

Massachusetts Partnership on Substance Use in Older Adults: A Resource Network on Prevention and Addiction

In the United States:

- The number of treatment admissions to publicly-funded substance abuse treatment programs among adults, 50 or older, more than doubled from 1992-2008. (SAMHSA, August 2010)
- Aging baby boomers (50-59) fueled an increase in illicit drug use. (SAMHSA, August 2009)
- On average, the older adult takes 4-5 prescription and 2 OTC medications each day. (NCOA)
- It is estimated that more than 4-6% of older adults are problem gamblers.

In Massachusetts:

- 9.1% of those 60 and over are current smokers. (BRFSS, MDPH, 2010)
- Approximately 5% of those 60 and over engaged in binge drinking in the past month. (Ibid)
- In FY 2010, 5076 of admissions to substance abuse treatment services in MA were 55 and older. (BSAS, MDPH, 2010)

This is important because:

- As people age they become more sensitive to alcohol's effects.
- Some medical conditions can worsen with alcohol use.
- Many medicines—prescription, over-the-counter, or herbal remedies can be dangerous when mixed with alcohol.

The Massachusetts Partnership on Substance Use in Older Adults was established in 1987 to raise awareness and provide education and training on substance use problems in older adults. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and the Bureau of Community Health and Prevention, the Partnership is comprised of organizations serving the health and social services needs of older adults. Partnership activities include monthly educational meetings, workshops and conferences, community collaborations and materials development and distribution, www.maclearinghouse.org.

For more information:

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