

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Alcohol Spending on Radio Falls But Ads Still Reaching Youth

Spending fell 38% from 2001 to 2006; One-third of Alcohol Ads More Likely to be Heard by Youth than Adults in 2006

Washington, DC - Alcohol industry spending on radio advertising decreased by 38 percent between 2001 and 2006, but more than a third of alcohol radio ads in 2006 were still more likely to be heard by underage youth than adults on a per capita basis, according to a [monitoring report](#) released today from the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at Georgetown University.

In 2003, trade groups for beer and distilled spirits companies announced that their members would no longer place ads where the underage youth audience was greater than 30%, but in 2006 one in twelve alcohol radio ads were placed above that voluntary threshold. In five markets -- Washington, D.C., Seattle, Philadelphia, Portland, OR and Salt Lake City -- more than half of alcohol product advertisements were placed when youth were more likely to hear them.

"The assumption that iPods and the Internet have displaced radio as a primary source of entertainment for young people is wrong," said David Jernigan, CAMY executive director. "Young people ages 12 to 17 are the most likely group to be listening from 7 p.m. to midnight and our findings show that alcohol ads are still finding their way to too many young ears."

Alcohol is the number one drug problem among youth, and underage alcohol use causes 5,000 deaths per year among people under 21, according to the U.S. Surgeon General. Numerous long-term studies have found that the more young people are exposed to alcohol advertising, the more likely they are to drink.

Using data gathered from TNS Media Intelligence and Arbitron, CAMY commissioned Virtual Media Resources to analyze 337,602 alcohol product advertisements placed on stations in 28 of the largest radio markets in the United States in 2006. Key findings included:

- More than a third -- 120,299 or 35.6% -- of the radio advertisements for alcohol were placed on programming that youth ages 12 to 20 were more likely per capita to hear

than adults.

- More than half (58%) of youth exposure to alcohol advertising on the radio came from advertising placed on programming that youth were more likely to hear than adults.
- Approximately one in twelve, or 27,682, alcohol advertisements were on programming with youth audience compositions in excess of the alcohol industry's voluntary 30% threshold. Eighteen of 143 brands placed 20% or more of their advertisements above the threshold.
- Twenty-six alcohol brands placed more than half of their advertisements on programming more likely to be heard by youth per capita than by adults.
- Four brands -- Licor 43, Yuengling Traditional Lager, Remy Martin V.S.O.P. Cognac, and Bud Ice Beer -- gained more than half of their youth exposure from advertising placed on programming with youth audiences greater than 30%.

"Four years after alcohol companies adopted a new threshold for youth audiences, their ad placements are still missing the mark," said Jernigan. "Ongoing monitoring is crucial to ensuring that alcohol companies do all they can to shield our youth from their advertising."

In 2003, the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine recommended that alcohol companies move toward a 15% threshold for youth audiences, since this is roughly the proportion of youth in the general population. In 2006, Congress passed and President Bush signed into law the Sober Truth On Preventing Underage Drinking Act (or STOP Act) requiring, among other things, that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services report annually on rates of exposure of youth to positive and negative messages youth about alcohol in the mass media. Although this reporting has been authorized by Congress, funding for it has not yet been appropriated.

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