



MDDCSAM is the Maryland state chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine whose members are physicians and other health providers who treat people with substance use disorders.

SB 205 Alcoholic Beverages - Sale or Delivery for Off-Premises Consumption

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

March 5, 2021

OPPOSE

Although most people who use alcohol do not have discernable resulting problems, the spectrum of unhealthy patterns of alcohol use are extremely common. **Alcohol is the fourth leading cause of preventable death in the U.S, and results in twice the number of deaths as do opioids.**

Making alcohol available for delivery **will predictably increase the rate of hazardous or harmful alcohol use.**

There has been a **significant pandemic-related rise in serious mental health and substance use problems and in alcohol-related traffic fatalities**, making resulting harms especially severe at this time.

For these reasons the bill is not supported by public health organizations or by many people affiliated with local liquor control boards.

Home delivery presents additional challenges in monitoring compliance by liquor boards, which do not have the resources to adequately monitor compliance currently. **Currently over half of restaurants do not check ID of mystery shoppers.**

Although sales to youth are of concern, **alcohol use disorder is primarily prevalent in adults**, and this would not be addressed by prohibition of sales to minors, even if it were enforced.

The regulation of the sale of ordinary household goods, for example, is very different from regulation of products with the risk of addiction and serious health consequences in a significant proportion of users.

The bill's rationale appears to be to enhance revenue for retail establishments affected by the pandemic. However, **a temporary circumstance should not be the basis for a permanent change** in long-standing policy with major public health implications. Although we are opposed to the bill, if it passes there should be a sunset after one year, with an evaluation of unintended consequences.

We respectfully request an unfavorable report
