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HARC Study Reveals Thousands Engage in Binge Drinking Across Eastern Riverside County

(PALM DESERT, CA) – More than one in five residents here admitted to binge drinking at least once within the past 30 days, as part of a sweeping health study across Eastern Riverside County. The findings, published in the Health Assessment Resource Center (HARC) *Community Health Monitor*, coincide with April being Alcohol Awareness Month.

An estimated 10% who said they participated in binge drinking only once in the past 30 days represent more than 29,000 residents of Eastern Riverside County. The 13.4% who admitted to binge drinking more than once within the last month include approximately 40,000 individuals. Combined, the numbers reveal that some 70,000 residents admitting to having engaged in binge drinking within the last 30 days.

Meanwhile, 2.5% or 7,673 residents reported they have driven during the last 30 days after having had too much to drink.

It is estimated that binge drinking accounts for half of the 85,000 alcohol-related deaths in the United States each year. The Center for Disease Control reports that approximately 92% of U.S. adults who drink excessively report binge drinking in the past 30 days. For men, binge drinking is defined as the consumption of five or more drinks in a row; for women, consuming four or more drinks in a row constitutes the standard.

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HARC's *Community Health Monitor* contains data from more than 3,500 completed household surveys conducted throughout Eastern Riverside County. Respondents fielded questions related to health status, behavioral risks, quality of life issues, access, and utilization of services. A total of 172 questions comprised the adult survey and 136 for children.

Because of the large sample size, researchers were able to deliver statistically valid results in virtually every major survey category. This is in stark contrast to prior needs assessment initiatives with low sample sizes and an emphasis on qualitative, rather than quantitative data.

The research initiative aims to deliver healthcare providers, cities, government agencies, and private interests a snapshot of public health in eastern Riverside County. HARC data will be used to facilitate decision-making on future issues such as program development, access, funding, utilization, and more.

About HARC

Formed in 2006 by a consortium of more than 35 public and private healthcare agencies, the Health Assessment Resource Center (HARC) conducts a confidential community health status assessment in eastern Riverside County every 3 years to identify major health and quality of life issues. The nonprofit 501(c)3 organization is funded in part by contributions from community partners, as well as entities that contract with the agency for customized public health research. More information can be obtained by calling HARC at (760) 601-3663, or visiting the organization's website at www.harcddata.org.

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