

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Alcohol Advertising Abounds in Magazines Read by Youth from 2001 to 2003

Spirits, beer and alcopop ads continued to overexpose underage youth through 2003

Washington, DC - America's teenagers saw significantly more beer and distilled spirits advertising in magazines between 2001 and 2003 than legal-age adults, as measured on a per capita basis, according to a [study released today](#) by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at Georgetown University.

CAMY's study analyzed 10,455 magazine alcohol ads costing almost \$1 billion between 2001 and 2003, and found that 56% of the ad spending was placed in magazines with a disproportionate readership of underage youth, ages 12 to 20.

The Beer Institute and the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) revamped their marketing codes in October 2003 and called on their members not to place ads where the underage audience is 30% or greater. CAMY's study found some progress toward the 30% threshold in 2003.

"The new threshold represents a step forward, but, as our study shows, it still does not offer adequate public health protection for our children," said Jim O'Hara, CAMY executive director. "A 30% threshold allows double exposure. It permits the placement of ads in magazines with a disproportionate share of underage youth readers since they only make up roughly 15% of the population. There is still too much alcohol advertising reaching a population for whom the product is illegal."

In reviewing the placement of the 10,455 ads using an advertising-industry standard measure of gross rating points, CAMY found:

- **More beer advertising "overexposed" youth, but distilled spirits ads delivered the greatest volume of alcohol advertising to youth.** Youth ages 12 to 20 were 52%, 57% and 48% more likely per capita to see beer advertising in magazines than adults age 21+ in 2001, 2002 and 2003, respectively. However, the volume of distilled spirits advertising in magazines was so much greater than that for any other beverage

category that spirits ads continued to dominate in magazine alcohol advertising seen by youth. In fact, distilled spirits magazine ads reached more than 90% of 12- to 20-year-olds between 2001 and 2003, with youth seeing an average of 141 spirits ads in magazines in 2001 and 94 spirits ads in 2003.

- **Beer advertising spending jumped between 2002 and 2003.** Distilled spirits ads represented 70% or more of all alcohol advertising dollars in magazines during each of the three years measured in the report. However, beer companies spent \$24 million more to advertise in magazines in 2003 than they did in 2001, and accounted for nearly 17% of magazine alcohol ad spending in 2003, up from 9.9% the year before.
- **In 2003 alone, more than 50% of the \$326 million spent to advertise alcohol in national magazines, as well as almost half of the 3,241 ads, went to magazines more likely to be read by underage youth than adults on a per capita basis.** In each year between 2001 and 2003, more than 30 brands placed all of their advertising in magazines with disproportionately high youth readership.

Impact of Advertising Policies:

In September 2003, the trade associations for the beer and distilled spirits industries announced that their members would no longer place ads in publications with youth audiences of greater than 30%. CAMY's report shows that the alcohol industry began moving closer to this threshold before it was even announced. Both spending and number of alcohol ads in magazines with over 30% youth in their audiences had begun to decrease by 2003.

However, the industry is still far from reaching the more proportionate 15% youth audience threshold proposed by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine report presented to Congress that same month: 56% of the spending on the alcohol advertisements from 2001 through 2003 studied for this report, as well as almost 50% of the ads, went to magazines that youth ages 12 to 20 were more likely to read on a per capita basis than adults 21 and above.

"The average teen drinker begins to drink alcohol at age 13. If alcohol advertisers had followed a youth audience standard that more closely represents the youth at risk, they would have reduced underage youth exposure to their advertising substantially in 2003," said David Jernigan, PhD, CAMY research director. "It's hard to argue with a change that would help alcohol companies better reach their legal-age audience and also do so much good for our kids."

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