

INEQUITY ALERT

CO SB24-020 . Alcohol Take Out & Delivery . Amendments Needed

Lawmaker silence on rising alcohol deaths raises questions for industry incentives in SB24-020

As we know from recent reports, alcohol deaths have surpassed drug overdose deaths in Colorado over the same time period as the permitting and expansion of alcohol takeout and delivery initiated by executive order in response to the pandemic lockdown.

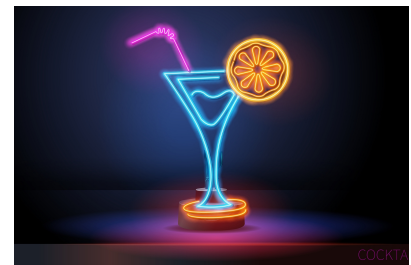
The lack of acknowledgment by lawmakers of the lives lost and families impacted by our state's alcohol successes is concerning enough, but then to see legislation put forward giving more protections to the alcohol industry without acknowledging the 60% increase in alcohol deaths can seem flippant, indifferent, self serving and cause confusion for survivors.

At some point, lawmakers could be more open about and reconcile their conflicts between alcohol industry love vs prison beds for drug users vs alcohol and overdose deaths.

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\$250,000 impact opportunity

There is a major public impact opportunity in SB 24-020 that with a few little tweaks in the form of amendments can have positive results for vested stakeholders, including many of those struggling with alcohol addiction and their affected families and communities.



1. Raise the \$11 / year permit fee to \$111 / year. Direct the \$100, which means \$250,000 for addiction healthcare and housing resources so that industry can better support the negative impacts of their success for barely \$8 / month.
2. Since it was originally created in response to the lockdown, update the language of the bill to justify its continuance in light of our state's soaring alcohol deaths now that the lockdown stage of the pandemic has passed. A justification, a stated basis, for its continuance needs included in the language of the bill. Otherwise, it has no stated purpose other than cheap permit fees for the industry.
3. Add a correlation study to determine whether the growth in takeout and delivery of alcohol has any connection to the rise in alcohol deaths over the same time period or if it reduced the number of deaths that could've been worse to make sure we know what it is we're embedding in the law in perpetuity.

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Correlation Study needed to prove no connection between soaring alcohol deaths and takeout delivery expansion

A correlation study can determine whether if and how much of the alcohol death increases were related to the expanded home delivery and take out, including domestic violence and other family home health data where alcohol was and is involved to make sure there aren't unintended consequences being overlooked in lawmaker enthusiasm for state-sanctioned incentives to alcohol businesses.

If there is no connection, the study will exonerate the industry and quash any correlative arguments from negatively impacted citizens.

Everyone wins.

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Krystyn Hartman is a graduate student in the Masters of Public Policy program at CU Denver. She is a childhood domestic violence and sexual assault survivor homeless at age 16 to escape the alcohol fueled violence at home.

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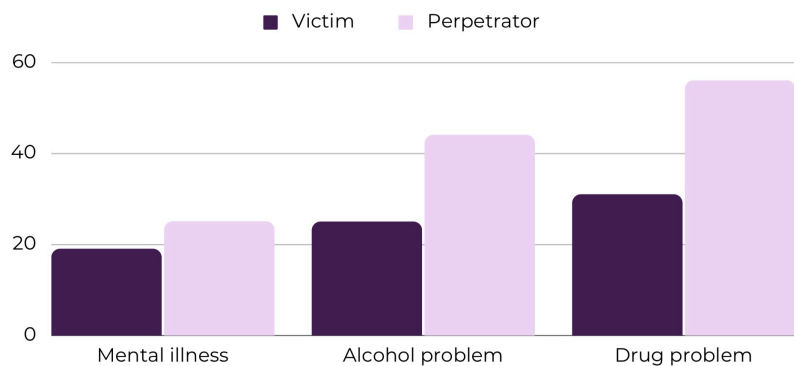
Krystyn Hartman - Colorado Citizen

Colorado Domestic Violence deaths hit all time high: 97% women victims, 42% involved alcohol

According to the Colorado Attorney General's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board 2023 report, domestic violence deaths broke records last year over the same time period as the expansion of alcohol take home and delivery. Of those deaths, 97% of the victims were women and 95% of the killers were men. Of those, 42% involved alcohol. Also over that same time period, alcohol deaths rose 60% in Colorado.

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Chart O: Percent of DV victims and perpetrators with indications of mental illness, alcohol problems, and drug problems (N=16)*



Amendments to SB24-020 could help negative impacts of state's dynamic alcohol success

With no legislation presented to address Colorado's alcohol addiction crisis, amendments to the alcohol takeout and delivery bill that includes funding for addiction and related healthcare and housing acknowledges problems *and* successes. Increasing permit fees helps provide much needed funding in addressing our state's addiction problem.

Whether glorified alcohol or stigmatized drugs, Colorado has a self-medicating problem that lawmakers can't afford to continue to ignore.

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A Denver Post Special Report

ALCOHOL DEATHS SOAR 60% IN JUST 4 YEARS



Alison Carter, left, and her daughter Aubrey, 16, comfort each other at Golden Gate Canyon State Park, northwest of Golden, on Sept. 30. The family recently moved to Fort Collins — a move inspired by a letter to the editor of the Denver Post. The letter said that the family had been in the state for 10 years and had not seen their daughter since the first two years of the pandemic.

But there's been no public outcry or push in state to save lives

By David W. Johnson, author of "The Alcohol Problem" and "The Drug Problem" (both published by the University of Colorado Press)

Colorado's Quiet Killer: A hidden epidemic sweeping across the state, killing thousands of people each year.