

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Alcohol Ads in Magazines Reaching Fewer Underage Youth

Ten Percent of Brands Cause More Than Half of Youth Exposure, Slowing Progress

Washington, DC - Youth exposure to alcohol advertising in magazines declined 31% from 2001 to 2004, but -- largely because of the advertising of a few brands -- youth continued to be exposed more per capita than adults of legal age to advertising for beer, distilled spirits and alcopops, according to a new report released today by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at Georgetown University.

"This decrease in youth exposure to alcohol ads in magazines is an encouraging development and a step in the right direction, but we need to see this kind of improvement across all the alcohol brands," said David Jernigan, CAMY executive director.

Titled [Youth Exposure to Alcohol Advertising in Magazines, 2001 to 2004: Good News, Bad News](#), the report also found that:

- **Youth saw 15% more beer advertising, 10% more distilled spirits advertising and 33% more advertising for alcopops per capita than adults age 21 and over in 2004.** In contrast, in 2001, youth saw 52% more beer advertising, 33% more distilled spirits advertising, and 63% more advertising for alcopops per capita than adults age 21 and over.
- **Ten percent of the brands advertising in magazines in 2004 were responsible for more than 50% of youth exposure.** Of the 211 alcohol brands advertising in 2004 in magazines reviewed for this report, 22 brands accounted for more than 50% of youth exposure, and about a third of all spending.
- **In 2004, only 3% of ads, and less than 2% of spending, were in magazines that exceed the alcohol industry's voluntary threshold of 30% youth readerships.** Trade associations for the beer and distilled spirits industries set this threshold in 2003, announcing that their members would no longer place advertising in publications with youth audiences greater than 30%.

- **Nearly 42% of alcohol ads placed in 2004 were in magazines where the youth audience exceeded 15%, roughly the proportion of youth 12-20 in the general population 12 and above.** When they examined the issue of underage drinking in 2003, the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine recommended that alcohol companies immediately adopt a 25% maximum for youth audiences for their advertising, and move towards a proportional 15% threshold.

Federal Trade Commissioner Pamela Jones Harbour, speaking for herself and not on behalf of the Commission or any other Commissioner, commented, "I am pleased that the overall exposure rate of youths to alcohol ads in magazines has dropped significantly. I am disappointed, however, to learn that 22 brands apparently are responsible for most of the continued exposure of our nation's youth to alcohol ads. I have encouraged those in the business of advertising alcohol to go the extra mile to ensure that the industry's 70 percent standard is met - even if that means aiming for an even higher standard, such as an adult audience of 75 percent or more. Underage drinking causes serious problems for young people and for others affected by their drinking."

The report also concludes that independent monitoring of youth exposure to alcohol advertising is having an effect. Trade associations for beer and for distilled spirits companies have issued more detailed guidelines regarding advertising placement, and the Federal Trade Commission has announced plans to solicit information from alcohol companies to assess compliance with the 30% standard.

"Underage drinking is the number one illegal drug problem among our nation's young people," remarked Jernigan. "Ongoing independent monitoring of youth exposure to alcohol advertising gives policy makers and parents information they need to reduce the odds that kids will drink."

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