

# Alcoholic Beverages and Cancer Act

1. To raise awareness that alcohol use can cause cancer,
2. To rejuvenate the message that alcohol use during pregnancy can cause birth defects
3. To add visuals and color so that the messages are more apt to be read

THIS SIGN would replace THIS SIGN



Wherever alcohol is sold in Georgia

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# The Alcoholic Beverages and Cancer Act (“ABC Act”)

Alcohol consumption causes hundreds of cancer deaths in Georgia each year, but most Georgians are not aware of this risk. The Alcoholic Beverages and Cancer Act (“ABC Act”) amends O.C.G.A. §3-1-5 to require the following warning where alcoholic beverages are sold:

**“Warning: Alcohol use can cause cancer, including breast and colon cancers. Alcohol use during pregnancy can cause birth defects.”**

## Cancers Attributable to Alcohol are a Major Public Health Burden

- Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Georgia.<sup>1</sup>
- Strong evidence links as little as one drink per day to increased risk for breast, head and neck, and esophageal cancers; two drinks per day to increased risk for colorectal cancer.<sup>2</sup>
- Alcohol use is the third leading modifiable cancer risk factor, after cigarette smoking and excess body weight - ahead of factors including UV radiation exposure, physical inactivity, processed meat consumption, and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection.<sup>3</sup>
- Researchers estimate that each year in Georgia, 514 cancer deaths and 2,157 cancer cases are attributable to alcohol consumption.<sup>4</sup>

## Georgians Need Accurate Information about Alcohol and Cancer Risk

- Just 43.7% of Georgians agree that “cancer can result from drinking too much alcohol” according to National Institutes of Health survey data.<sup>5</sup>
- Survey research further indicates that awareness of alcohol use and cancer risk is low even among medical professionals.<sup>6</sup>
- Signs warning against the risks of drinking while pregnant—required in Georgia since 1986—are associated with an 11% decrease in the odds of alcohol consumption during pregnancy in the 23 states that require posting of signs, compared to similar states without warning requirements.<sup>7</sup>
- Awareness of alcohol as a cancer risk factor is significantly higher in California, the only state that currently requires a point-of-service alcohol cancer warning.<sup>8</sup>
- For some cancers, such as breast and esophageal cancers, the risk increases with less than one drink per day, and continues to increase with greater alcohol consumption.<sup>9</sup>
- 15.7% of adults engage in excessive drinking in Georgia.<sup>10</sup>
- Approximately 3,953 people in Georgia die each year from excessive alcohol use.<sup>11</sup>

## Cancer Warnings on Alcohol Can Reduce Other Alcohol-Related Harms

- Adding a warning label on the cancer risk associated with alcohol use led to a 6-10% decline in alcohol sales during a one-month trial study in Yukon, Canada.<sup>12</sup>
- Higher awareness of the alcohol-cancer link is associated with greater support for alcohol control policies such as restricting outdoor advertising.<sup>13</sup>
- Across cultures, decreases in per capita alcohol consumption are associated with declines in all alcohol-related harms, including motor vehicle accidents, injuries, violence, and alcohol-related health problems such as cancer and liver cirrhosis.<sup>14</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> States of the States of Georgia, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/georgia/georgia.htm>
- <sup>2</sup> World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research. Continuous Update Project Expert Report 2018. Alcoholic drinks and the risk of cancer. Available at [www.dietandcancerreport.org](http://www.dietandcancerreport.org).
- <sup>3</sup> Islami et al. "Proportion and number of cancer cases and deaths attributable to potentially modifiable risk factors in the United States," *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, Volume 68, Issue 1 p. 31-54 (2017), available at: <https://acsjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.3322/caac.21440> (estimating the proportion and number of invasive cancer cases and deaths, excluding nonmelanoma skin cancers, that were attributable to major, potentially modifiable exposures.)
- <sup>4</sup> Goding Sauer A, Fedewa SA, Bandi P, Minihan AK, Stoklosa M, Drope J, Gapstur SM, Jemal A, Islami F. Proportion of cancer cases and deaths attributable to alcohol consumption by US state, 2013-2016. *Cancer Epidemiol.* 2021 Apr;71(Pt A):101893. doi: 10.1016/j.canep.2021.101893. Epub 2021 Jan 19. PMID: 33477084.
- <sup>5</sup> National Cancer Institute. Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS), Cycle 3 (2019).
- <sup>6</sup> Alcohol and Cancer: A Statement of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, <https://ascopubs.org/doi/full/10.1200/JCO.2017.76.1155>
- <sup>7</sup> Cil G. Effects of posted point-of-sale warnings on alcohol consumption during pregnancy and on birth outcomes. *J Health Econ.* 2017 May;53:131-155. doi: 10.1016/j.jhealeco.2017.03.004.)
- <sup>8</sup> Budenz, A.; Moser, R.P.; Eck, R.; Agurs-Collins, T.; McNeel, T.S.; Klein, W.M.P.; Berrigan, D. Awareness of Alcohol and Cancer Risk and the California Proposition 65 Warning Sign Updates: A Natural Experiment. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2022, 19, 11862. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191911862>
- <sup>9</sup> Most Americans Still Unaware that alcohol is a Cause of Cancer, <https://www.aicr.org/news/most-americans-still-unaware-that-alcohol-is-a-cause-of-cancer/>
- <sup>10</sup> Excessive Drinking, <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/ExcessDrink/state/GA>
- <sup>11</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Alcohol Related Disease Impact (ARDI) application, 2022. Available at [www.cdc.gov/ARDI](http://www.cdc.gov/ARDI).
- <sup>12</sup> Zhao et al. "The Effects of Alcohol Warning Labels on Population Alcohol Consumption: An Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Alcohol Sales in Yukon, Canada," *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* (2020), available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32359054/>
- <sup>13</sup> Seidenberg AB, Wiseman KP, Eck RH, Blake KD, Platter HN, Klein WMP. Awareness of alcohol as a carcinogen and support for alcohol control policies. *Am J Prev Med* 2022; 62: 174-82.
- <sup>14</sup> Rossow et al. "Public Health Thinking Around Alcohol-Related Harm: Why Does Per Capita Consumption Matter?" *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* (2021) available at: <https://www.jsad.com/doi/full/10.15288/jsad.2021.82.9>.

Title: To amend the O.C.G.A. §3-1-5 to require all retailers selling alcoholic beverages to post a warning sign stating that consuming alcoholic beverages causes cancer and is dangerous during pregnancy.

## **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE**

This Act may be cited as the “Alcoholic Beverages and Cancer Act” or “ABC Act.”

## **SECTION 2. FINDINGS**

Relating to the following:

Whereas strong evidence links alcohol consumption to increased risk of multiple forms of cancer. <https://www.aicr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Alcoholic-Drinks.pdf>

Whereas the 2016 *Surgeon General’s Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health* states: “Alcohol misuse is associated with... cancers of the oral cavity, esophagus, larynx, pharynx, liver, colon, and rectum. For breast cancer, studies have shown that even moderate drinking may increase the risk.” *Surgeon General’s Report (Page 1-12)*:  
<https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-generals-report.pdf>

Whereas emerging evidence indicates that even drinking within the recommended limits prescribed by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans increases the overall risk of several types of cancer. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Page 62*,  
[https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Americans-2020-2025.pdf](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf)

Whereas alcohol use is the third leading modifiable cancer risk factor, after cigarette smoking and excess body weight. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29160902/>

Whereas breast and colorectal cancers are two of the most common types of cancer in the United States, with an estimated 284,200 new breast cancer diagnoses and 149,500 new colorectal cancer diagnoses each year, causing nearly 100,000 deaths each year in the United States each year. *ACS Facts and Figures 2021*:  
<https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/annual-cancer-facts-and-figures/2021/cancer-facts-and-figures-2021.pdf>

Whereas a majority of Georgians are unaware of the relationship between alcohol and cancer, with just 43.7% of Georgians acknowledging that “cancer can result from drinking too much alcohol” according to the National Cancer Institute’s 2019 Health Information National Trends Survey. [https://hints.cancer.gov/view-questions-topics/question-details.aspx?PK\\_Cycle=12&qid=1678](https://hints.cancer.gov/view-questions-topics/question-details.aspx?PK_Cycle=12&qid=1678)

Whereas a 2019 nationally representative survey conducted by the American Institute for Cancer Research shows that 89% of Americans identified tobacco as a cancer risk factor, while only 45% were aware that alcohol consumption causes cancer.  
<https://www.aicr.org/assets/can-prevent/docs/2019-Survey.pdf>

Whereas point-of-service warning labels on fetal alcohol syndrome have led to significant declines in drinking while pregnant.  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28343094/>

Whereas point-of-service alcohol cancer warnings are associated with higher awareness of alcohol cancer risk. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191911862>

Whereas alcohol cancer warnings have led to significant declines in alcohol sales.  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32359054/>

Whereas reducing overall alcohol consumption, or average per capita alcohol consumption, is associated with fewer alcohol-related harms. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33573718/>

Whereas results suggest that warning statements focusing on specific chronic health conditions associated with alcohol consumption may encourage changes in drinking intentions among those drinking at levels associated with long-term harm.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cyy025>

Whereas an estimated 1,590 Georgians will die from colorectum cancer in 2022, and 1,410 will die from breast cancer, and an estimated 4,970 and 9,170 new cases of colorectum cancer and breast cancer, respectively, will be diagnosed.

<https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/annual-cancer-facts-and-figures/2022/2022-cancer-facts-and-figures.pdf>

Whereas an estimated 58,970 Georgians will be diagnosed with cancer in 2022, and an estimated 18,750 Georgians will die from cancer.

<https://cancerstatisticscenter.cancer.org/-/state/Georgia>

### **SECTION 3. CANCER WARNING FOR ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AT A STOREFRONT**

In General. O.C.G.A. §3-1-5 is amended as follows:

#### **3-1-5. Posting of warning by retailer that consumption of alcohol during pregnancy is dangerous and that consumption of alcohol at any time increases cancer risk.**

(a) All retail consumption dealers and retail dealers in this state who sell at retail any alcoholic beverages, whether for consumption on the premises or off the premises, shall post, in a conspicuous place, a sign which clearly reads: “Warning: Alcohol use can cause cancer, including breast and colon cancers. Alcohol use during pregnancy can cause birth defects.”

# ALCOHOL ISSUE BRIEF



GEORGIA  
ALCOHOL  
POLICY  
ALLIANCE

## Reducing Alcohol-Related Harms in Georgia January 2023

### We're All Experiencing the Cost of Excessive Drinking:

- Kills more than 140,000 people in the U.S. each year, and is responsible for about 1 in 5 total deaths among adults 20-49 years old.<sup>1</sup>
- Kills more than 3,900 Georgians annually.<sup>2</sup> This is similar to the number of Georgians who died from drug overdoses last year.<sup>3</sup>
- Shortens the lives of those who died by an average of 29 years.<sup>4</sup>
- Cost Georgia \$6.9 billion, or \$2.12 a drink, in 2010.<sup>5</sup>

### GEORGIA COST: \$6.9B<sup>5</sup>

National Breakdown of Costs:



**72%**  
Lost Workplace  
Productivity



**11%**  
Healthcare  
Expenses



**10%**  
Criminal  
Justice Costs



**5%**  
Motor Vehicle  
Crash Costs

### EXCESSIVE DRINKING IS COMMON IN GEORGIA

**14.5%**

% of binge  
drinking  
among  
Georgia  
adults.<sup>6</sup>

**10.0%**

% of current  
drinking  
among  
Georgia high  
school  
students.<sup>7</sup>

**59.5%**

% of binge  
drinking  
among  
Georgia high  
school  
students who  
drink.<sup>7</sup>

### WHAT IS EXCESSIVE DRINKING?<sup>8</sup>

#### BINGE DRINKING



For men,  
binge drinking is  
**5 or more drinks**  
consumed on  
one occasion\*



For women,  
binge drinking is  
**4 or more drinks**  
consumed on  
one occasion\*

\*One occasion = within 2 to 3 hours

#### DRINKS PER WEEK



For men –  
**15 or more drinks**  
on average per week



For women –  
**8 or more drinks**  
on average per week

One Drink = 5-ounces of wine, 12-ounces of beer,  
or 1 ½-ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits or liquor

#### PREGNANT WOMEN & THOSE UNDER 21



Any alcohol use by  
pregnant women



Any alcohol use by  
those **under age 21**

### 9 OF 10 EXCESSIVE DRINKERS ARE NOT ALCOHOL DEPENDENT<sup>9</sup>

**89.8%** of  
Excessive  
Drinkers  
Are Not  
Dependent

Only  
**10.2%** of  
Excessive  
Drinkers  
Are  
Dependent



## THE HEALTH IMPACTS OF EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL USE <sup>10</sup>

**Injuries**  
Motor vehicle crashes, falls, drowning

**Violence**  
Homicide, suicide, intimate partner violence, sexual assault

**Chronic diseases**  
High blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease

**Cancer**  
Of the breast, liver, mouth and throat

**Reproductive health**  
Unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV

**Alcohol dependence/alcoholism**

**Learning and memory problems**

**If pregnant** .....

- Miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth, and low birth weight
- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) which include physical, behavioral, and learning disabilities
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

## CANCER

**THE GREATEST CANCER RISKS ARE CONCENTRATED IN THE HEAVY AND MODERATE DRINKER CATEGORIES.<sup>11</sup>**

## EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING EXCESSIVE DRINKING <sup>12</sup>

The independent, non-federal Community Preventative Services Task Force (CPSTF) recommends several community based approaches for preventing excessive alcohol consumption and related harms.

- ✓ Increasing alcohol taxes
- ✓ Regulation of alcohol outlet density
- ✓ Dram shop liability
- ✓ Maintaining limits on days and hours of sale
- ✓ Electronic screening and brief interventions (e-SBI)
- ✓ Avoiding privatization of retail alcohol sales (for ABC states)
- ✓ Enhanced enforcement of laws prohibiting sales to minors

## ADDITIONAL GAPA POLICY PRIORITIES

- ✓ Raise awareness of links to cancer
- ✓ Support the 3-Tier System
- ✓ Home rule: Local control for stronger policies

## REFERENCES

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2. "Alcohol and Public Health: Alcohol-Related Disease Impact (ARDI)"; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [https://nccd.cdc.gov/DPH\\_ARDI/default/default.aspx](https://nccd.cdc.gov/DPH_ARDI/default/default.aspx)
3. "CDC Reports Overdose Deaths In Georgia Rose At Least 38% During Pandemic", Georgia Public Broadcasting, <https://www.gpb.org/news/2021/08/11/cdc-reports-overdose-deaths-in-georgia-rose-at-least-38-during-pandemic>
4. "Deaths and Years of Potential Life Lost From Excessive Alcohol Use — United States, 2011-2015"; Esser MB, Sherk A, Liu Y, et al.; MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:1428-1433. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6939a6>.
5. "Excessive Drinking is Draining the U.S. Economy"; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/features/excessive-drinking.html>
6. "Chronic Disease Indicators", Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/cdi/>
7. "Survey Results." Georgia Department of Education; <https://www.gadoe.org/wholechild/GSHS-II/Pages/GSHS-Results.aspx>.
8. "About 38 Million Adults in the US Drink Too Much"; Center for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/onlinemedialinfographics/38-million-adults.html>.
9. "9 out of 10 Excessive Drinkers are Not Alcohol Dependent"; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/onlinemedialinfographics/alcohol-dependency.html>.
10. "Vital Signs", Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/bingedrinkingfemale/infographic.html>
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12. "What Works: Preventing Excessive Alcohol Consumption: Evidence-based interventions for your community". The Community Guide, <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/resources/what-works-preventing-excessive-alcohol-consumption>.



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