

Study Finds High Rate of Underage Drinking



One-quarter of 12-to-20-year-olds say they drank alcohol in the past month, according to a new government report.

Almost nine percent said they purchased their own alcohol the last time they drank. Buying and consuming alcohol is prohibited for anyone under age 21 in the United States.

The new report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) found 26.6 percent of persons ages 12 to 20 drank alcohol in the past month. Rates of underage drinking were highest in Vermont (37 percent). Utah had the lowest rate, at 14.3 percent, HealthDay reports.

"Underage drinking should not be a normal part of growing up. It's a serious and persistent public health problem that puts our young people and our communities in danger," SAMHSA Administrator Pamela Hyde said in a news release. "Even though drinking is often glamorized, the truth is that underage drinking can lead to poor academic performance, sexual assault, injury and even death."

The report found New York had one of the highest rates of underage youth who illegally purchased alcohol (15 percent). That rate was 2.5 percent in New Mexico, and 2.6 percent in Oregon and Idaho.

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