

## AMERICANS' CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL BEVERAGES CONTINUES TO GROW

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New research reported by the **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism** (NIAAA) indicates that the market for alcohol beverages in this country will not disappear anytime soon. Overall per capita consumption of alcohol in the United States has climbed steadily since the early 1990's. In the most recent year for which consumption data are available (2012), per capita consumption of alcohol beverages climbed 2.2% over the previous year to reach 2.33 gallons per American.

The federal government has been compiling data on Americans' consumption of alcohol for 150 years (excluding the eleven years of Prohibition). NIAAA has issued 28 survey reports, beginning in 1977.

According to the compiled data, the highest period of per capita consumption in American history occurred during 1980-81, when the national per capita consumption rate rose to 2.76 gallons per person. The next heaviest period of drinking in America occurred between 1906 and 1910, when per capita consumption averaged 2.60 gallons.

The NIAAA cites 2.1 gallons as a goal for a healthy society, but the last time per capita levels dipped that low was in 1961. Current trends appear to be more towards an increase. 43 states (including D.C.) saw an increase in alcohol sales in 2012. According to the recently-released NIAAA report, the top five jurisdictions experiencing per capita increases in alcohol consumption were:

1. New Hampshire +4.65%
2. Dist. of Columbia +3.89%
3. Delaware +3.59%
4. North Dakota +3.42%
5. Nevada +3.27%

In contrast, the states experiencing the lowest increases in per capita alcohol consumption were as follows:

1. Oklahoma +1.94%
2. Kentucky +1.87%
3. Arkansas +1.81%

4. West Virginia +1.81%
5. Utah +1.37%

It is noteworthy that no state saw a decline in alcohol consumption according to the 2012 data released by NIAAA. Analysis of overall per capita alcohol consumption by census region between 2011 and 2012 indicated an increase of 3.4% in the West, 2.3% in the South, 2.1% in the Northeast, and 1.7% in the Midwest.

The NIAAA's recent report, entitled "Apparent Per Capita Alcohol Consumption: National, State, and Regional Trends, 1977-2012," is accessible online at:  
<http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/surveillance98/CONS12.htm>