

News Release
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Youth Exposure to Alcohol Ads in Magazines Declined from 2001 to 2005

Substantial alcohol advertising remains in magazines with disproportionate youth audiences

Washington, DC - Youth exposure to alcohol advertising in magazines declined 49% from 2001 to 2005, according to a new report released today by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at Georgetown University.

The study also found, however, that a substantial portion of the alcohol industry's advertising remains in magazines with disproportionate youth (12-20 year-old) audience composition: 44% of advertisements and 50% of spending in 2005. Magazines with disproportionate youth audience composition were defined as those with youth audiences greater than 15%, the proportion of youth ages 12-20 in the general population age 12 and above. Most alcohol companies have successfully shifted their advertising to publications that meet the voluntary maximum of 30% youth audience composition adopted by the beer and distilled spirits trade associations in 2003. According to CAMY's report, [It Can Be Done: Reductions in Youth Exposure to Alcohol Advertising in Magazines, 2001-2005](#), less than 1% of alcohol advertisements and alcohol advertising dollars in 2005 were in magazines with youth readership exceeding the industry standard, down from a high of 11% in 2002.

Also today, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published an article using CAMY data in its [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#). Figures in the two studies differ slightly because CAMY analyzed per capita exposure while CDC reported total exposure for each age group. The CDC publication emphasized the need for the industry's standards to be strengthened to prevent advertising in youth-oriented magazines, and called for continued independent monitoring of alcohol marketing to youth to further assess changes in youth exposure to alcohol advertising in magazines and other media.

"The alcohol industry has done a good job of following its voluntary standard when it comes to advertising in magazines," said David Jernigan, executive director of CAMY, "but the standard itself is not strong enough to adequately protect youth from needless exposure to this advertising."

The CAMY report analyzed 16,635 alcohol advertisements placed in national magazines between 2001 and 2005 at a cost of nearly \$1.7 billion. The report also found that:

- Alcohol advertising in magazines declined overall, but youth exposure fell substantially more than adult exposure. From 2001 to 2005, youth exposure fell by 49%, while the number of alcohol advertisements placed per year fell by 20%, and adult exposure dropped by 30%. These declines reflect a trend of alcohol advertisers moving from magazines to television.
- As CAMY has previously reported, during this same period youth exposure to alcohol advertising on television increased by 41%, so that combined youth exposure to alcohol advertising in these two media changed very little between 2001 and 2005.
- In 2005, advertising placed in magazines with disproportionate youth audiences accounted for more than 82% of total youth exposure to alcohol advertising in magazines, but only 55% of adult exposure.
- The majority of alcohol brands (127 out of 201 brands) had either none or less than half of their advertising in publications with disproportionate youth readerships in 2005. However, 36 brands had all of their advertising, and 38 brands had the majority of their advertising in magazines such as Rolling Stone, Cosmopolitan, Stuff and Maxim that were more likely to be read by youth than adults.
- More than half of youth exposure to alcohol advertising in magazines came from 18 brands, 16 of which exposed youth ages 12 to 20 more effectively to their advertising than adults age 21 and over. These 18 brands accounted for approximately 36% of all alcohol advertising spending in magazines in 2005.

In 2003, the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine recommended that alcohol companies move their advertising toward magazines with a maximum of 15% youth audiences, a figure roughly proportionate to the presence of persons ages 12 to 20 in the population age 12 and above. At that time, alcohol industry trade associations changed their voluntary youth audience maximum from 50% to 30%.

In December 2006, President Bush signed into law the Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act (or STOP Act). Among other things, the STOP Act requires the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to report annually on rates of exposure of youth to positive and negative messages youth about alcohol in the mass media.

In March of this year, the U.S. Surgeon General called on alcohol companies to ensure that "the placement of alcohol advertising, promotions and other means of marketing do not disproportionately expose youth to messages about alcohol."

"Alcohol advertisers have shown they can change their practices," said Dr. Jernigan, "but there is still more to be done to shield youth from the influence of alcohol advertising." He added, "This is the 22nd report on youth exposure to alcohol advertising issued by CAMY since its founding in 2002. In that time, youth exposure to alcohol advertising in magazines has fallen substantially, and industry associations have adopted clearer guidelines for where and how ads should be placed. Based on experience to date, ongoing monitoring and reporting of alcohol industry advertising practices will be helpful in documenting and influencing the behavior of these advertisers and reducing youth exposure to alcohol advertising.

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