



For Immediate Release

## **New study amplifies costs linked to alcohol; ignores progress**

**OTTAWA (June 26, 2018)** - The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) released a study estimating the cost of substance use to Canadian society. The \$1.4 million study, funded by Health Canada, fails to discuss some of the positive trends that are a direct result of industry, government and NGOs working toward reducing harmful drinking and fostering a culture of moderation across Canada.

“CCSA is an excellent organization that publishes a lot of thoughtful research,” said Luke Harford, President of Beer Canada. “But these cost studies come with a lot of moving parts aimed at producing the highest and most alarming numbers.”

Almost two-thirds of the cost estimate for alcohol in the study relate to productivity losses and the criminal justice system. These costs are contentious and subject to ongoing debate among health economists. The World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines have advised against including loss of production in cost of substance use studies.

Harford said, “There are a lot of assumptions built into these types of cost studies and CCSA’s new study is no different. The assumptions boost the costs and downplay, trivialize or ignore any benefits.”

The majority of Canadian adults drink in moderation. Among those who drink, 80% do so within the Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines for long-term harm, and 85% for short-term harm.

Canada’s beer, wine and spirits makers are committed to encouraging responsible choices and believe that for adults of legal drinking age, moderate alcohol consumption can be part of a well-balanced lifestyle. Canada’s beer, wine and spirits makers, large and small, are proud of the products they make and the people they employ in their breweries, wineries and distilleries in communities across the country.

Jan Westcott, President and CEO of Spirits Canada highlighted, “Canada’s low risk drinking guidelines recommend adults limit their alcohol consumption to two drinks a day for women and three drinks a day for men. Whereas the guidelines for tobacco, or cocaine, is zero.”

Everyone has a role to play in combatting harm.

“Today’s impaired driving levels are at an historic low in Canada and awareness activities by Canada’s beer, wine and spirits makers contributed significantly to this progress,” said Dan Paszkowski, President and CEO of the Canadian Vintners Association. “There is more to be done for sure but progress is being made, and in Canada the vast majority of adults drink alcohol in a balanced and responsible manner,” highlighted Paszkowski.

Canada's beer, wine and spirits companies are proud of the products they make and know that it is a privilege to be part of Canada's heritage and communities. The \$1.4 million study, paid for by Canadian taxpayers, amplifies costs while failing to acknowledge the progress that has been made.

**KEY FACTS:**

- In 2016 impaired driving declined for the fifth consecutive year reaching a historical low with the rate falling by 66% since 1986, and by 3% over the previous year (Statistics Canada, [Police-reported Crime Statistics in Canada](#), 2016, July 24, 2017)
- Statistics Canada reports that, while the highest impaired driving rate was observed among drivers aged 20 to 24, this rate was 36% lower than the rate recorded in 2009, one of the largest declines recorded among all age groups (Statistics Canada, [Impaired Driving in Canada 2015](#), December 14, 2016).
- 77% of young adults in Canada are licensed drivers - among them, 8 in 10 (78%) have served as designated drivers. 79% of those surveyed always plan ahead of time how they are going to get home before going out and drinking (Ipsos Reid Study, 2017)
- Past-year alcohol use for Canadians of 15-24 years of age fell from 83% in 2004 to 71% in 2015. ([Health Canada Surveys: 2004 CAS](#), [2012 CADUMS](#) and [2015 CTADS](#)).
- The longest ongoing school survey in Canada, and one of the longest in the world, the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS), reports significant decreases in past year alcohol use (more than a few sips) among students during the period from 1999 to 2017, from 66% to 43% (CAMH, [Drug Use among Ontario Students](#), OSDUHS, 2017).
- OECD data indicates Canada ranks only 26th out of a total of 44 countries by level of alcohol consumption (OECD Indicators, [Health at a Glance 2017](#), November 10, 2017).
- Canada's alcohol consumption at 8.1 litres per capita is below the OECD average of 9 litres (OECD Indicators, [Health at a Glance 2017](#), November 10, 2017).

**RESOURCES:**

- CCSA's [Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](#).
- Mäkelä, Klaus, [Cost-of-alcohol studies as a research programme \(2012\)](#), Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, p. 324

## **ABOUT BEER CANADA**

Beer Canada is the national trade association that advocates to ensure Canadian brewers are able to operate in a healthy regulatory environment and that beer remains a celebrated part of Canada's culture. As the national voice of beer, Beer Canada represents over 50 Canadian brewing companies that account for 90% of beer made in Canada and a category that supports 149,000 Canadian jobs, \$13.6 billion in real gross domestic product and \$5.7 billion in tax revenues for federal, provincial and municipal levels of government.

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## **ABOUT CANADIAN VINTNERS ASSOCIATION**

The Canadian Vintners Association (CVA) is the national trade association representing the small, medium and large wineries which comprise Canada's wine industry. CVA members are engaged in the entire wine value chain from grape growing, farm management and grape harvesting to wine production, cellaring, bottling, retail sales and tourism. The Canadian wine industry is a significant contributor to the national economy at \$9 billion in economic impact, having grown through the dedication of generations of grape growers and vintners. [www.canadianvintners.com](http://www.canadianvintners.com)

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## **ABOUT SPIRITS CANADA**

Spirits Canada is the only national trade association representing the interests of Canadian Spirits manufacturers, marketers, exporters and consumers. Spirits Canada is a leading voice for the moderate and responsible consumption of beverage alcohol. Canadian Spirits companies adhere to a robust [Code of Responsible Advertising and Marketing](#). Founded on our signature products of "Canadian Whisky" and "Canadian Rye Whisky", Canada's spirits producers are proud to source 100% of our premium cereal grains from Canadian farmers.

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