

News Release

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Study Shows Dramatic Growth in Cable TV Ad Dollars Spent by Alcohol Companies

Children Continue to Be Overexposed to Advertisements Glamorizing Alcohol Use

Washington, DC - In a [study released today](#), the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at Georgetown University found that alcohol companies significantly increased their advertising activity on cable television. More importantly, the number of cable network alcohol ads that were more likely to be seen by underage youth than adults on a per capita basis rose 97% from 2001 to 2004.

CAMY, which is supported by grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, conducted an analysis of more than one million television ads placed between 2001 and 2004 on broadcast, cable and local television and worth almost \$3.5 billion. This analysis shows high levels of underage youth exposure to these ads despite the industry's self-regulation of its marketing and advertising practices and despite repeated public opinion poll findings that parents want their children exposed to less of this advertising.

"Exposure to alcohol ads influences youth drinking behavior," said CAMY research director Dr. David Jernigan. "Kids need to see fewer of these messages glamorizing alcohol use, not more."

Key findings of the analysis include:

- **Overall spending on alcohol advertising on television grew from 2001 to 2004.** Annual expenditures grew from \$774 million to \$915 million between 2001 and 2004 and totaled almost \$3.5 billion during this period.
- **Spending on cable advertising grew dramatically.** Distilled spirits advertisers increased the number of ads they placed on cable networks by 5,687%, from 645 ads in 2001 to 37,328 in 2004. Distilled spirits advertisers' spending on cable networks increased 3,392%, from \$1.5 million to \$53.6 million. At the same time, beer marketers also substantially increased their advertising on cable networks. The number of beer ads was up 113% during this period, from 38,810 ads to 82,559, and beer spending on cable networks increased 54%, from \$137 million to \$211 million.

- **Youth exposure to alcohol advertising shifted to cable television.** Every year from 2001 to 2004, more alcohol advertising reached youth on cable networks than on broadcast networks. In 2001, youth ages 12 to 20 saw a little more than one alcohol ad for every two seen by adults age 21 and older on broadcast networks. That ratio had dropped to a little less than one for every two by 2004. However, on cable television alcohol companies exposed youth to three ads for every four seen by adults in 2001 and increased that ratio to nearly four for every five by 2004.
- **Overexposure of youth to alcohol advertising overall remains constant.** Youth overexposure to alcohol advertising occurs when youth are over-represented in the audience viewing an alcohol ad relative to their presence in the general population, and thus are more likely per capita to see the ad. Throughout this period, the percentage of alcohol ads on television that were more likely per capita to be seen by underage youth than adults remained relatively stable, with 23% falling into that category in 2004. Almost half (44%) of youth exposure to alcohol ads on television in 2004 came from overexposing ads.
- **Teen programming remains popular with alcohol advertisers.** The CAMY analysis shows that alcohol advertising was seen on all of the 15 shows most popular with teen audiences, ages 12 to 17, each year from 2002 to 2004.
- **The alcohol industry is not meeting its own standards.** The study shows that the voluntary industry guideline restricting placement of ads to shows where 30% or less of the audience is under the age of 21 has not been met overall. While the percentage of alcohol ads on broadcast network television above the 30% youth threshold dropped to a negligible 0.4% in 2004, the percentage of alcohol ads on cable network television above the 30% youth threshold remains high. In 2004, 13.4% of the alcohol industry's ads on cable exceeded the industry's own standard. In fact, the number of cable network alcohol ads above the 30% youth threshold actually increased to 18,027 in 2004, up from 9,235 in 2001.

"Parents, families and teachers face the tragic consequences of teen alcohol use every day," said Dr. Jernigan. "Alcohol companies need to adopt more effective standards to protect our kids from exposure to a barrage of advertisements for a product they are not allowed to purchase."

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