



A Chapter of American Society of Addiction Medicine

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 75 UNFAVORABLE

Alcoholic Beverages - Class A License - Food Retailers

Senate Finance Committee February 20, 2026

The density of retail alcohol establishments is strongly associated with health disparities (1) and public health professionals have long worked to decrease it. If the goal is to increase health by encouraging food retailers to locate in food deserts, the result is likely to be the opposite.

It is not widely known that most alcohol sales are made to individuals with heavy use associated with harm (2) (because those with harmful use purchase the greatest quantities).

Grocery establishments will market and promote these products to increase consumption. **While food shopping, unavoidable exposure to products and promotions will trigger alcohol purchases**, including by some of those attempting to limit their consumption for health or to avoid harmful use.

Alcohol marketing and promotion tend to normalize alcohol consumption to people of all ages. **“De-normalization”** of substance use is an accepted public health approach for decreasing the use of tobacco and alcohol among youth.

Most individuals who drink do not experience overt harms, though **alcohol is a leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. (3)** that can lead to **hypertension, heart disease, stroke, cancer, liver disease, mental health disorders as well as social, occupational and educational problems. (4) (5)**

There is no threshold of alcohol consumption below which cancer risk does not increase, according to the American Institute for Cancer Research.

Very respectfully,

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REFERENCES:

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