



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

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A resolution declaring January 2025 as Dry January USA Month, recognizing Meharry Medical College as the national leader for Dry January USA, highlighting the transformational Yellow Campaign, and addressing the broad impact of alcohol on health, safety, and society.

WHEREAS, Meharry Medical College, established in 1876, has become a beacon of hope for underserved communities, a pioneer in public health and a leader in addressing systemic health disparities, with its leadership of Dry January USA reinforcing its mission to promote health equity and healthier lifestyles; and

WHEREAS, since 2022, Meharry Medical College has been the home of Dry January USA, leading a national movement to encourage individuals to reflect on their relationship with alcohol, adopt healthier habits and reduce the harmful impacts of excessive alcohol use; and

WHEREAS, Dry January USA, originally developed by Alcohol Change UK in 2013, has grown from 4,000 participants to millions worldwide and, under Meharry Medical College's stewardship, has become a transformative movement promoting mindful drinking habits, health equity and public health education; and

WHEREAS, Dry January USA, is an effort to allow everyone to put a mirror up to their own relationship with alcohol, in a supportive and non-judgmental environment; and recognizing that every person and community has its own journey to education and self-awareness regarding alcohol; and recognizing that the official and free Try Dry app has been shown to correspond with a greater success for those choosing to observe Dry January; and

WHEREAS, Dry January USA has embraced yellow as its official color, symbolizing hope, positivity and personal growth. The theme "Go Yellow in January" serves as a rallying cry for action, encouraging individuals to:

1. Go Yellow by embarking on their alcohol-free journey in January.
2. Be Yellow by embodying optimism, happiness, and resilience.
3. Support Yellow by fostering community spirit and solidarity in promoting healthier choices.
4. Do Something Yellow by raising awareness about alcohol's effects, hosting alcohol-free events, and supporting non-alcoholic alternatives; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee faces significant challenges related to alcohol use, with a 98% increase in alcohol-related deaths between 2012 and 2022, over 70,000 alcohol-related ER visits annually and concerning patterns of excessive drinking across demographics, including youth, higher-income individuals and those in professions like music and hospitality; and

WHEREAS, Nashville's status as Music City with its vibrant music and hospitality industries amplify alcohol's normalization; and the tolerance of a binge drinking culture, and its associated harms, further underscoring the importance of Dry January USA initiatives to promote health, safety and alternative lifestyle choices; and

WHEREAS, alcohol is classified as a Group 1 carcinogen by the World Health Organization, significantly increasing the risk of several cancers, including mouth, throat, esophageal, liver, breast and colorectal cancers, with risks rising sharply even with light to moderate consumption; contributing to 20,000 U.S. cancer deaths annually, underscoring the need for prevention and public education; and

WHEREAS, alcohol use is closely linked to mental health disorders, exacerbating conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia, while undermining effective treatment outcomes; and

WHEREAS, alcohol is a contributing factor in 22% of suicide deaths, with intoxication lowering inhibitions and increasing impulsivity, leading to a 10-fold increase in suicide risk among those with alcohol abuse disorders; and

WHEREAS, alcohol use significantly increases the risk of injuries, including falls, fractures, drowning, burns, and workplace accidents, straining healthcare and emergency services and endangering community well-being; and

WHEREAS, alcohol is a major contributor to traffic accidents, with about 28% of all traffic-related deaths in the United States involving alcohol-impaired drivers and a fatal crash risk 11 times higher for drivers with a BAC of 0.08% compared to sober drivers; and

WHEREAS, alcohol is a factor in 55% of domestic violence incidents, increasing the severity of injuries and placing children in homes with alcohol abuse at greater risk of neglect and abuse; and

WHEREAS, alcohol use contributes to community disruption, including increased crime rates, strained healthcare and emergency systems, economic losses from reduced productivity, and destabilization of families and child development; and

WHEREAS, the impact of alcohol disproportionately affects underserved and marginalized populations, including African American, Hispanic, LGBTQ, and Veteran communities, amplifying health disparities and social inequities that Meharry Medical College is committed to addressing; and

WHEREAS, Veterans and military personnel experience disproportionately high rates of alcohol misuse, with 20% of Veterans with PTSD also suffering from substance use disorders, necessitating targeted interventions and support for their health and well-being; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ individuals face elevated risks of alcohol-related challenges, with up to 25% experiencing moderate to severe drinking problems, often driven by minority stress and stigma, requiring inclusive and culturally sensitive outreach; and

WHEREAS, African Americans face disproportionately higher rates of alcohol-related health problems despite lower overall consumption, and Hispanic Americans experience unique barriers to treatment access, with 33% of drinkers at risk for persistent alcohol problems, highlighting the importance of culturally responsive resources and support; and

WHEREAS, Nashville's music industry reports high alcohol normalization, with 22.4% of Billboard songs mentioning alcohol, and hospitality workers report 56% daily alcohol use, demanding workplace interventions and community-driven education campaigns to reduce harm; and

WHEREAS, through initiatives like Dry January USA, Meharry Medical College provides tools such as the free Try Dry app, educational resources and public health campaigns to empower individuals and communities to

make informed, healthier choices while addressing systemic challenges related to alcohol use; and

WHEREAS, Meharry Medical College's work aligns with its broader mission to serve as a force for health equity and its leadership in mental health, addiction treatment and community engagement; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council recognize the work of Dry January USA and Meharry Medical College.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. That the Metropolitan County Council hereby recognizes January 2025 as Dry January USA Month, celebrating Meharry Medical College's leadership, its innovative YELLOW campaign and embracing that the home for Dry January USA is in Nashville, Tennessee.

Section 2. That the Metropolitan County Council further recognizes January 7, 2025, as Dry January® USA Day, honoring the initiative's commitment to fostering healthier communities and focusing our annual efforts on this one day of significance where those who drink alcohol are asked to reflect, for at least one day, and to observe how they may reduce their use of alcohol throughout the rest of the year.

Section 3. The Metropolitan County Council encourages all residents, organizations, and industries to Go Yellow, Be Yellow, Support Yellow, and Do Something Yellow, raising awareness about alcohol's impacts and promoting mindful drinking choices.

Section 4. The Metropolitan County Council expresses its commitment to:

- Expanding education and public health initiatives aligned with Dry January USA.
- Partnering with Meharry Medical College to implement culturally inclusive programs.
- Supporting community events that embody the YELLOW campaign and its mission of hope, positivity and health equity.
- Calling on all residents, businesses, and organizations to join Dry January® USA, reflect on their relationship with alcohol and support Meharry Medical College in its mission to promote health equity and reduce alcohol-related harm.

Section 5. That this resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.