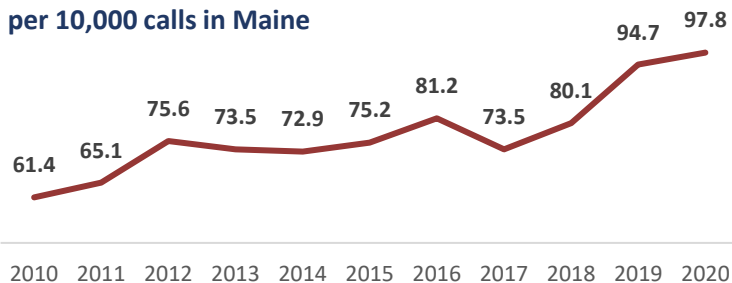


MORBIDITY

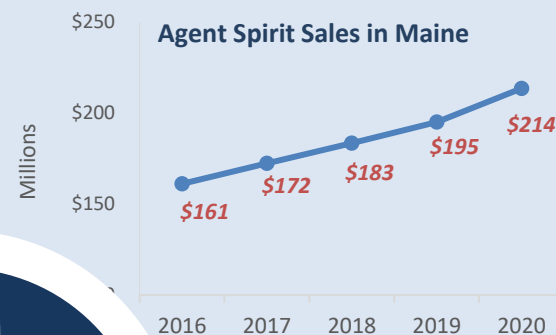
Rates of alcohol related Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responses in Maine have been increasing over the past decade. In 2020, for every 10,000 EMS responses, there were about 98 calls related to alcohol. There were nearly 2,500 EMS responses related to alcohol (based on primary impression) in 2020; this is a 60% increase since 2010.⁷

Alcohol Related EMS calls per 10,000 calls in Maine



SALES

Total alcohol sales outside of bars and restaurants increased by 24% during the pandemic nationwide. Sales of spirits with higher alcohol content rose faster, with more than a 27% increase over the last year. In the month of September 2020, online alcohol sales nationwide were up 256% compared to 2019.⁹

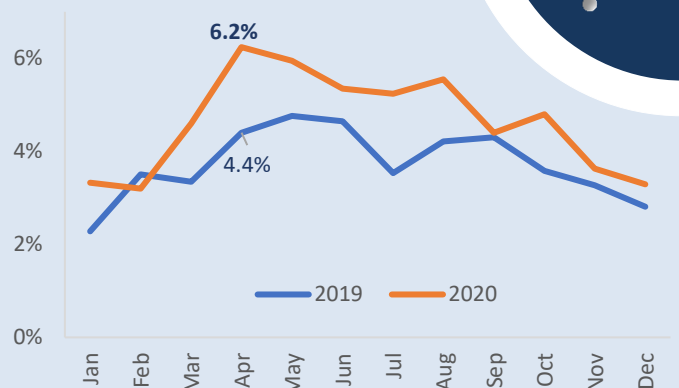


Agent sales of spirits (e.g., hard liquor) to off premise outlets (e.g., agency liquor stores) in Maine have never been higher. Agent spirit sales in Maine increased by 10% from 2019 to 2020 and by 33% since 2016.¹⁰

IMPAIRED DRIVING

In April 2020, shortly after COVID-19 began, the percentage of crashes related to impaired driving in Maine peaked at 6.2% compared to 4.4% in April 2019. Rates of impaired driving crashes remained consistently higher in 2020.⁸

% of Maine Motor Vehicle Crashes Due to Impaired Driving



It is important for Maine to consider public health concerns when making decisions on alcohol policy and longer-term impacts of increased alcohol consumption.

RISK FACTORS FOR EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL USE

Individual

- Inadequate social support
- Limited coping skills
- Pre-existing mental health, or dependence issue
- Low perception of harm

Environmental

- Ease of access/low pricing
- Exposure to marketing
- Relaxed regulations/laws
- Economic downturn
- Isolation

Long-standing research is clear that stress, isolation, and increased accessibility are known to increase high-risk alcohol use and related harms. Recent studies suggest that younger adults, minorities, essential workers, and unpaid adult caregivers experienced disproportionately worse mental health outcomes, increased substance use, and higher rates of suicide ideation as a result of COVID-19.¹¹ It is crucial that we continue to monitor and study the impact of COVID-19 on substance use and mental health, particularly among vulnerable populations.

This fact sheet is a product of the Maine State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW). For more info, visit www.maine-seow.com



1. [American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse](#)
 2. [Int J Environ Res Public Health](#)
 3. [2020 SEOW State Profile](#)
 4. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*
 5. Maine Data, Research, and Vital Statistics
 6. Rapid Health Information for Maine
 7. Maine Emergency Medical Services
 8. Maine Dept. of Transportation.
 9. [USDA Economic Research Service. \(2020\). Nielsen: Scantrack.](#)
 10. Bureau of Alcohol Beverages and Lottery
 11. [U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
 *Self-reported data