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U.S. recorded 47,938 alcohol-induced deaths in 2023

The CDC said the age-adjusted death rate fell 6.7% from 2022 to 12.6 per 100,000 people

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The United States recorded 47,938 deaths from causes directly induced by alcohol in 2023, according to final mortality data published on Thursday, November 12 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Health Statistics.

The report said the age-adjusted death rate for alcohol-induced causes fell to 12.6 per 100,000 people in 2023, down 6.7% from 2022. Age-adjusted rates are used to compare years without the results being distorted by changes in the population’s age mix.

The figures come from the CDC’s annual final mortality report, which is based on death certificate data from across the country. Final mortality data are treated as the government’s official annual count after provisional tallies are updated and completed.

The alcohol-induced category is narrower than the broader universe of deaths in which alcohol may have contributed. It reflects causes directly tied to alcohol, as classified in the national mortality system, and does not capture every crash, injury, disease or violent death in which drinking may have played a role. That means the 47,938 deaths represent a specific public health measure rather than the full extent of alcohol-related harm.

Even with the decline from 2022, the number remained high enough to keep alcohol-induced mortality as a major health indicator. A total close to 48,000 deaths in a single year means public health agencies, hospitals and researchers are likely to continue tracking whether the drop in the age-adjusted rate marks the start of a sustained change or a one-year movement.

Because the figures come from a standardized national system, they are also likely to be used as a benchmark in policy and business debates tied to drinking. For beer, wine and spirits producers, distributors and retailers, the data add official weight to discussions about prevention campaigns, product messaging, responsible-drinking programs and possible regulatory pressure. The report itself does not make policy recommendations, but the numbers are likely to be cited in arguments over how the industry should address health risks tied to alcohol consumption.

The CDC report covers far more than alcohol-induced deaths. It presents the final 2023 national mortality picture, including leading causes of death and cause-specific death rates. Within that broader review, the alcohol-induced figures stand out because they measure deaths directly assigned to alcohol on death certificates, giving health officials a consistent yardstick for year-to-year comparison.

Public health experts often watch the age-adjusted rate as closely as the raw death count because it can show whether the risk of dying from a given cause is changing independent of population aging. In this case, the 6.7% decline suggests some improvement from 2022 by that measure, even though the total number of deaths remained substantial.

The new data are likely to feed continuing debate over prevention strategies, clinical treatment for alcohol use disorder and how aggressively states and local governments should respond to alcohol-related harm. They also give the beverage sector an updated federal reference point as companies and trade groups face closer scrutiny over how they present consumption risks and support responsible use.