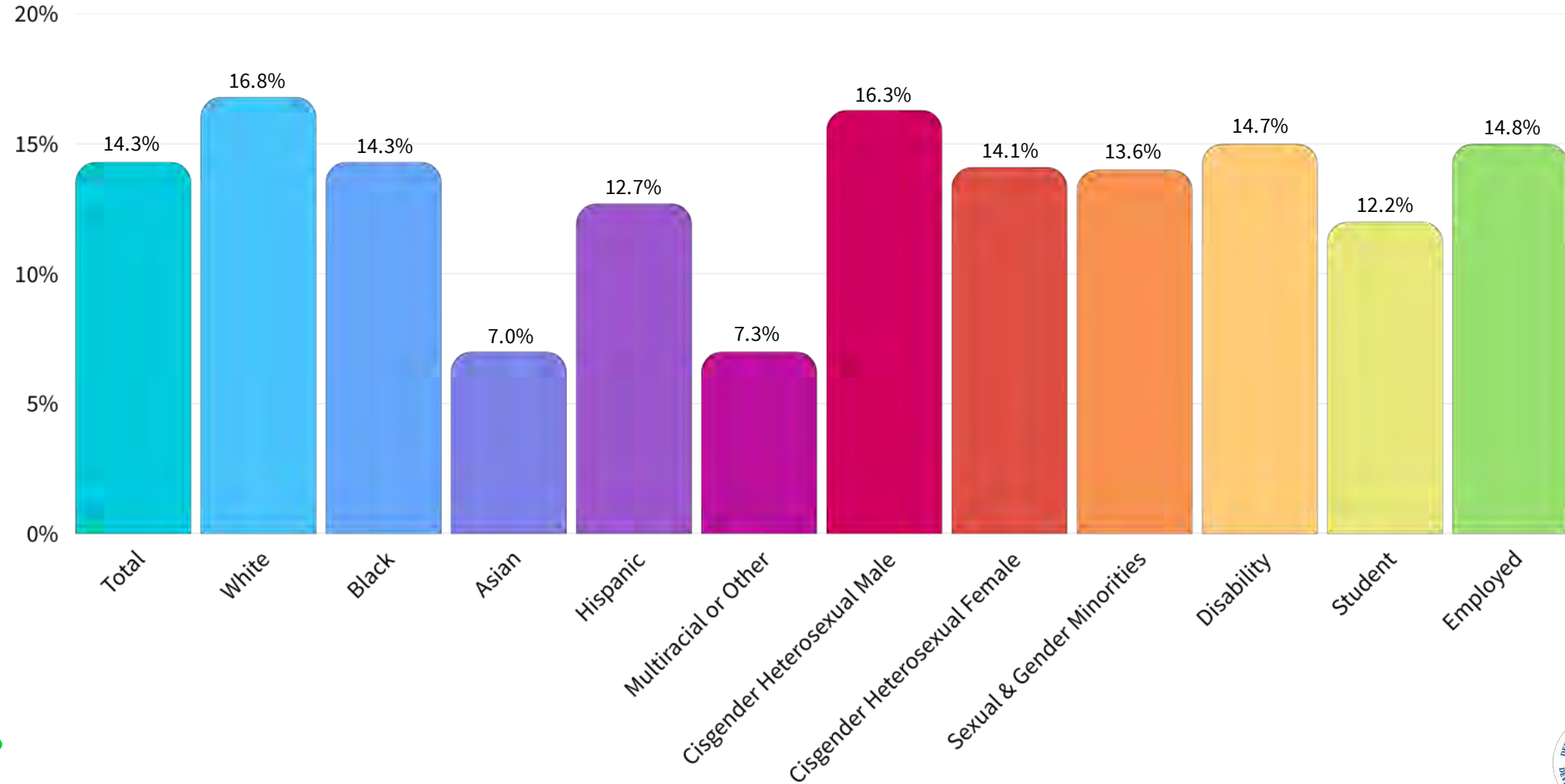
Past Month Underage Drinking Over Time

NOTE: There is a significant linear decrease in past month underage drinking over time, $OR=0.79$, $p = 0.002$.



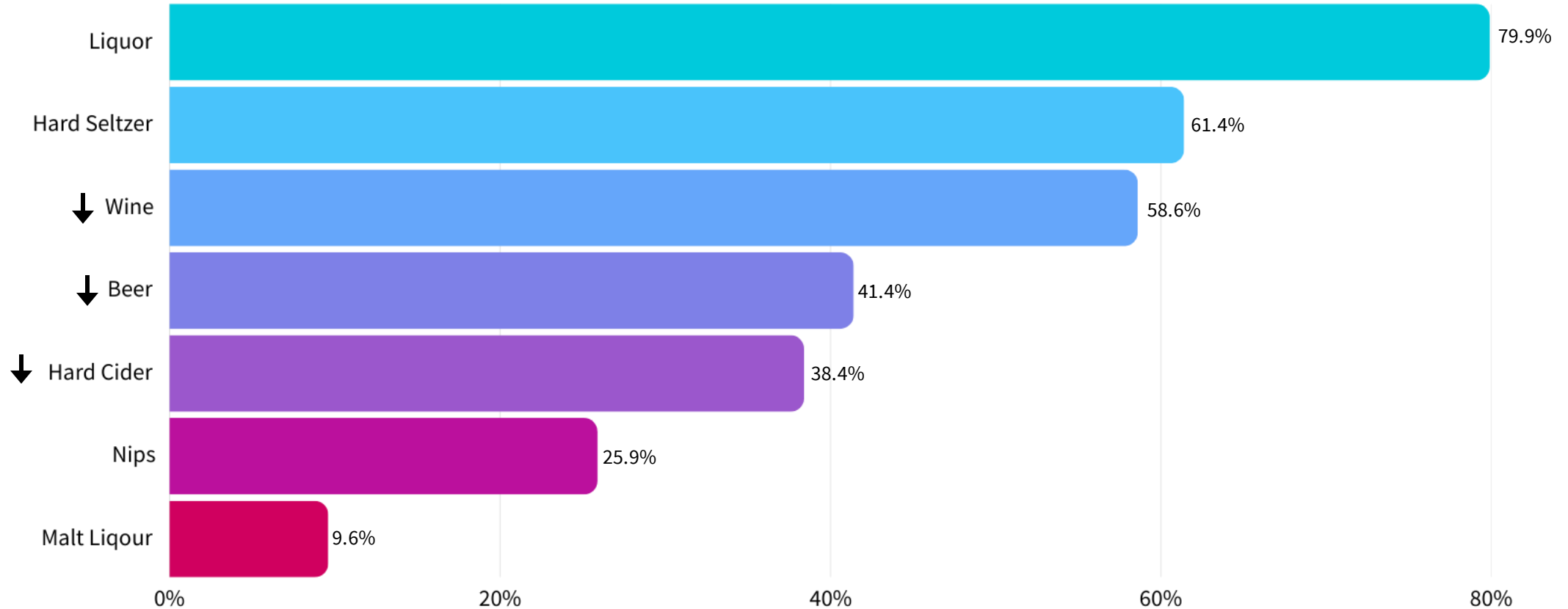
Hazardous Drinking

NOTE: Percent varied by race/ethnicity ($p=0.043$) and student status ($p=0.017$)
Hazardous Drinking was defined by a score of 8+ on the AUDIT



Type of Alcohol Consumed by Drinkers

n=751



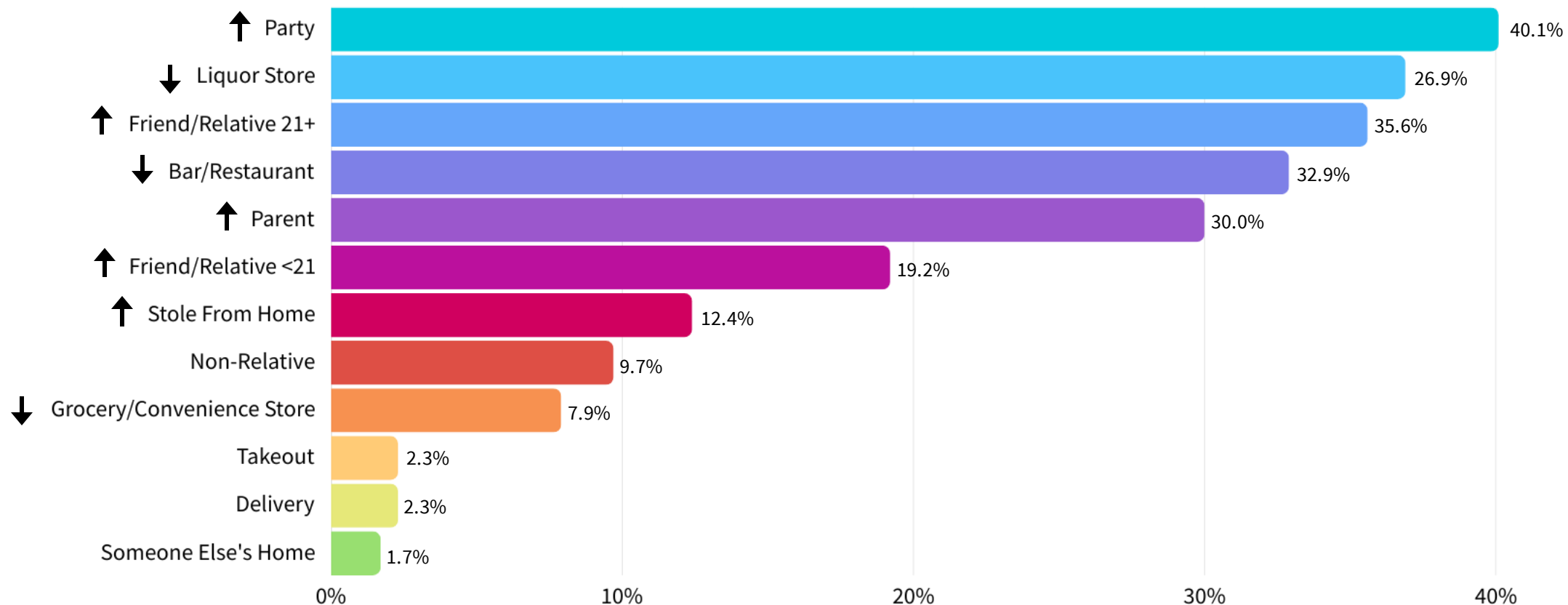
↓ Underage drinkers were significantly less likely to use this type ($p < 0.05$).





Source of Alcohol among Ever Drinkers

n=751



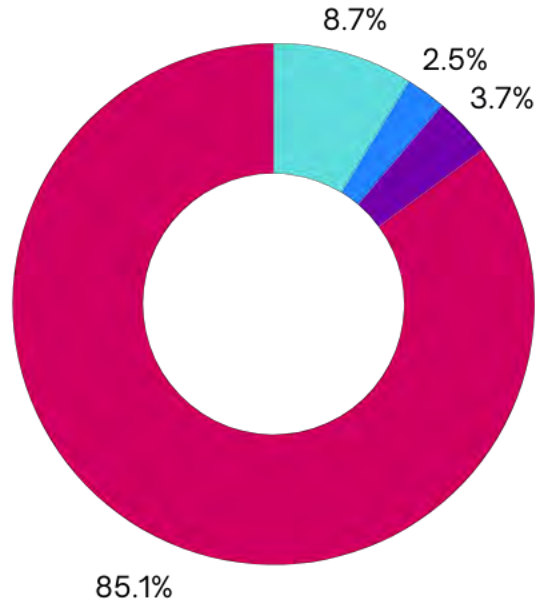
Rhode Island Young Adult Survey

↓ Underage drinkers were significantly less likely to use this source ($p < 0.05$). ↑ Underage drinkers were significantly more likely to use this source ($p < 0.05$).



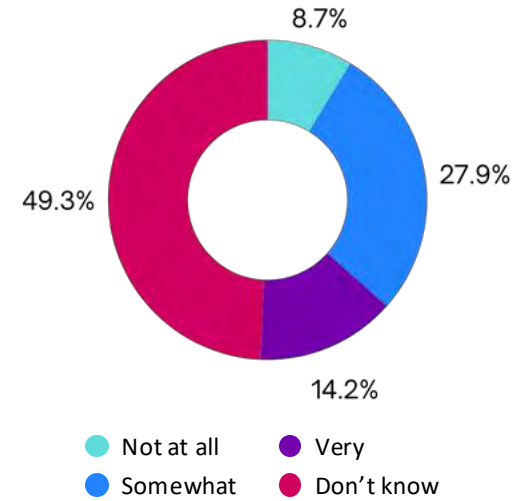
Fake ID Use among Underage Drinkers

n=438



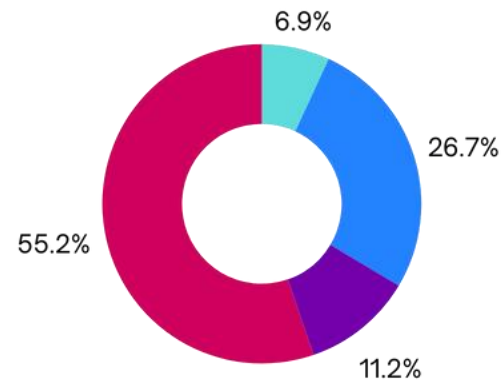
- No, and no intention to get one
- No, but plans to get one
- Yes, and has not used it
- Yes, and has used it

Ease of Getting a Fake ID



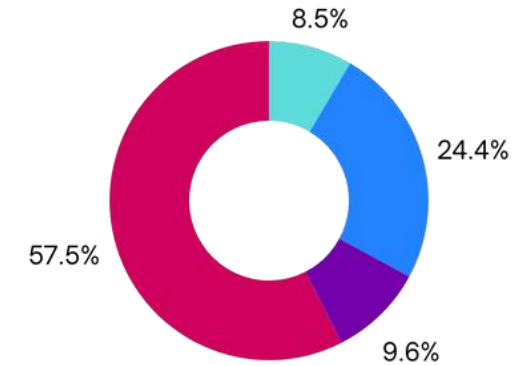
- Not at all
- Somewhat
- Very
- Don't know

Ease of Purchasing Alcohol with a Fake ID



- Not at all
- Somewhat
- Very
- Don't know

Ease of Getting into a Bar/Club with a Fake ID

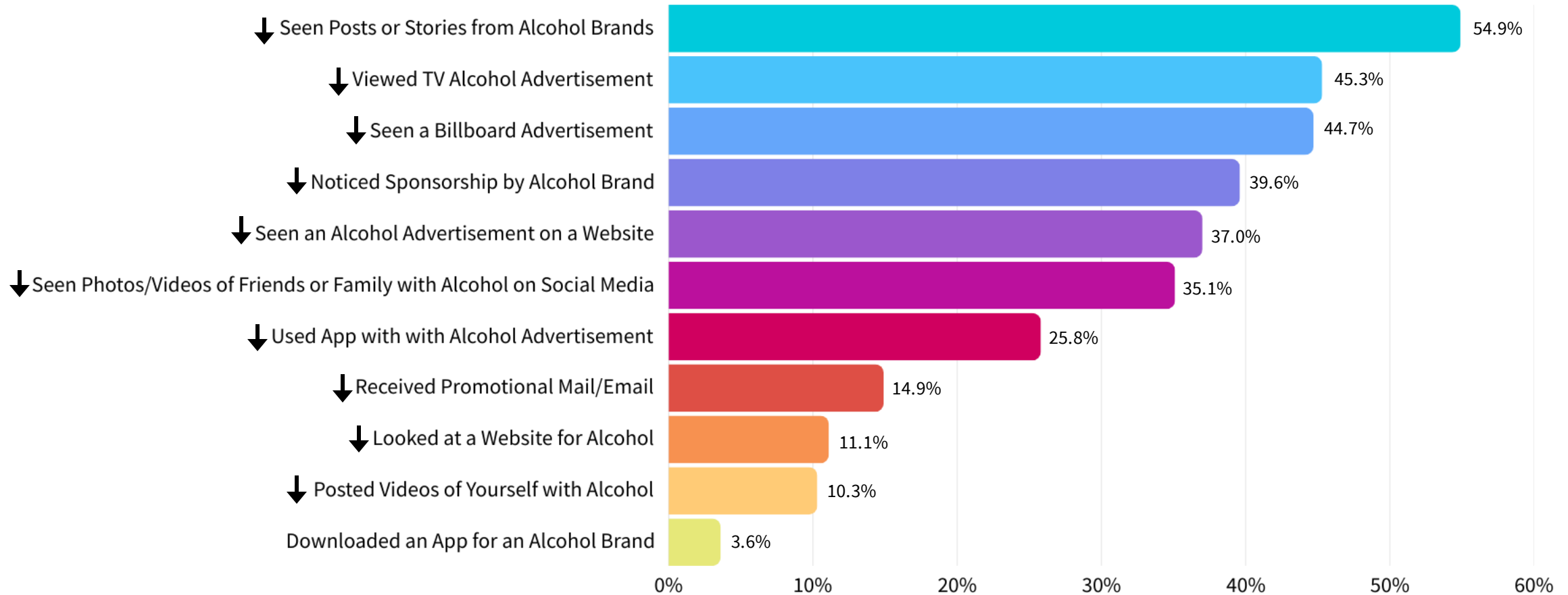


- Not at all
- Somewhat
- Very
- Don't know



Alcohol Marketing Exposure in the Past 30 days

N=1,008

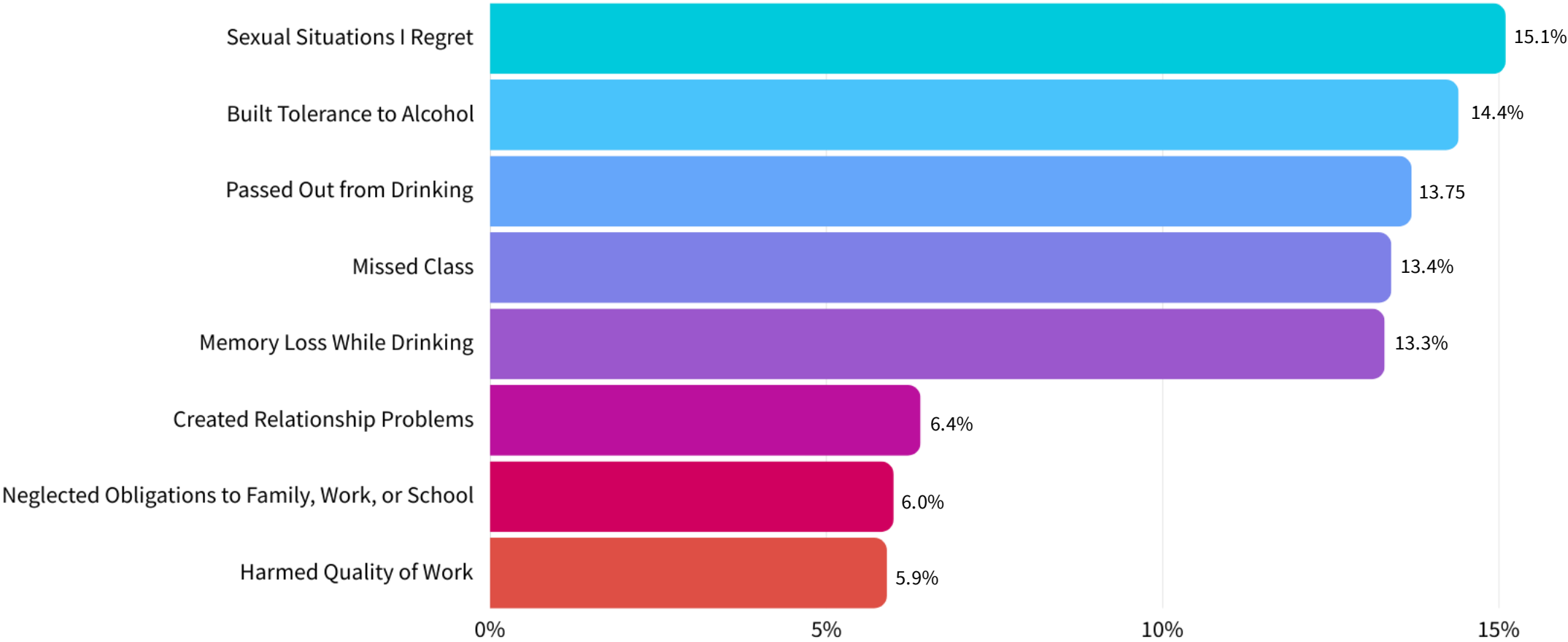


Underage drinkers were significantly less likely compared to legal age adults ($p < 0.05$).

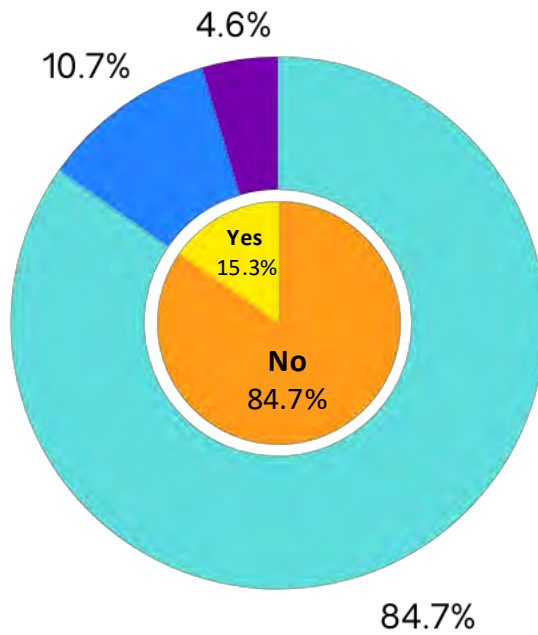


Negative Consequences of Alcohol among Drinkers

n=700

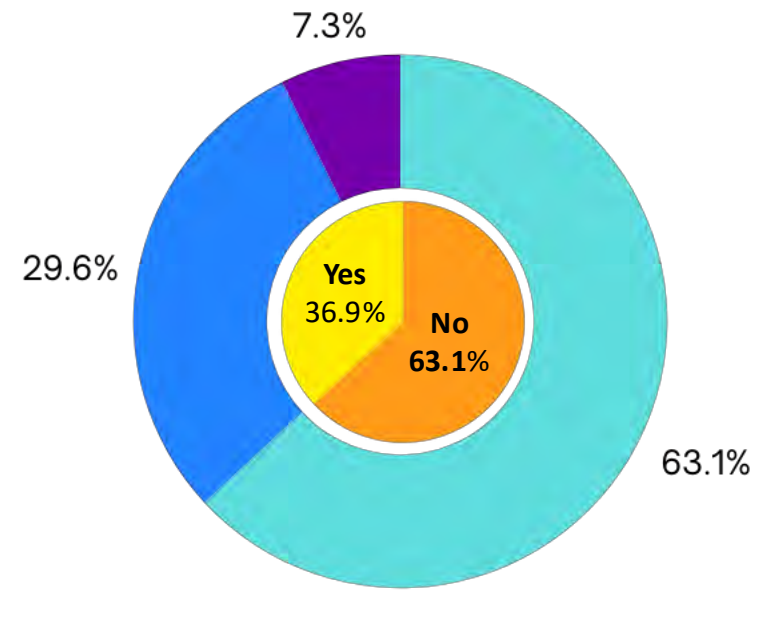


Drinking and Driving (n=700)



- No
- Yes, more than a month ago
- Yes, in the past month

Riding with a Drinking Driver (N=1,008)



- No
- Yes, more than a month ago
- Yes, in the past month



What's next?

2024 RIYAS data will be used for additional peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations, and data briefs.

We hope to administer the RIYAS again in 2026, with a goal of seeking funds to sustain data collection moving forward.

For questions, please contact **srrosenthal@gmail.com**



For more information on 2022 statewide data [click here](#).
2024 Statewide Report coming soon.





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The Partnerships for Success (PFS) Regional Grant: South County Programs and Strategies for Young Adult Alcohol Prevention and Compliance

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Regional Director

South County Regional Prevention

Coastline EAP D/B/A

Rhode Island Student Assistance Services

Lily O'Toole | BS, CPS

Community Prevention Program Manager

Partnerships for Success

South County Regional Prevention

Coastline EAP D/B/A

Rhode Island Student Assistance Services



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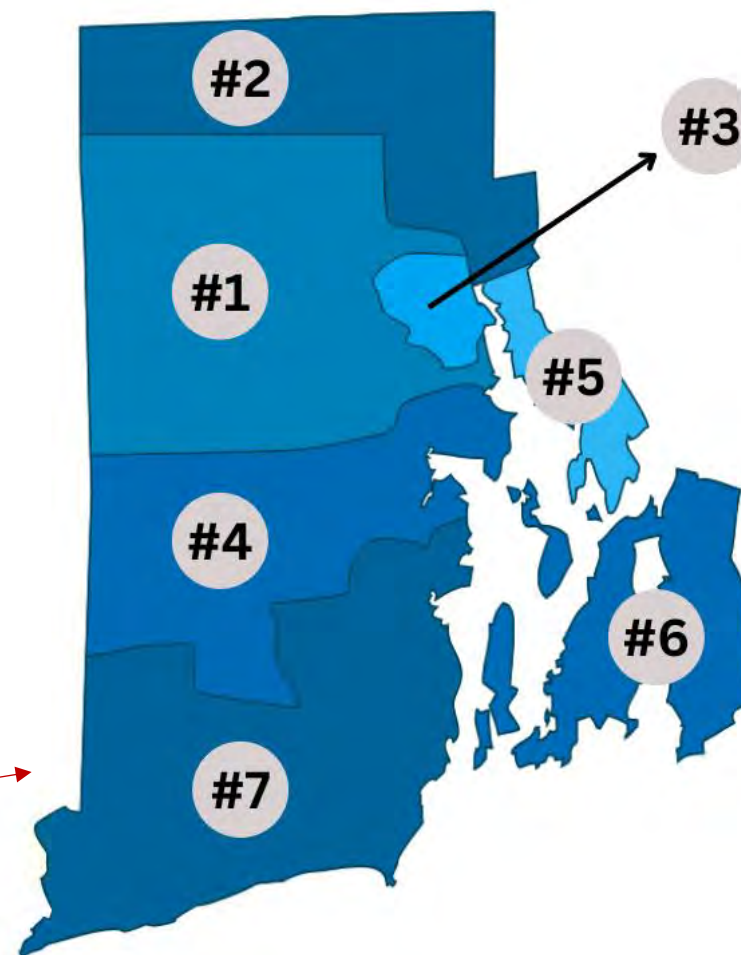


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Regional Coalition Map

- ☐ **Region 1:** Southern Providence
- ☐ **Region 2:** Blackstone Valley
- ☐ **Region 3:** City of Providence
- ☐ **Region 4:** Kent County
- ☐ **Region 5:** East Bay
- ☐ **Region 6:** Newport County
- ☐ **Regional 7:** South County





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PFS Scope of Work

The Rhode Island Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) Partnerships for Success (PFS) 2023 regional program will address current gaps in alcohol and cannabis (marijuana) use prevention among young adults ages 18-25 and work to reduce the onset and progression of underage and problem alcohol and cannabis (marijuana) use in young adults in Rhode Island.

The Regional PFS grant was awarded to:

**Region 3:
Providence**

**Region 5:
East Bay**

**Region 6:
Newport**

**Region 7:
South County**



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PFS Scope of Work

Reduce underage and problem alcohol use of young adults ages 18-25 in high-need geographic areas by the end of year 5.

Goal 1

Reduce underage and problem cannabis (marijuana) use of young adults ages 18-25 in high-need geographic areas by the end of year 5.

Goal 2

Reduce underage and problem alcohol and cannabis (marijuana) use disparities of young adults ages 18-25 who identify as LGBTQ+ by the end of year 5.

Goal 3



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South County Evidence-Based Programs and Strategies

Current

Training for Intervention Procedures (TIPS)

Project Safe Zone

Project Sticker Shock

Party Patrols

In Progress

Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College
Students (BASICS)

InShape Prevention Plus Wellness

AFFIRM Adult

The BARS Program



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TIPS (*Training for Intervention Procedures*) Certified Alcohol Server Program

- ❑ Education and training for the responsible service, sale, and consumption of alcohol.
- ❑ Proven effective by third-party studies, TIPS is a skills-based training program that is designed to prevent intoxication, underage drinking, and drunk driving.
- ❑ TIPS provides several curriculums catered for different establishments and positions such as businesses and universities, alcohol servers and sellers, and communities and coalitions.
- ❑ Implemented TIPS University with **85%** of the Risk Chairs involved in Greek life at the University of Rhode Island.

Get TIPS Trained!



Want the knowledge and confidence to help reduce high-risk drinking behavior among your fellow students?


TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedures) is a 3-hour training session tailored for college and university students to prevent intoxication, underage drinking, and impaired driving. Learn skills you'll need to intervene with your peers in social situations to avoid negative alcohol-related incidents.

Want a healthier lifestyle for you and your fellow students?
Discover this unique approach!


What TIPS training can do for you:

- Empowers you to intervene when alcohol is misused.
- Prevents property damage, vandalism, and other alcohol-related crimes.
- Improves relations with local law enforcement, businesses, and residents.
- Provides liability protection for the university and student organizations.
- Demonstrates commitment to the safety and well being of students.

Invest in a safe & responsible campus community!



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Project Safe Zone

- ❑ Safe Zone is an opportunity to learn about LGBTQ+ identities, gender and sexuality, and examine prejudice, assumptions, and privilege.
- ❑ Safe Zone equips community members to be better allies to the LGBTQ+ community, which helps to address minority stress which contributes to health disparities in substance use for members of the LGBTQ+ community.
- ❑ The South County Prevention Coalition has trained **788 people** in Safe Zone within the region.





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Project Sticker Shock

- ☐ Community awareness campaign designed to increase visibility of and compliance with Rhode Island underage drinking laws.
- ☐ Discourage people over the age of 21 to provide alcohol to minors.
- ☐ Provides an opportunity to work with local liquor stores to enforce these laws and regulations.
- ☐ Participation from the **24 liquor stores** in the South County area.
- ☐ More than **12 pizza places** partake, including **Dave's Marketplace in North Kingstown**.





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Party Patrols

- ☐ Community-based approach in which police visit locations where there have been reports and complaints about noisy party activity.
- ☐ Police visit addresses associated with keg registrations to determine whether underage drinking is taking place.
- ☐ If illegal activity is occurring, the police cite any adults who appear to have facilitated underage drinking.
- ☐ In year one of the grant, South County police departments and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) were funded for **196 hours** of party patrol details.





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In Progress



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Brief Alcohol Screening Intervention for College Students (BASICS)

- ☐ A program designed to assist students in examining their alcohol and other substance-use behavior. Services provided through this program are non-judgmental, non-labeling, and confidential.
- ☐ This is NOT an abstinence-only program.
- ☐ BASICS helps students to select goals that aim to reduce risky behavior and potential consequences.
- ☐ Discussion with the University of Rhode Island to add this program into their substance prevention curriculum.





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InShape (Alcohol/Drug) Prevention Plus Wellness for Young Adults

- ❑ A single-session substance use prevention program designed to increase fitness, health, and performance-enhancing behaviors like physical activity, exercise, healthy eating, getting adequate sleep, and practicing stress control while avoiding harmful substance use for young adults.
- ❑ Targets naturally motivating positive images to increase personal goal setting to improve multiple wellness habits and positive self-identity.
- ❑ Can be a stand-alone program, an add-on component, and repeated over time for sustained prevention.
- ❑ Partnering with the University of Rhode Island's Health Promotions and Advocacy Team to implement the program. Two current classes being done!

InShape
Prevention Plus Wellness Program

South County Prevention Coalition
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It's Free!
Participants receive a \$25 Gift Card.
Space is limited.
Sign up today!
Scan to Sign up!

An easy, 1-hour program designed to help you feel more active, fit & healthy.

InShape Prevention Plus Wellness (PPW) is an easy, enjoyable, and effective way to promote good mental health and the physical wellbeing of young adults. This easy, single-session program has undergone rigorous research evaluating its effectiveness for preventing substance use and increasing healthy habits.
Want to live a healthier lifestyle? Give it a try!

tinyurl.com/inshapePPW24

Learn how you can increase these wellness-enhancing behaviors:
Physical Activity • Healthy Eating • Good Sleep Habits • Stress Control



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AFFIRM Adult

- ❑ An evidence-based, coping skills training intervention focused on reducing mental health issues and behavioral risks experienced by LGBTQ+ populations.
- ❑ Through a trauma-informed and affirming approach, AFFIRM Adult addresses clients' challenges through a cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) framework while simultaneously attending to the experiences and resiliencies of LGBTQ+ people.
- ❑ This program is typically delivered by trained and/or licensed counselors, social workers, and other mental health professionals in a group-based format.
- ❑ Currently recruiting clinicians in the South County area.





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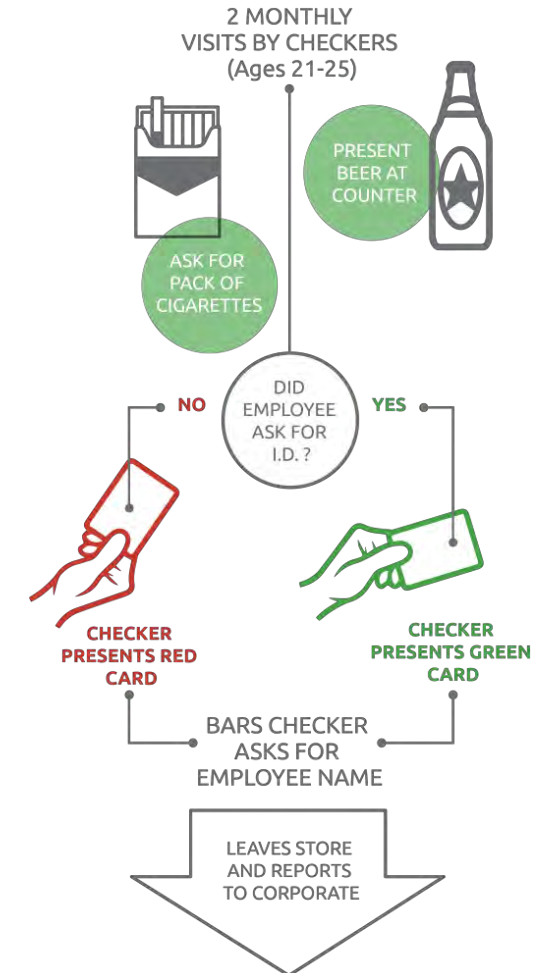
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The BARS Program

Alcohol and Tobacco Compliance

- ❑ Involves sending 21 to 25-year-old “checkers” into establishments once or twice a month to conduct mock purchases of cigarettes, tobacco vape products, nicotine pouches, and/or beer.
- ❑ Green Card/Red Card Method
- ❑ The purpose is to monitor staff when management is not on site.
- ❑ Ensures proper ID checking methods are being implemented.
- ❑ Each town will coordinate with two or three restaurants to implement compliance checks over a four- to six-month period.





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If you are a South County resident, join us the *2nd Wednesday of every month* at 3 p.m. via Zoom for the Regional Prevention Coalition meeting!

Please contact Heidi Driscoll at hdriscoll@risas.org for the Zoom link.

OR

**Join Your Area's Regional
Prevention Coalition!**

- ★ To find your local Coalition, visit the webpage below on the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH).

bhddh.ri.gov/prevention/ri-prevention-providers



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**DEA NATIONAL ^{Rx}
TAKEBACK**

**Saturday,
April 26**

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

DEATakeBack.com





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**Need Safe Rx
& Cannabis
Storage?**

It's in the bag!

Get yours FREE at riprevention.org/campaigns





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BH Link (401-414-5465)

Services include:

- 24/7 access to crisis assessment
- Substance use disorder assessment and referral
- Crisis/suicide hotline

To see what other services BH Link provides, go to:

bhlink.org/services





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Presenter Contact Information

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To learn more, please visit:

riprevention.org



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Thank you!

Public Comment
