

Media Statement
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WNBC-TV's Decision To Carry Hard Liquor Ads a Step Backward; Efforts To Reduce Underage Drinking Will Be Undermined

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Washington, DC - The recent decision by WNBC-TV (New York) to begin airing liquor advertisements will increase youth exposure to alcohol advertising and undermine efforts to reduce underage drinking. This move comes amidst a trend of ever greater numbers of alcohol advertisements appearing on television. From 2001 to 2005, the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth found that youth exposure to alcohol advertisements on television rose by 41 percent, in large part because distilled spirits companies increased their advertising on cable television from 1,973 ads in 2001 at a cost of \$5 million to 46,854 ads in 2005 at a cost of \$122 million.

Alcohol is the number one drug used by young people in the United States, and more youths drink alcohol than smoke cigarettes or marijuana. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, underage drinking causes 5,000 deaths per year of persons under 21. Furthermore, long-term, federally funded studies have shown that the more alcohol advertisements youth are exposed to, the more likely they are to drink.

These findings, combined with calls from the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, state attorneys general, and the American Medical Association for the alcohol industry to reduce youth exposure to its marketing, are strong indicators that WNBC-TV's action is a step backwards and will undermine efforts to prevent and reduce underage drinking.