

News Release
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Alcohol Industry Reforms Make Slight Progress in Reducing Youth Exposure to Alcohol Advertising

Washington, DC - Alcohol companies made small progress between 2001 and 2006 in reducing youth exposure to their advertising despite industry reforms announced in 2003, according to a new study of advertising in magazines and on television released today from the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at Georgetown University.

Although alcohol industry trade associations adopted a stricter youth audience composition standard in 2003, historic increases in cable television advertising by distilled spirits brands offset declines in youth exposure to alcohol advertising in magazines. The drop in youth exposure over the five-year period in both media was 6.1%. However, 46% of youth exposure across both media in 2006 continued to come from placements in magazines or programming that youth ages 12 to 20 were more likely per capita to see than adults. The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, the U.S. Surgeon General and 20 state Attorneys General have all recommended eliminating this disproportionate exposure as well.

The CAMY monitoring report, "[Youth Exposure to Alcohol Advertising on Television and in National Magazines, 2001 to 2006](#)," analyzed 19,466 alcohol advertisements placed in national magazines and 1,693,594 alcohol advertisements placed on cable and broadcast network and local broadcast television from 2001 to 2006.

"Youth exposure to alcohol advertising in magazines and on television during this period tells two very different stories," said CAMY executive director David Jernigan. "Most of the progress made in magazines was undercut by increases in television advertising."

Key findings of the report include:

- From 2001 to 2006, the number of alcohol advertisements placed in national magazines fell by 22% (from 3,616 to 2,831). During the same period, the number of alcohol advertisements on television grew by 33% (from 225,619 to 299,475).

- From 2001 to 2006, youth exposure to alcohol advertisements in national magazines fell by 50%, while youth exposure to television advertisements grew by 30%.
- Overall, youth exposure to alcohol advertising in the two media declined slightly (6.1%).
- Youth overexposure to alcohol advertising on television remained virtually unchanged: in 2001, 37% and in 2006, 36% of youth alcohol advertising exposure came from advertising on programs with disproportionate youth audiences. In magazines, 89% of youth exposure in 2001 and 77% in 2006 came from overexposing placements.
- During each year since 2001, alcohol advertisements were placed on at least 13 of the 15 television programs with the largest teen audiences (13 of 15 programs in 2001, 15 of 15 programs in 2003, and 14 of 15 programs in all other years, including 2006).
- Distilled spirits companies increased their spending on television more than 20-fold from 2001 to 2006, from over \$7.1 million (5,702 advertisements) in 2001, to over \$142.4 million (62,821 advertisements) in 2006.

This study comes on the heels of recent media reports that distilled spirits brands have begun airing advertisements on WNBC-TV in New York, a break with parent company NBC's long-term, voluntary ban on distilled spirits advertising on broadcast television.

In September 2003, the Beer Institute and the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) announced that their members would limit placements of advertisements to media with youth audiences of 30% or less. Prior to that, the standard was 50%. By 2006, 3% of alcohol advertisements in national magazines (90 advertisements) were placed in magazines with youth audiences larger than 30%; for television, the number was 6% (or 18,220 advertisements).

"When the alcohol industry announced the 30% youth audience standard in 2003, there was hope that youth exposure to alcohol advertisements would decline across all media," said CAMY executive director David Jernigan. "Instead, the alcohol companies shifted their advertising dollars from magazines to television, where too many ads are still on programs more likely to be seen by youth per capita than by adults, and young people are paying the price. As the U.S. Surgeon General has recommended, ongoing monitoring of youth exposure to alcohol marketing is a necessary component of efforts to reduce underage drinking."

Alcohol is the number-one drug problem among youth, and underage alcohol use causes 5,000 deaths per year of persons under 21, according to the U.S. Surgeon General. Long-term, federally-funded studies have shown that the more alcohol advertising youth are exposed to, the more likely they are to drink.

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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