

# The NSDUH Report

Issue 13

2006

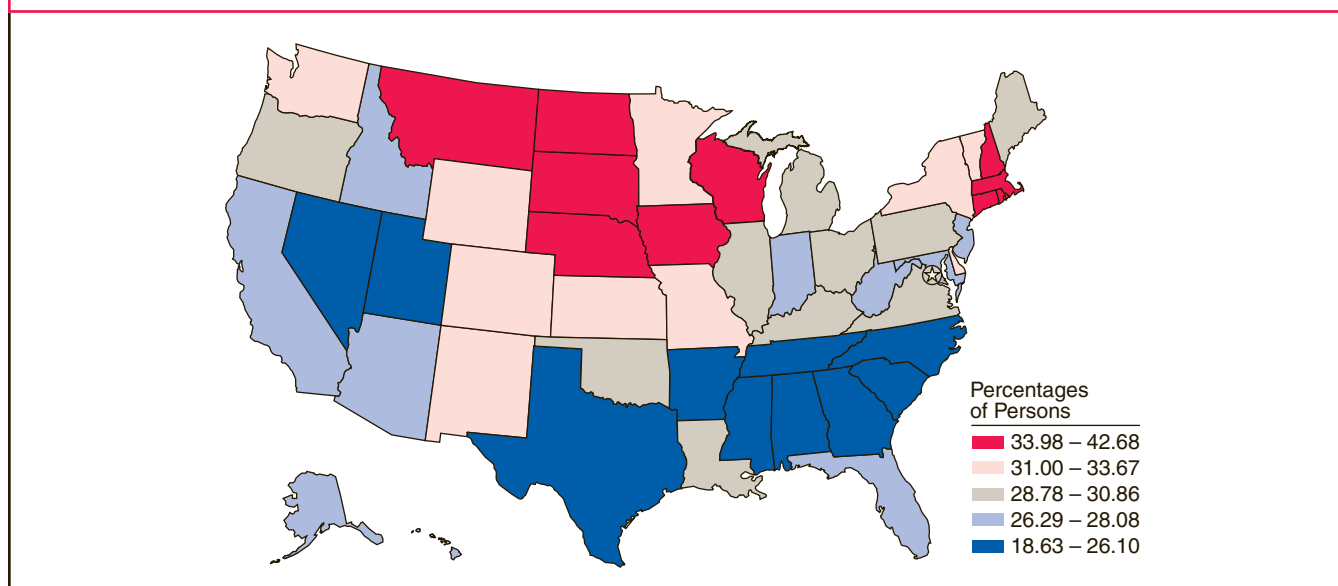
## State Estimates of Underage Drinking

### In Brief

- In 2003–2004, past month alcohol use rates for persons aged 12 to 20 were among the lowest in Utah (18.6 percent) and Tennessee (22.3 percent) and among the highest in North Dakota (42.7 percent) and South Dakota (39.1 percent)
- Between 2002–2003 and 2003–2004, past month alcohol use increased in California (from 24.7 to 26.3 percent) and Wisconsin (from 34.7 to 38.3 percent), while binge alcohol use increased in Iowa (from 24.7 to 27.7 percent) and Oklahoma (from 19.1 to 21.5 percent)
- Past month alcohol use decreased between 2002–2003 and 2003–2004 in South Carolina (from 27.2 to 24.1 percent) and Michigan (from 31.8 to 30.2 percent), while binge alcohol use decreased in South Carolina and North Carolina (both from 18.0 to 15.9 percent) and in Tennessee (from 15.9 to 13.1 percent)

Underage drinking is known to vary across States.<sup>1</sup> The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) asks respondents aged 12 or older to report on their alcohol and binge alcohol use in the past 30 days. NSDUH defines binge alcohol use as drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past 30 days.

This report presents State estimates of past month and binge alcohol use among persons aged 12 to 20. Estimates are based on a small area estimation (SAE) methodology in which State-level NSDUH data are combined with local-area county and census block group/tract-level data from the State. This model-based methodology provides more precise estimates of substance use at the State level than those based solely on the sample, particularly for smaller States.

**Figure 1. Percentages of Persons Aged 12 to 20 Reporting Past Month Alcohol Use, by State: 2003 and 2004**

## State Estimates of Past Month Alcohol Use

In 2003–2004, 28.8 percent of persons aged 12 to 20 drank alcohol in the past month.

Rates of past month alcohol use were among the lowest in Utah (18.6 percent) and Tennessee (22.3 percent) and among the highest in North Dakota (42.7 percent) and South Dakota (39.1 percent).

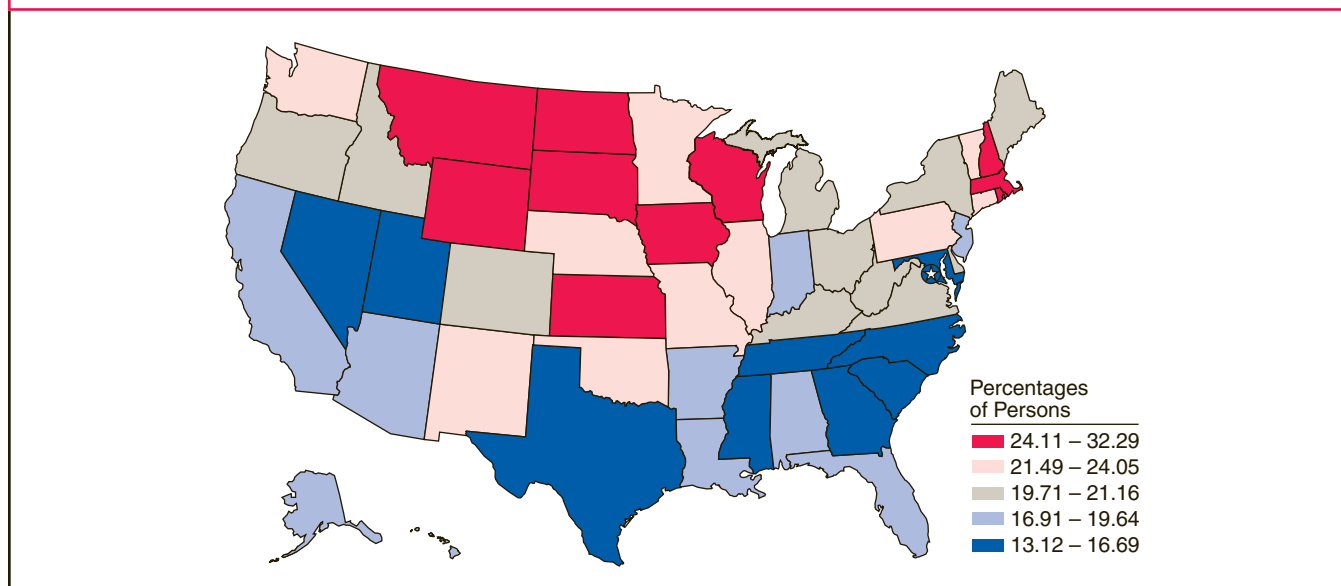
Figure 1 shows State differences in the rate of past month alcohol use among persons 12 to 20 years old. States with the highest estimates fall into the top quintile (fifth) and are shown in red. States with the lowest estimates are in the bottom quintile and are shown in blue. Of the 10 States with the highest rates of past month alcohol use, half are in the Midwest (Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin).<sup>2</sup> Of

the 10 States with the lowest rates of past month alcohol use, 8 are in the South (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas).

## State Estimates of Binge Alcohol Use

In 2003–2004, 19.4 percent of persons aged 12 to 20 engaged in binge alcohol use in the past month. As with any past month use, the rates of binge use were among the lowest in Tennessee (13.1 percent) and Utah (14.5 percent) and among the highest in North Dakota (32.3 percent) and South Dakota (29.5 percent) (Figure 2). All but two of the States in the top quintile were either in the Midwest or Northeast, and all but two of the States in the bottom quintile (Utah and Nevada) were in the South.

**Figure 2. Percentages of Persons Aged 12 to 20 Reporting Past Month Binge Alcohol Use, by State: 2003 and 2004**



## State Trends in Underage Drinking

In most States, rates of past month and binge alcohol use have remained relatively stable over the past few years. However, a handful of States have seen significant changes. Between 2002–2003 and 2003–2004, rates of past month alcohol use increased in California (from 24.7 to 26.3 percent) and Wisconsin (from 34.7 to 38.3 percent).<sup>3</sup> Rates of binge alcohol use increased in Iowa (from 24.7 to 27.7 percent) and Oklahoma (from 19.1 to 21.5 percent). Conversely, rates of past month alcohol use decreased in South Carolina (from 27.2 to 24.1 percent) and Michigan (from 31.8 to 30.2 percent). Rates of binge alcohol use decreased in South Carolina and North Carolina (both from 18.0 to 15.9 percent) and in Tennessee (from 15.9 to 13.1 percent).

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Wright, D., & Sathe, N. (2006). *State estimates of substance use from the 2003–2004 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 05-4063, NSDUH Series H-29). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies.

<sup>2</sup> The *West* has 13 States: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, and WY. The *South* has 16 States plus the District of Columbia: AL, AR, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, and WV. The *Northeast* has 9 States: CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, and VT. The *Midwest* has 12 States: IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, and WI.

<sup>3</sup> The precision of the SAE estimates, particularly for States with smaller sample sizes, can be improved significantly by combining data across 2 years (i.e., 2002 to 2003 and 2003 to 2004). For more information, see the report cited in footnote 1, which also is available online at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/states.htm> and <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/states.htm#Prevalence>.

## Figure Note

Source: SAMHSA, 2002, 2003, and 2004 NSDUHs.

Research findings from the SAMHSA 2002, 2003, and 2004 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs)

## State Estimates of Underage Drinking

- In 2003–2004, past month alcohol use rates for persons aged 12 to 20 were among the lowest in Utah (18.6 percent) and Tennessee (22.3 percent) and among the highest in North Dakota (42.7 percent) and South Dakota (39.1 percent)
- Between 2002–2003 and 2003–2004, past month alcohol use increased in California (from 24.7 to 26.3 percent) and Wisconsin (from 34.7 to 38.3 percent), while binge alcohol use increased in Iowa (from 24.7 to 27.7 percent) and Oklahoma (from 19.1 to 21.5 percent)
- Past month alcohol use decreased between 2002–2003 and 2003–2004 in South Carolina (from 27.2 to 24.1 percent) and Michigan (from 31.8 to 30.2 percent), while binge alcohol use decreased in South Carolina and North Carolina (both from 18.0 to 15.9 percent) and in Tennessee (from 15.9 to 13.1 percent)

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Prior to 2002, this survey was called the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA). The 2003–2004 data used in this report are based on information obtained from 62,710 persons aged 12 to 20; the 2002–2003 data are based on information from 64,262 persons aged 12 to 20. The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their place of residence.

*The NSDUH Report* is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies (OAS), SAMHSA, and by RTI International in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. (RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.)

Information on NSDUH used in compiling data for this issue is available in the following publications:

Office of Applied Studies. (2005). *Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 05-4062, NSDUH Series H-28). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Office of Applied Studies. (2004). *Results from the 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 04-3964, NSDUH Series H-25). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Office of Applied Studies. (2003). *Results from the 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 03-3836, NSDUH Series H-22). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Also available online: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov>.

Because of improvements and modifications to the 2002 NSDUH, estimates from the 2002, 2003, and 2004 surveys should not be compared with estimates from the 2001 or earlier versions of the survey to examine changes over time.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration  
Office of Applied Studies  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)