

CONSEQUENCES DATA HIGHLIGHTS

Health and Mortality

Prenatal exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs jeopardizes the fetus. Maternal use of these substances during pregnancy puts the newborn at risk for low birth weight, drug withdrawal, and lifelong impairments including serious birth defects and mental retardation. Substance abuse during pregnancy showed little change in 2005. The reported number of newborns whose mothers drank alcohol during their pregnancies was 473 in 2005. Studies have shown that alcohol use during pregnancy is substantially underreported, so the actual number of babies at-risk for fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects is unknown but much higher than this. Hospitals reported 300 drug-affected births in 2005, but illicit drug use by pregnant women is also underreported. In 2005, hospitals reported 14,317 births to women who smoked during their pregnancies—the highest number since 1997—involving 18.3 percent of Missouri's live births.

Communicable diseases such as hepatitis and HIV/AIDS are often acquired through substance abuse. Hepatitis C cases continued to increase, reaching 3,829 in 2005 compared to 3,150 in 2004. In 2005, 500 Hepatitis B cases were reported, a decrease from 529 in 2004. The cumulative number of HIV cases reported in Missouri reached 4,897 in 2005, while cumulative AIDS cases slowed to 9,837—only 27 more than the 2004 total.

Alcohol, tobacco, and drug related deaths are estimated because these substances sometimes contribute to diseases and events that are identified as the immediate causes of death. Smoking-attributable deaths totaled 9,548 in Missouri in 2005, an increase from the 2004 estimate of 9,396. Drug related deaths continued to increase, reaching 674 in 2005 compared to 591 in 2004. Alcohol related deaths decreased from 383 in 2004 to 327 in 2005.

Hospital and emergency room episodes resulting from alcohol and drug abuse increased in 2005. Alcohol related cirrhosis episodes increased from 3,492 in 2004 to 3,621 in 2005. All other alcohol related episodes totaled 46,451 in 2005 compared to 45,747 in 2004. Drug related episodes increased 8.1 percent, rising from 38,606 in 2004 to 41,735 in 2005.

Public Safety and Law Enforcement

Traffic crashes involving an alcohol-intoxicated driver or pedestrian decreased from 8,301 in 2004 to 7,888 in 2005—amounting to 4.5 percent of all vehicle crashes and a rate of 11.47 crashes per 100 million miles of vehicle travel in Missouri. Alcohol related fatal crashes increased to 253 and accounted for 22.6 percent of all fatal crashes and 3.2 percent of the alcohol-involved crashes. Drug-related crashes decreased from 955 in 2004 to 940 in 2005, but 3.3 percent of them resulted in fatalities compared to 1.8 percent in 2004.

Arrests for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs increased slightly to 35,551 in 2005 and arrests for intoxicated boating increased from 352 in 2004 to 476 in 2005. Drug arrests also increased—to 42,371 in 2005. However, methamphetamine lab seizures continued to decline from the 2003 peak of 2,860, falling to 2,252 in 2005 and 1,284 in 2006.

Court and Corrections

Juvenile court referrals for alcohol and drug offenses declined in 2005. Only 1,055 alcohol violations were referred to juvenile court—the lowest number in many years. Juvenile drug referrals totaled 3,131 and reached their lowest level since 1995. In 2005, juvenile courts ordered out-of-home placements for 2,306 children due to substance abuse by their parents. These placements constituted almost 36 percent of all removals and included 305 resulting from parental alcohol use, 1,776 caused by parental drug use, and 225 involving parental alcohol and drug use.

Drug offenses accounted for 36.5 percent of probation and parole openings and 34.6 percent of prison admissions in fiscal year 2006. Intoxicated driving resulted in an additional 4.8 percent of the probation and parole caseload and 5.3 percent of state incarcerations.