

The Exchange

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Kim P. Bowman

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Message from the Director

Alcohol Advertising and Youth

Is the fox guarding the hen house?

Somewhat like the fox guarding the hen house, the alcohol industry is expected to self-regulate their advertising practices to youth. It took two landmark reports, one in 1999 by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and one in 2003 by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine - both calling for the alcohol industry to reform its marketing practice to youth – before the industry decided to make some changes.

In September 2003, the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States and the Beer Institute announced that they would reduce the number of ads seen by underage youth. To accomplish this, the industry agreed to tighten their standards for maximum youth audiences from 50% to 30% (or 70% adults). On the surface this sounds good however; the voluntary, self-regulated change has had little positive effect.

According to a 2005 report from the National Academies, the industry’s self-imposed cap is not effective because 70% of the population is 21 or over. As a result, alcohol advertising can be almost anywhere except young children’s television shows or magazines.

The cap effectively allows alcohol messages to reach large numbers of children and teenagers on a regular basis. According to a May 2006 publication from the Center for Alcohol

an increase in the number of alcohol ads seen by youth since implementation of the 2003 cap.

More and more studies are showing a direct link between alcohol advertising and drinking among underage youth. A long-term national study published in the January 2006 issue of *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescents Medicine* concluded, “greater exposure to alcohol advertising contributes to an increase in drinking among underage youth. Specifically, for each additional ad a young person saw above the monthly national average for youth, he or she drank 1% more. For each additional dollar per capita spent on alcohol advertising in a local market, young people drank 3% more” www.camy.org.

Earlier studies also support the link between alcohol advertising and our youth. One survey, conducted in 1996, showed that children, ages 9 to 11, were more familiar with Budweiser’s frogs than with Kellogg’s Tony the Tiger, Mighty Morphine Power Rangers or Smokey the Bear (Center on Alcohol Advertising, 1996). More recent surveys (RAND Health July 2005) found that “more than one in four fourth graders could name three or more brands of beer and an equal number knew the slogan for at least one brand”.

Underage drinking is fast becoming a national epidemic and anything we can do to reduce the appeal of alcohol use to our youth can only have a positive effect. Our youth are bombarded with alcohol advertising from all media venues including television, magazines, radio, in-store displays and the Internet. Many of these ads “glorify” alcohol use and utilize advertising strategies such as cartoon characters to actively gain the attention of underage youth. Advertising that makes youth see positive

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Marketing and Youth (C A M Y), some studies actually show

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outcomes from alcohol use such as attracting the opposite sex or portraying alcohol as a key ingredient to a successful social life, all have an impact on a youth's decision to drink.

The Surgeon General, in his Call to Action (March 2007), states that the alcohol industry "has a public responsibility relating to the marketing of its product". But experts disagree on what this responsibility should look like.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (Join Together, December 2006) called on Congress to "ban alcohol ads with cartoon characters and beautiful women, limiting ads to showing product images only". The American Medical Association calls for a statutory ban on all alcohol advertising except for inside retail and wholesale outlets. Both the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine recommend limiting the placement of alcohol ads to outlets with underage viewer/readership of less than 15%. If this cap were to be imposed, the impact on the number of alcohol ads seen by youth would significantly decrease, while still allowing alcohol advertising to appear on 79% of all television programming (CAMY, July 2005).

Recognizing the fact that underage drinking is a health crisis across the nation, and in our own backyard (over 52% of our 12th graders report alcohol use in the past month according to the 2005 Chester County Youth Survey) we need to take action. A unified approach is needed, one that includes policy changes at the federal, state and local levels – including enforcement of newly enacted policies, increased public awareness of the problem via media campaigns, prevention education at all grade levels and finally, easy access to alcohol treatment programs.

To learn more about alcohol advertising and youth log onto the following web sites: www.camy.org, www.marininstitute.org or www.beersoaksamerica.org.

Kim P. Bowman

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Department of Drug and Alcohol Services*



Docs Call for Ban on Alcohol Ads in College Sports

March 12, 2007

News Summary

(www.jointogether.org)

The American Medical Association (AMA) is paying for a series of ads in college newspapers calling on schools to stop accepting alcohol advertising during college sports events, the *Associated Press* reported March 9.

The ads, timed to coincide with the beginning of the NCAA basketball "March Madness" tournament, call on colleges to "stop the madness" of alcohol advertising aimed at youth. The ads appeared in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and student newspapers at Georgia Tech, the University of Iowa, the University of Wisconsin, Indiana University, the University of Mississippi, and DePaul University.

"The truly insane thing about March basketball is all the money universities get from alcohol advertising," the ad says.

The AMA ad says the alcohol industry spent over \$52 million on ads during college sporting events in 2006. An NCAA spokesperson said the association's rules limit alcohol ads to one minute per hour of broadcast and ban hard-liquor ads.

The Beer Institute contends that 89 percent of March Madness viewers are adults. "Sports fans tend to be beer drinkers and therefore, we're going to try to advertise to that audience," said Beer Institute President, Jeff Becker.

Richard Yoast, the director of the AMA's Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, said alcohol ads during school sports events undermine campus prevention efforts. "Almost every college president would agree that heavy drinking is their major student health problem," Yoast said.

IN VIEW

PROJECT ALERT

“School drug prevention programs can blunt the impact of alcohol ads on youth”
(*“Forging the Link Between Alcohol Advertising and Underage Drinking”* – RAND Corporation www.rand.org)

In 2005, researchers from the RAND Corporation conducted two studies to look at the connection between alcohol advertisements and underage drinking. Included in these studies was an analysis of data collected from a large scale field trial of an alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) prevention program known as Project ALERT (for middle school students) and ALERT Plus (for middle and high school students). Key findings from the studies showed:

- Alcohol advertising appears to promote adolescent drinking.
- Different kinds of ads have different effects depending on a youngster’s prior alcohol use.
- School drug prevention programs can blunt the impact of alcohol ads on youth.

Project ALERT and ALERT Plus, both developed by the RAND Corporation, help youth identify and resist alcohol marketing strategies. Following participation in the program, youth can recognize persuasive messages used in alcohol ads and learn how product placement is utilized to influence the decision to drink. The curriculum teaches youth to look beyond what the advertisers want you to see and actually rewrite the advertisements so that they tell the truth about alcohol use. The studies found that “students who took part in the ALERT Plus program were less likely than the control students to drink in 9th grade. Furthermore, the ALERT Plus students who hadn’t started drinking before the lessons began were less susceptible to the persuasive appeals of in-store advertisements”.

Project ALERT has been recognized by many agencies including the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services as a proven, effective alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention program. The program targets middle school youth and consists of 11 core lessons that are taught one time a week during the first year with three (3) booster lessons delivered the following year. Lessons include Consequences of Smoking Cigarettes and Marijuana, Drinking Consequences and Alternatives, Social Pressures to Use, Practicing Resistance Skills. Proven outcomes from the program include:

- Reduced initiation of marijuana use by 30%.
- Decreased current marijuana use by 60%.
- Reduced past month cigarette use by 20% to 25%.
- Decreased regular and heavy smoking by 33% to 55%.

Currently, Project ALERT is offered at the Community, Youth and Women’s Alliance (CYWA) in Coatesville, PA and at select schools in Chester County. For more information on local programming please contact The Coad Group at 610-363-6164. Contact or log onto www.projectalert.com.

Mark Your Calendar



NATIONAL OBSERVANCES:

May 20 - 26, 2007: Alcohol and Other Drug Related Birth Defects Week - www.ncadd.org

May 31, 2007: World No Tobacco Day - www.wntd.com

LOCAL EVENTS and TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:

June 6 - 8, 2007: Commonwealth Prevention Alliance (CPA) 17th Annual Conference "Leading the Challenge" www.commonwealthpreventionalliance.org

September 29, 2007: 5th Annual Recovery Expo 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. United Way Methodist Church of the Resurrection (UMCR) Exton, PA. Contact Wendy Beck for more information at wbeck101@comcast.net

PA Department of Health, Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs: For complete list of courses offered visit <http://bdap.health.state.pa.us/mrtr/Welcome.aspx>

FAMILY CORNER

News you can use

The following article is reprinted, in part, from the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, Georgetown University
<http://camy.org/press/print.php?ReleaseID=19>

Underage Youth Have Easy Access to Alcohol Web Sites

Games, Downloads, Interactive Attractions Create Cyber Playground; Content Popular with Youth Concentrated on Beer, Distilled Spirits Web Sites; B-Roll Available

Washington, DC - Despite alcohol industry marketing codes promising to limit access to only legal-age adults, nearly 700,000 in-depth visits to alcohol company Web sites in the last six months of 2003 alone were from young people under the drinking age, according to the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at Georgetown University. CAMY conducted this analysis using underage site visitation* data supplied by comScore Media Metrix.

The report also found:

- The majority of parental control software programs, described by the alcohol industry as critical to limiting underage access, are, in fact, largely ineffective at preventing youth from visiting these sites.
- Alcohol Web sites feature an array of video games such as car races, air hockey and pinball, as well as downloadable customized music, interactive accessories and other content considered attractive to youth. The majority of this content is concentrated on Web sites for beer, distilled spirits, and "malternatives," the usually sweet-tasting alcohol drinks that are sometimes produced as joint ventures of beer and distilled spirits companies.

"These alcohol Web sites are a virtual cyber playground with no adult supervision," said Jim O'Hara, executive director of the Center. "Once again, the alcohol industry's marketing codes are not protecting our youth."

"If a community found out that a local liquor store or bar was this ineffective at policing itself, there would be an immediate uproar and demand for accountability. The alcohol industry is failing in its responsibilities to America's parents and children."

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FAMILY CORNER *(continued)*

Key findings from the study include:

Alcohol Web sites attract large numbers of underage youth. In the first publicly released analysis of underage traffic on alcohol Web sites, comScore Media Metrix, a leading Internet audience measurement service, provided data to the Center showing that between July and December 2003, 683,588 in-depth visits, or 13.1% of all in-depth visits to 55 branded alcohol sites were initiated by underage persons. The vast majority of the in-depth visits - 611,800 - occurred at 22 sites, according to the analysis by comScore. The analysis also revealed that sites in the distilled spirits and beer categories received the highest percentages of such visits from underage persons, at 15.2% and 12.8%, respectively.

A site-level analysis revealed that two distilled spirits Web sites led in the percentage of underage, in-depth site visits. One site - www.bacardi.com - received almost 60% of its in-depth visits from underage persons, and a second site - www.skyy.com - received nearly half of all in-depth visits from underage persons. Two (2) beer Web sites led in the absolute number of in-depth site visits initiated by those under the legal age. Both sites - www.budlight.com and www.budweiser.com - each received more than 90,000 in-depth visits from underage persons.

Features with youth appeal concentrated on beer, distilled spirits Web sites. Since an initial report in 1997 by the Center for Media Education (CME), policymakers have been concerned about content on alcohol company Web sites that could be attractive to underage youth. In reviewing these sites in October and November 2003, CAMY found video games such as a water-balloon toss, pinball, car races, shooting aliens and air hockey, as well as customized music downloads and IM (instant messaging) accessories in abundance. These features were clearly concentrated on the beer and distilled spirits Web sites.

Games were featured on 10 of 15 beer Web sites, seven (7) of 19 distilled spirits sites and four (4) of 12 malternative sites reviewed. Visitors to 10 beer sites, 11 distilled spirits sites and eight (8) malternative sites were able to download screensavers or wallpapers.

In contrast, only one (1) of 28 wine Web sites featured a game (a wine user's profile), and screensavers or wallpapers were available for downloading on only five (5) wine Web sites.

No effective "carding" on the Internet. While the vast majority of the alcohol Web sites reviewed by the Center asked users to affirm they were 21 or older or to state their birth date, data demonstrate that this does not prevent underage users from accessing the sites. To determine whether parents can control their children's access to these sites, the Center, using parent volunteers in seven (7) states and the District of Columbia, reviewed how effectively eight (8) leading parental control software packages worked in blocking access to the sites. The Center found that 76% of the alcohol brands eluded parental controls half the time or more.

"This report makes clear the need for the federal public health service to monitor the alcohol industry's practices and shine a spotlight so parents and policymakers can know what is happening, as the Institute of Medicine has recommended," said O'Hara.

In its landmark report, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, published in September 2003, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) called on the Department of Health and Human Services to monitor the advertising and marketing practices of the alcohol industry and to report its findings periodically to the Congress and the public.

As the Internet has grown in popularity among teenagers in the last decade, policymakers have repeatedly shown concern about the appeal and attraction of alcohol Web sites to underage youth. Both CME and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have reviewed alcohol Web sites in the past and raised concerns about the appeal of these sites to underage youth. As a result of these concerns, the Beer Institute and the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) revised their advertising codes in 1997 and 1998, respectively.

* In-depth visits, reported by comScore Media Metrix, have been defined by CAMY as visits that resulted in more than two-page views. This distinction has been used to eliminate from the analysis visits initiated by persons who were deterred by a Web site's age verification process, and thus viewed fewer than three pages.



The Exchange is sponsored by: The Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services, P.O. Box 2747, 601 Westtown Road Suite 325, West Chester, PA 19380-0990.

For more information or to be on the mailing list for this newsletter, contact the Community Prevention staff at: The Coad Group, 930 East Lancaster Avenue, Exton, PA 19341, 610.363.6164 or 1.800.917.1117

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Resources

Looking for Help in Chester County?

AA Web Site

www.aachesco.org

Al-Anon/Ala-Teen

1-888-4AL-ANON

Al-Anon/Ala-Teen Web Site

www.al-anon-alateen.org

Alcohol and Drug Information

– Personal & Confidential 1-866-286-3767

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

215-923-7900

Crisis Intervention

1-877-918-2100

Domestic Violence

1-888-711-6270

Health and Human Service Agencies

www.referweb.net/chesco

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

215-629-6757

NA Web Site

www.na.org

Welfare Office

610-466-1000

You can view or print this newsletter by visiting Chester County's Website: www.chesco.org and following the links for Human Services to Drug & Alcohol Services.