

Costs of Alcohol and Other Drug Misuse/Abuse

April 2024

Prevalence of substance use and abuse in the United States¹

Age group (years)	Alcohol		Rx		Illicit Drug			Overall
	Binge drinking ^{a,d}	Alcohol use disorder ^d	Rx opioid misuse ^{b,d}	Marijuana use ^{b,d}	Cocaine use ^{b,d}	Illicit drug use ^{b,d}	Illicit drug use disorder ^{b,c}	
Youth (12-17)	3.2%	2.9%	1.6%	11.5%	0.2%	14.3%	5.7%	8.7%
Young Adult (18-25)	29.5%	16.4%	3.2%	38.2%	3.7%	40.9%	15.5%	27.8%
Adult (26+)	22.6%	10.4%	3.1%	20.6%	1.8%	23.7%	6.1%	16.6%
Total (12+)	21.7%	10.5%	3.0%	22.0%	1.9%	24.9%	7.2%	17.3%

Rx opioid: Prescription pain relievers. Binge drinking: 5 or more drinks (for male) or 4 or more drinks (for female) on the same occasion on at least 1 day in the past 30 days.

^a In the past month ^b In the past year ^c Percent for year 2021 ^d Percent for year 2022

Alcohol and other drug (AOD) use results in a heavy **disease** and **economic** burden

Alcohol and other drug use in LAC costs **billions** annually in tangible costs²

- People with SUD incur 2-3 times more medical expenses than people without SUD³

Annually in LAC, there are:
2,990 AOD-related deaths⁴
146,087 AOD-related ED visits⁵
139,179 AOD-related hospitalizations⁵
\$103,372 charge per AOD-hospitalization⁵
\$14.3 billion total AOD-hospital charges⁵

State Spending on Addiction and Substance Use⁹

19.5%
of CA state budget

2¢ per \$1
spent in CA pays for prevention and treatment

98¢ per \$1
spent in CA pays for consequences

- The average annual taxpayer cost per inmate in California (CA) is **\$106,131**⁶

In the US:
65% of inmates meet criteria for a SUD⁷
25% of incarcerations were for drug law violations⁷
43% were under the influence at time of crime⁷
 Annually in CA:
385,275 AOD-related arrests annually (LAC: 19%)⁸
\$7.7 billion in SUD-related justice spending⁹

- 16% of US young adults drove under the influence of AOD in the past year¹⁰

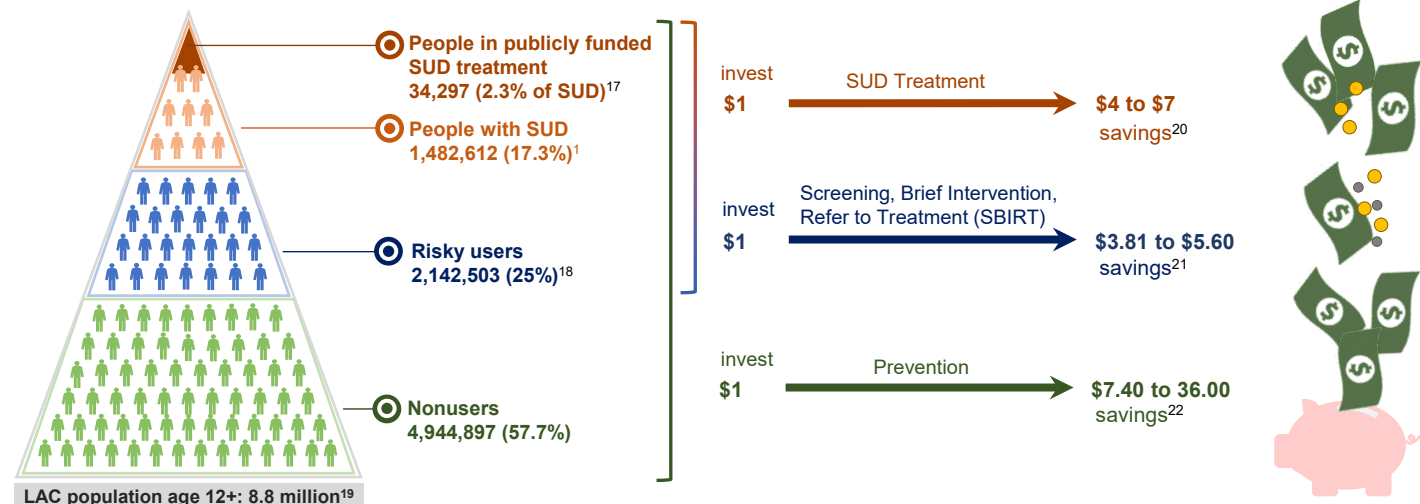
Annually in LAC, there are:
23,583 DUI arrests¹¹
17,713 DUI convictions¹¹
11,940 DUI collisions¹²
7,143 DUI injuries¹²
275 DUI fatalities¹²
\$13,500 cost per DUI case in CA¹³

- 15% of the adult US workforce were alcohol-impaired at work in the past year¹⁴

Among US workers:
28% of full-time employees are illicit drug users¹⁰
31% of part-time employees are illicit drug users¹⁰
 Among US workers who use AOD:
3.5 times more likely to have workplace accident¹⁵
2 times more likely to miss work¹⁶

Investments in prevention, screening, and treatment yield substantial **cost savings**

Savings per dollar spent, by intervention for **target population**



For substance use disorder treatment in LAC, call at 844-804-7500, or visit [Service & Bed Availability Tool \(SBAT\)](#)

For more information on substance use disorders in LAC, visit <http://ph.lacounty.gov/sapc>.

For more information regarding this data brief, please contact Tina Kim, PhD at tkim@ph.lacounty.gov

Costs of Alcohol and Other Drug Misuse/Abuse

April 2024

References and Notes

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2021 or 2022 National Survey of Drug Use and Health: [Detailed Tables](#).

- In 2022, an estimated 17.3% of the US population aged 12 or older had a substance use disorder (SUD).
- Young adults aged 18-25 years had the highest prevalence of alcohol and other drug (AOD) use and use disorder among all age groups.
- The estimated Los Angeles County (LAC) population needing SUD treatment based on the 2022 US SUD prevalence (17.3%) and the annual population aged 12 or older in LAC for 2022 (8,570,012) was 1,482,612.

2. Fact sheet prepared by Ted R. Miller. Total Direct and Indirect Costs of SUD in LAC. [Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation](#). 2012.

- Tangible costs of SUD, including medical, wage and household work, public services, property damage, and motor vehicle crash costs, amounted to nearly \$13 billion (\$9.5 billion for alcohol and \$3.4 billion for illicit drugs) in LAC in 2012.

3. National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University. [Addiction Medicine: Closing the Gap Between Science and Practice](#). 2012.

- People with SUD incur 2-3 times more medical expenses over their lifetimes compared to people who do not have an SUD.

4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death. [CDC WONDER Online Database](#). Drug or alcohol induced underlying cause of death.

- On average from 2017-2021 in LAC, 2,990 death certificates listed an AOD-related underlying cause of death each year, accounting for 4.2% of all deaths.

5. Department of Health Care Access and Information (previously OSHPD). Emergency Department and Inpatient Discharge Data Set. [California Department of Public Health](#).

- On average from 2016-2021 in LAC, there were 148,305 ED visits, and 139,810 hospitalizations that listed an AOD-related condition as the principal or other diagnosis or external cause of injury each year.
- The mean charge per AOD-related hospitalization was \$103,372, totaling \$14.3 billion each year. All costs are adjusted for inflation to 2022 US dollars.

6. Legislative Analyst's Office. The California Legislature's Nonpartisan Fiscal and Policy Advisor. How much does it cost to incarcerate an inmate? [California's Annual Costs to Incarcerate an Inmate in Prison](#). January 2022.

- The average annual cost to incarcerate an inmate in California prisons was \$106,131 in 2021-2022. This includes expenditures for security, inmate health care, facility operations and records, administration, inmate food and activities, rehabilitation programs, and other costs.
- About three-quarters of these costs are for security and inmate health care.
- The average annual cost increased by about \$57,000 (117%) since 2010-2011. The higher costs in 2021-2022 were driven by employee compensation, activation of a new health care facility, and COVID-19.

7. National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, Columbia University. [Behind Bars II: Substance abuse and America's prison population](#). 2010.

- Among inmates incarcerated at federal or state prison or county jails in the US, 65% meet medical criteria for an SUD; 25% were incarcerated for drug law violations, including possession or use, trafficking, or other unspecified

substance offenses; and 43% were under the influence of AOD at the time of the crime.

8. California Department of Justice. [Open Justice](#). Arrests Statistics. [Los Angeles County Arrests](#).

- On average from 2016 to 2020 in California, there were a total of 385,275 AOD-related arrests each year, of which 30,074 were for felony offenses (narcotics, marijuana, dangerous drug, and other drug law violations), and 355,201 were for misdemeanor offenses (driving under the influence, drunk, and drug offenses).
- On average from 2016 to 2020 in LAC, there were a total of 71,647 AOD-related arrests each year, of which 6,957 were for felony offenses, and 64,690 were for misdemeanor offenses.

9. National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, Columbia University. [Shoveling Up II: The Impact of Substance Abuse on Federal, State and Local Budgets](#). 2009.

- Substance use and addiction accounts for about 19.5% of the California state budget. In 2005, \$7.7 billion, or 82.2% of the total justice (adult corrections, juvenile justice, judiciary) spending in California was related to substance abuse. Government spending for substance abuse for prevention and treatment was 339 million (1.7%), compared to the \$19.5 billion (98%) spending on its consequences in California.

10. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. [Detailed tables](#). [Tables 8.35B, 1.24B](#).

- In 2022, 16.0% of US young adults aged 21-25 reported driving under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs in the past year.
- In 2022, among US adults aged 18+ years, 28.1% full-time employees and 31.3% part-time employees reported using illicit drugs in the past year. Past year illicit drug use was highest among young adults aged 18-25 years at 45.5% of full-time employees and 41.9% of part-time employees.

11. California Department of Motor Vehicles. [2022 Annual report of the California DUI management information system](#). 2023.

- In LAC, on average from 2016-2020, there were 23,583 driving under the influence of alcohol or drug (DUI) arrests. About 72% of DUI arrests were convicted. There were an average of 17,713 DUI convictions per year from arrests in 2016-2019.

12. Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System. [Fatal and injury motor vehicle traffic collisions](#). [California Highway Patrol](#).

- On average from 2018-2022 in LAC, 11,940 traffic collisions (9.5% of all collisions), 7,143 injuries from traffic collisions (10.0% of all injuries from traffic collisions), and 275 traffic fatalities (35.3% of all traffic fatalities) involved alcohol or drug(s) each year.

13. California Highway Patrol (CHP). [Impaired Driver Enforcement Programs](#).

- According to CHP, DUI cases can cost about \$13,500. DUI costs include vehicle towing and storage (\$187); booking, fingerprinting, jail costs (\$156); fines (\$468); penalties (\$780); attorney and legal fees (\$2,557); car insurance increases (\$8,652); DUI victim funding (\$100); driver license reinstatement (\$100); and DUI classes (\$500).

14. Frone M. Prevalence and Distribution of Alcohol Use and Impairment in the Workplace: A U.S. National Survey. [J Stud Alcohol](#). 2006;67:147-156. doi:10.15288/jsa.2006.67.147

- 15% of the adult US workforce (19.2 million) reported consuming alcohol before work, consuming alcohol during

the workday, working under the influence of alcohol, or working with a hangover at least once during the past year.

15. 14 Short Employer Cost Savings Briefs. Publication No. SMA08-4350. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2008.

- People who abuse AOD are 3.5 times more likely to be involved in a workplace accident than other workers.

16. Larson SL, et al. [Worker Substance Use and Workplace Policies and Programs](#) (DHHS Publication No. SMA 07-4273, Analytic Series A-29). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. 2007.

- Full-time workers aged 18 or older who used illicit drugs in the past month are 2 times more likely to report missing two or more workdays in the past month due to an illness or injury compared to nonusers.

17. Los Angeles County Participant Reporting System (LACPRS) and Sage data. Substance Abuse Prevention and Control. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

- On average from FY1819-FY2223, there were 34,297 patients each fiscal year admitted to publicly funded SUD treatment programs in LAC.

18. Rawson R. California's Forum on Integration: Integrating Substance Use Disorder Services and Primary Care: Overview and Rationale. [UCLA Integrated Substance Abuse Programs](#). Dec 8, 2010. Estimated from slide 3.

- An estimated 20-25% of the US population use alcohol or drugs in a risky manner, but do not meet criteria for a SUD. Population estimates for risky users and nonusers are rounded.

19. County of Los Angeles, Internal Services Department, Information Technology Service, Urban Research-GIS Section. [Population and Poverty Estimates of Los Angeles County Tract-City Splits by Age, Sex and Race-Ethnicity](#).

- The average population aged 12 or older in LAC from 2018-2022 was 8,775,813.

20. National Institute on Drug Abuse. [Principles of drug addiction treatment: a research-based guide](#). 3rd edition. National Institutes of Health. US Department of Health and Human Services. January 2018.

- Drug treatment in the community returns \$4 to \$7 in benefits to society for every \$1 spent.

21. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - Health Resources and Services Administration, Center for Integrated Health Solutions. [SBIRT: Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment Opportunities for Implementation and Points for Consideration](#) and Fleming et al. [Benefit-cost analysis of brief physician advice with problem drinkers in primary care settings](#). [Med Care](#). 2000;38(1):7-18. doi:10.1097/00005650-200001000-00003

- Alcohol and other drug screening and brief intervention returns between \$3.81 to \$5.60 in health care cost savings for every \$1 invested.

22. Miller T, Hendrie D. [Substance Abuse Prevention Dollars and Cents: A Cost-Benefit Analysis](#). DHHS Pub. No. (SMA) 07-4298. Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2008.

- School-based prevention programs returns \$7.40 to \$36.00 in savings for every \$1 invested.