



Former NBA Star Beating Addiction, Visiting Nazareth

Part of any athlete's story is statistics. When Chris Herren, who was a great high school basketball player in Fall River, Mass. during the early 1990s, speaks to youngsters he trots out a heck of a stat. He talks about how, at one point while he was in the [NBA](#), he was spending upwards of **\$20,000 a month on Oxycontin, heroin and various other narcotics.**

He lays that on the kids in part because during his glory days as the Massachusetts High School Player of the Year and as a McDonald's All-American, most of them hadn't been born. They don't know he played part of a season at Boston College until he was suspended for drug use, and then at Fresno State, where he also tested positive, and then for the [Denver Nuggets](#) and [Boston Celtics](#) until drugs shut down those opportunities and relegated him to brief, added stints with teams in China, Turkey and elsewhere.

"I don't think the kids know who I am anyway," Herren said. "I don't think that my basketball career was ever that successful for them to know who I am. They know me more for what I do today than what I did playing basketball. And I think that just comes from trust, transparency and honesty. And I think that's what the kids respond to."

"I was a drinker," Herren said. "I smoked pot, but I always said, 'That's where it would begin and end.' Cocaine ... I was scared to death, and I said, 'I'll do it once,' and that one try lasted 14 years."

YOU SHOULD GO: Hear Chris Herren tell his story of addiction and sobriety on Thursday, May 12th at 7:00pm at Nazareth High School. There is no admission fee.

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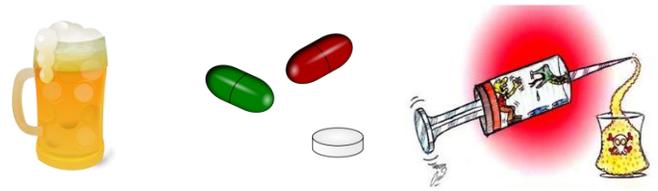
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In 2014, More Deaths From Alcohol Than Prescription Medicine, Heroin Combined



Alcohol is killing Americans at a rate not seen in at least 35 years, according to new federal data. Last year, more than 30,000 Americans died from alcohol-induced causes, including alcohol poisoning and cirrhosis, which is primarily caused by alcohol use.

In 2014, there were 9.6 deaths from these alcohol-induced causes per 100,000 people, up 37 percent since 2002. This tally of alcohol-induced fatalities excludes deaths from drunken driving, other accidents, and homicides committed under the influence of alcohol. If those were included, the annual toll of deaths directly or indirectly caused by alcohol would be closer to 90,000, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In recent years, public health experts have focused extensively on overdose deaths from heroin and prescription painkillers, which have risen rapidly since the early 2000s. But in 2014, more people died from alcohol-induced causes (30,722) than from overdoses of prescription painkillers and heroin combined (28,647), according to the CDC - although total drug deaths are far higher.

Patterns vary widely from state to state, for reasons that are not always obvious. Alcohol-related death rates in the Philadelphia region are far below the national average - New Jersey's (6.2 per 100,000 residents) was third-lowest in the United States last year, while Pennsylvania's (6.5) was sixth-lowest.

Yet the same set of federal statistics show that Pennsylvania had the sixth-highest rate of drug overdose deaths (21.4 per 100,000 and continuing to rise). New Jersey's drug-death rate (14 per 100,000, just below the national average) was down slightly in 2014 after several years of rapid increases.

Drug fatality rates are even higher in most of the region's suburban counties in both states. But for alcohol, they are lower. In the city, the relationship is flipped. Philip J. Cook, a Duke University professor who studies alcohol consumption patterns and their effects, notes that per-capita alcohol consumption has been increasing nationally since the late 1990s.

"Since the prevalence of heavy drinking tends to follow closely with per capita consumption, it is likely that one explanation for the growth in alcohol-related deaths is that more people are drinking more," he wrote in an email.

The number of American adults who drink at least monthly rose by a small but significant amount between 2002 and 2014 - from 54.9 percent to 56.9 percent - according to data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The change has been especially pronounced among women. The percent of women drinking monthly or more rose from 47.9 in 2002 to 51.9 in 2014. And the percentage of women reporting binge drinking - defined as five or more drinks on at least one occasion - rose from 15.7 to 17.4 percent over the same period. Cook notes that when you adjust the alcohol fatality rates for age, the increase narrows somewhat. That's because older Americans are at more risk for alcohol-induced diseases, like cirrhosis, and the U.S. population has gotten older in recent decades.

Some researchers want health officials to focus more on the dangers posed by alcohol, and less on the dangers of less toxic drugs, such as marijuana and LSD.

[To read the full article by Christopher Ingraham and Don Sapatkin of the Washington Post, \[23 December 2015\] go to http://www.philly.com/philly/health/20151223_health_inqh_ealthsci_region.html](http://www.philly.com/philly/health/20151223_health_inqh_ealthsci_region.html)

YOU SHOULD GO: Join us on April 6th, 2016 from 7:00-8:00 pm in the Laros Room of the Bethlehem Public Library on 11 West Church Street in Bethlehem to hear Amanda Foehr, Certified Recovery Specialist from the Lehigh Valley Drug and Intake Unit Recovery Support Services, speak on the heroin epidemic in the Lehigh Valley. Mayor Donchez will give opening remarks.

“Drinking Responsibly”

[A blog from Hanna Lottritz

<https://hlottritz.wordpress.com/2016/01/06/drinking-responsibly/>, 7 January 2016] Today is my 21st birthday, a day I have been looking forward to for quite some time now. Due to an event that happened about six months ago I will not be taking birthday shots and getting wasted tonight. Instead I plan on having dinner and maybe a glass of wine with my closest friends and family. I am writing this because I didn't realize the importance of drinking responsibly until I was waking up from a coma, and I don't want anyone to go through what my family and I went through. I ask that you share this with your friends, family or anyone who may benefit from reading this. If I can help just one person by sharing my experience, then I will be absolutely ecstatic.



Reno, Nevada- July 26, 2015: A photo from the emergency room an hour after I arrived at Renown hospital. At this point I was not responding to verbal or painful stimuli and the ventilator was breathing for me. I was completely unresponsive.

July 27, 2015: The first thing I remember is my mom holding my hand, telling me I was going to be okay. I felt like I was dreaming. Everything seemed foggy. I drifted in and out of consciousness for the next few hours. I was coming out of a 24 hour coma.

On the morning of July 25, 2015, I thought I was going to have a fun day with friends at the Night in the Country music festival in Yerington, Nevada. I woke up, had

breakfast and started what would end up being the worst 48 hours of my life. The first part of the day was a lot of fun. We met new people, played human foosball and had a really good time. After dinner we went to the Joe Nichols and Jake Owen concert. At the concert I had two beers. Many of the people I was with had been drinking throughout the day and were already feeling good. I hadn't started drinking until a little after dinner and I felt a little behind. My problems started after the concert. I was beginning to feel a little bit of a buzz and drifted off from the people I went to the concert with. I ended up at a campsite where I found some of my other friends. I am a competitive person by nature and this group was mostly guys who (for some reason) I promised I could outdrink. Around 11:30pm, one of my guy friends and I were seeing who could take the longest chug from a bottle of “Black Velvet Whiskey.”

July 26, 2015: Everything that happened from midnight on is information I gathered from friends because I have zero memory of anything after that. Apparently after I chugged from the bottle, I chugged a solo cup full of “Black Velvet Whiskey.” Immediately after this I told my friends I felt fine, and about five minutes later I collapsed. I wasn't breathing. My friends picked me up and started carrying me to the medical tent. From there I was intubated and taken to Renown hospital in Reno, Nevada via care flight. Meanwhile, the police showed up at my house to tell my parents to meet me at the hospital.

I was in critical condition, suffering from acute respiratory failure and acute alcohol intoxication. My blood alcohol concentration was .41 when I arrived at the hospital, five times over the legal limit. The doctors thought I was brain dead because I was completely unresponsive. My pupils were sluggishly reactive, I had no corneal reflex and I wasn't responding to verbal or painful stimuli. I finally woke up about 24 hours after I arrived at the hospital. I had a tube down my throat and my hands were restrained so I couldn't pull it out. I was unable to talk with the tube down my throat, making it hard to tell my parents and the nurses that it was extremely uncomfortable. I had to pass a respiratory test to prove I could breathe on my own before they removed it. I failed the first respiratory test I took, and I had to wait several hours to take another test. When I passed the second test and the tube was taken out, the doctors and nurses told me how lucky I was to be alive. They told me that they didn't think I would make it through the night. They asked me if I was trying to kill myself by drinking so much. This question hit me the hardest. From my hospital bed in the Intensive Care Unit, my eyes were opened to the seriousness of being irresponsible with alcohol. The next day when I was

discharged from the hospital, I realized that the way I looked at alcohol would be changed forever.



Reno, Nevada – August 5, 2015: Bruises from blood tests during my hospital stay. This picture was taken several days after I was discharged from the hospital.

I've heard a lot of rumors about what happened to me. I heard a rumor that I overdosed on drugs (blood tests found ZERO drugs in my system). Someone even told a friend of mine that I died. I received texts from people asking me what happened without asking if I was okay. This event taught me a lot about who is there because they actually care, and who is there because they are curious about what happened. Despite the handful of people who didn't really care, there were so many people who genuinely cared about my health and safety. I appreciate every one of these people and can't thank them enough.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, binge drinking is defined as five or more drinks on one occasion for men, and four or more drinks on one occasion for women. Heavy drinking is defined as 15 or more drinks per week for men, and eight or more

drinks per week for women. The CDC also says, "Very high levels of alcohol in the body can shutdown critical areas of the brain that control breathing, heart rate, and body temperature, resulting in death." About six people die from alcohol poisoning each day in the US. I'm not asking that everyone avoid alcohol altogether because that is unreasonable, but please try to avoid binge drinking and heavy drinking because the consequences are not worth it.

This situation could have been so much worse. Fortunately for me, I had good people around when all of this took place. I could have easily been taken advantage of when I passed out. I could've been left alone to "sleep it off." I can't tell you how many times I've heard the phrase, "Let them sleep it off, they'll be fine in the morning," but I'm alive today because my friends got me help. Don't take a chance if you see a friend passed out from drinking too much. Get them help as soon as possible. I'm very lucky to have made a full recovery, but I know there are others who won't be as lucky. So please drink responsibly and make sure your friends do too. Watch out for friends, family, even strangers, and take care of them when you suspect they might be suffering from alcohol poisoning. Know the symptoms and be safe.

YOU SHOULD GO: Bethlehem City Hall (10 East Church Street) will host the HOPE Program (Heroin and Opioid Prevention Education) from 6:30-8:00pm on 28 April 2016. FREE!

Did you know???

The [Prevention & Treatment Resource Press](#) [PTRP] produces the [In The Know Zone](#), a resource for information on substance abuse and other issues. Based in St. Rose, Louisiana, PTRP provides a wealth of information about impairment and [blood-alcohol concentration](#).

That includes:

- The faster someone drinks, the higher the blood-alcohol concentration.
- A BAC in the range of .37 to .40 or higher can cause death.
- Most people begin to feel relaxed, sociable and talkative when BAC reaches 0.04.
- Judgment, attention and control are somewhat impaired at 0.05, and the ability to drive safely begins to be limited.
- At 0.25 to 0.30, drinkers have near total loss of motor functions, little response to stimuli and may lose consciousness or be unable to stand or walk.
- A 120-pound woman would have to consume seven drinks in an hour to reach a BAC of 0.30. The same woman would be at 0.35 with 10 drinks in an hour. Two drinks in an hour would bring her BAC to 0.08, the legal limit for driving.
- A 160-pound man would have a BAC of 0.30 by consuming 11 drinks in an hour.
- A standard drink is considered 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.
- A person's BAC may be different than what [published tables](#) show based on a number of factors such as body composition, medications taken or amount of food in the stomach.

