

**News Release**

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## **New Survey Shows Parents Troubled by Underage Drinking and Alcohol Companies' Advertising Practices**

*Poll finds that parents of teens think alcohol ads have a serious effect on teen drinking habits*

**Washington, DC** - Two-thirds of parents say that seeing and hearing alcohol ads make teens more likely to drink alcohol, and almost three-quarters of parents say that alcohol companies are not doing enough to limit the amount of alcohol advertising that teens see, according to a survey conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates and American Viewpoint for the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University.

[Download full survey results](#)

"Parents get it that alcohol companies' ads are not helping them teach their children about the risks of alcohol use," said Jim O'Hara, executive director of the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University. "Parents want accountability and responsibility from the beer and liquor companies."

Key findings from the survey include:

- **Parents perceive alcohol ads as having a serious effect on teen drinking habits, and they see alcohol companies as falling far short in dealing responsibly with the impact of their advertising on young people.** Fully two-thirds (66%) of parents say that seeing and hearing alcohol ads makes teens more likely to drink alcohol than they otherwise would be. Minority parents are substantially more likely than are parents overall to think alcohol ads make teens more likely to drink, with 76% of African-American parents and 73% of Hispanic parents agreeing that this is the case. Almost three-quarters of parents fault alcohol companies for the amount of ads that teens see and hear.
- **Teens engaging in risky behavior while under the influence of alcohol ranks at the top of a list of concerns that parents have about teenagers' behavior.** Eighty-two percent (82%) of parents say that teens' alcohol-related risky behavior is a problem in society today, including 56% who say that it is a big problem.

- **A wide gap exists between parents' perceptions of their teens' drinking habits and those habits reported by teens themselves.** The largest gap is between 15-to 16-year olds and their parents. Only 31% of parents of teens in this group say that their teen probably or definitely has consumed an alcoholic beverage in the last year, as compared with 60% of teens in this age group who report having done this.
- **Parents reject the argument that alcohol companies' advertising practices are legitimate as they are only trying to make money like any other business.** Parents overwhelmingly (81%) believe that, due to the potentially harmful effects of its products, the alcohol industry has a special responsibility to avoid exposing young people to messages encouraging alcohol consumption.

**Overall, parents find alcohol companies' specific advertising practices to be very troubling.**

Parents express strong disapproval for a variety of specific advertising practices commonly used by alcohol companies. For example, 65% of parents find it very troubling when they learn that alcohol companies produce marketing Web sites that include video games and other features that appeal to youth under the legal drinking age. And, 63% of parents were very troubled to learn that beer companies place their advertisements on television in such a way that young people ages 12 to 20 see two beer advertisements on television for every three seen by an adult.

"The survey results are striking because they show a nearly universal view among parents that alcohol companies should be doing more to reduce teens' exposure," said Geoffrey Garin of Peter D. Hart Research Associates. "This belief is held by large majorities of every demographic subgroup, including two-thirds or more of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats," said Gary Ferguson of American Viewpoint.

**Background on the survey:** From June 2 to 8, 2003, Peter D. Hart Research Associates and American Viewpoint conducted a survey on behalf of the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University among a random national sample of 801 parents of 12- to 17-year-olds, including oversamples of 100 African-American parents and 100 Hispanic parents. The survey carries a margin of error of +3.5%. Data on teen drinking behavior is from the Monitoring the Future Survey, University of Michigan, 2002.

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