

**News Release**

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## **Number of Alcohol Ads Bombarding Teens Rose in 2002**

*Top 15 teen television shows all had alcohol advertising;  
Alcohol industry reforms need monitoring*

**Washington, DC** - Alcohol advertising on television, and youth exposure to it, grew substantially in 2002 from 2001, and although new industry marketing codes were announced in 2003, they will still allow for substantial youth overexposure to alcohol ads, according to a study released today by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University.

The Center found that the total number of alcohol ads on network, local and cable television increased to 289,381 in 2002, a 39% hike from 2001. Spending grew by 22%, to more than \$990 million in 2002. Youth 12-20 were more likely on a per capita basis than adults to have seen 66,218 ads, a 30% increase over 2001.

"This dramatic increase in alcohol ads seen by our children in 2002 suggests the problem got worse," said Jim O'Hara, executive director of the Center. "While a step in the right direction, the industry's new marketing codes lag far behind its aggressive marketing practices."

**Key findings from the study include:**

- **Alcohol advertising increased substantially.** Driving the 39% increase in ads and the 22% increase in spending overall were significant increases in distilled spirits and low-alcohol refresher television advertising - 418% and 147% increases in spending respectively.
- **More ads are overexposing youth.** Youth 12-20 were more likely on a per capita basis than adults to have seen 66,218 ads, a 30% increase over 2001. These ads were purchased at a cost to the industry of more than \$118 million. In 2002, youth ages 12-20 saw two beer and distilled spirits ads on television for every three seen by adults, and nearly three advertisements for low-alcohol refreshers for every four seen by adults.
- **Teen programming is filled with alcohol advertising.** All 15 of the television shows most popular with teens ages 12-17 had alcohol ads. Throughout 2002, alcohol companies placed 5,085 ads on programs such as Survivor, Fear Factor and That - 70s Show, at a

total cost of nearly \$53 million. Spending on this group of shows increased by 60% compared with 2001. Six of the shows - five on WB, one on Fox - had disproportionately youthful audiences.

- **Industry guidelines inadequate.** Alcohol industry self-regulation is the primary means of regulating alcohol advertising's exposure to youth. The current industry standard, announced in September 2003, sets the maximum permissible youth audience composition for alcohol advertising at 30%. Because youth ages 12-20 are only 13.3% of the national TV viewing audience, a threshold of 30% allows alcohol ads to be placed on programs where there are twice as many youth as in the viewing population.

A more protective threshold was offered by the Institute of Medicine (IOM). In its landmark report, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, published in September 2003, the IOM recommended that the industry move toward a threshold of 15% youth audience composition. The IOM threshold would leave 77% of television programming still accessible to alcohol advertising, yet in 2002 it would have required advertisers to pull, or move to programming less likely to be seen by youth, 61,741 ads that accounted for 40% of youth advertising impressions.

"This report provides further support for the IOM recommendation that alcohol companies adopt a standard for youth audience composition that is closer to the actual proportion of youth 12-20 in the general population," said David H. Jernigan, CAMY research director. "The data demonstrate that the alcohol industry needs to make major changes in its advertising just to comply with its current code. But parents and policymakers need to understand that even this industry standard is offering false hope - youth will still be overexposed to alcohol advertising."

**About this report:** CAMY commissioned Virtual Media Resources (VMR) of Natick, Massachusetts to analyze all of the alcohol product advertising on television in 2002. This report is based on industry-standard data sources and methods that are available to ad agencies and advertisers as they make their decisions about where to place their advertising. Advertising occurrence and expenditure data came from TNS Media Intelligence/CMR (formerly known as CMR or Competitive Media Reporting). Audience data came from Nielsen Media Research, the industry-standard source for television ratings.

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