

EXPOSURE OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN YOUTH TO ALCOHOL ADVERTISING

Executive Summary

The marketing of alcohol products in African-American communities has, on occasion, stirred national controversy and met with fierce resistance from African Americans and others. Charges of over-concentration of alcohol billboards in African-American neighborhoods have prompted protests and legislative fights in Chicago, Milwaukee, Baltimore, Los Angeles and elsewhere.¹ Battles over the heavy marketing to the African-American community of malt liquor, a stronger-than-average beer, resulted in the banning of one new brand, PowerMaster, in the summer of 1991, and fines against the makers of another, St. Ides Malt Liquor, by the states of New York and Oregon, for advertising practices that allegedly targeted youth and glamorized gang activity.²

These local actions have also extended to efforts to reduce the availability of alcohol by restricting or shutting down alcohol outlets in numerous cities, including Chicago,³ Los Angeles⁴ and Oakland.⁵ They have garnered occasional attention in the mainstream news media and prominent spokespersons such as former Surgeon General Antonia Novello, who made the issue of alcohol marketing in African-American and Hispanic communities a focus during her tenure.

Despite these occasional media and community spotlights on the marketing of alcohol products in the African-American community, there has been no systematic review of the industry's advertising directed to the nation's second-

largest minority. The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) commissioned Virtual Media Resources (VMR) to audit the exposure of African-American youth to alcohol advertising in magazines and on radio and television in 2002. In previous reports, the Center has found widespread and pervasive overexposure of all youth⁶ to alcohol advertising in magazines and on television and radio. In this context of youth being more likely than adults to see much of alcohol advertising, this analysis compares the exposure of African-American youth to that of non-African-American youth, and the Center finds that African-American youth were even more overexposed to alcohol advertising than non-African-American youth.

¹ See e.g., D. Jernigan and P. Wright, eds., *Making News, Changing Policy: Using Media Advocacy to Change Alcohol and Tobacco Policy* (Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 1994); B. Gallegos, *Chasing the Frogs and Camels out of Los Angeles: The Movement to Limit Alcohol and Tobacco Billboards: A Case Study* (San Rafael, CA: The Marin Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems, 1999).

² D. Jernigan and P. Wright, eds., *Making News, Changing Policy*.

³ A. Tate, "Revitalizing Roseland: Chicago Church Takes on Liquor Industry," in *Case Histories in Alcohol Policy*, ed. J. Streicker (San Francisco: San Francisco General Hospital, 2000), 75-98.

⁴ M. Lee, *Drowning in Alcohol: Retail Outlet Density, Economic Decline, and Revitalization in South L.A.* (San Rafael, CA: The Marin Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems, 1998).

⁵ J.F. Mosher and R.M. Works, *Confronting Sacramento: State Preemption, Community Control, and Alcohol-Outlet Blight in Two Inner-City Communities* (San Rafael, CA: The Marin Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems, 1994).

⁶ For this report, unless otherwise noted, youth are defined as persons ages 12-20, and adults are defined as persons age 21 and over. Overexposure is defined as greater exposure to the advertising by a given segment of the population, relative to their proportion of the total population, resulting in a higher likelihood that members of that population will see, hear or read the advertising. Prior CAMY reports are available at www.camy.org/research/.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
CENTER ON ALCOHOL MARKETING AND YOUTH	3
ABOUT THIS REPORT	4
INTRODUCTION	4
MAGAZINES	4
RADIO	8
TELEVISION	10
CONCLUSION	12
APPENDIX A	13
APPENDIX B	14

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June 19, 2003

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Specifically, the Center finds that in 2002:

- **Alcohol advertising was placed on all 15 of the television programs most popular with African-American youth.** Alcohol advertisers spent \$11.7 million in 2002 to place ads on all 15 of the programs most popular with African-American youth,⁷ including *Bernie Mac*, *The Simpsons*, *King of the Hill*, *My Wife and Kids*, and *The Wonderful World of Disney*.
- **Alcohol advertising in magazines overexposed African-American youth compared to non-African-American youth, reached underage African Americans more effectively than young adult African Americans, and exhibited significant concentration of brands and magazines.**

— Compared to non-African-American youth, African-American youth saw 66% more beer and ale and 81% more distilled spirits magazine advertisements in 2002, and 45% more magazine advertisements for malternatives, alcopops and other “low-alcohol refreshers.”⁸ This means that 96% of African-American youth, on average, saw 171 alcohol ads, whereas 83% of non-African-American youth, on average, saw 111 ads.

— For beer, distilled spirits and the so-called low-alcohol refreshers, alcohol advertising in magazines

reached more of the African-American underage audience with more ads than it reached African-American young adults, ages 21-34. The alcohol industry routinely refers to 21-34 year-olds as its target audience.⁹

— Fifteen alcohol brands accounted for more than half of the magazine advertising reaching underage African-American youth, and the alcohol industry placed 80% of its advertising reaching this audience in 13 publications.

- **Alcohol advertising on radio overexposed African-American youth compared to non-African-American youth and was concentrated in two formats and five markets.**

— African-American youth heard 12% more beer advertising and 56% more ads for distilled spirits than non-African-American youth.¹⁰

— Two formats — Urban Contemporary and Rhythmic Contemporary Hit—accounted for almost 70% of the alcohol advertising reaching underage African-American youth on radio.

— Five radio markets—New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston-Galveston, and Washington, D.C.—accounted for more than 70% of the alcohol advertising

reaching underage African-American youth.

Why the Concern

Alcohol is the drug most widely used by African-American youth.¹¹ Although African-American youth drink less than other youth (according to the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, 19.8% of African Americans between 12 and 20 used alcohol in the past 30 days, compared to 31.6% of whites, and 10.5% of African-American youth reported “binge” drinking in the past month, compared to 21.7% of whites),¹² as they age, African Americans suffer more from alcohol-related diseases than other groups in the population. The age-adjusted death rate from alcohol-related diseases for non-Hispanic African Americans is 31% greater than for the general population.¹³ National surveys have found that while frequent heavy drinking among white 18-29 year-old males dropped between 1984 and 1995, rates of heavy drinking and alcohol problems remain-ed high among African Americans in the same age group.¹⁴

Alcohol use contributes to the three leading causes of death among African-American 12-20 year-olds: homicide, unintentional injuries (including car crashes), and suicide.¹⁵ Research has shown that young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who wait until age 21 to become drinkers, while those who start

⁷ These are the fifteen prime time, regularly-scheduled programs drawing the largest numbers of African-American youth in November 2002.

⁸ Many of the beverages in this category contain 5% alcohol, more than most beers.

⁹ See e.g., Howard Riell, “Half Full or Half Empty?,” *Beverage Dynamics*, 112, no. 3 (May 1, 2002): 8; Rebecca Zimoch, “Malternatives: A new brew rides to the rescue,” *Grocery Headquarters* 68, no. 4 (April 1, 2002): 83; Sarah Theodore, “Beer’s on the up and up,” *Beverage Industry* 92, no. 4 (April 1, 2001): 18.

¹⁰ Radio data are based on a sample drawn from one weekday per week in 19 markets by Media Monitors Incorporated (MMI).

¹¹ J.M. Wallace Jr. et al., “The Epidemiology of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use among Black Youth,” *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 60 (1999): 800-809.

¹² National Institute on Drug Abuse, *The NHSDA Report: Alcohol Use by Persons Under the Legal Drinking Age of 21* (Rockville, MD: Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 9 May 2003).

¹³ A.M. Miniño et al., “Deaths: Final Data for 2000,” *National Vital Statistics Reports* 50, no. 15 (2002): Table 27.

¹⁴ R. Caetano, C.L. Clark, “Trends in Alcohol-Related Problems among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics: 1984-1995,” *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* 22, no. 2 (1998): 534-538.

¹⁵ National Center for Health Statistics Vital Statistics System, “10 Leading Causes of Death, United States 2000, Black, Both Sexes,” in *WISQARS Leading Causes of Death Reports, 1999-2000*, <<http://webapp.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/leadcaus10.html>> (cited 18 May 2003); American Medical Association, “Facts about Youth and Alcohol,” <www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/3566.html> (cited 8 April 2003).

to drink prior to age 14 are more likely to experience alcohol-related injury.¹⁶

African-American youth culture already abounds with alcohol products and imagery. A content analysis of 1,000 of the most popular songs from 1996 to 1997 found that references to alcohol were more frequent in rap (47% of songs had alcohol references) than other genres such as country-western (13%), top 40 (12%), alternative rock (10%), and heavy metal (4%); and that 48% of these rap songs had product placements or mentions of specific alcohol brand names.¹⁷ Rap music videos analyzed around the same time contained the

highest percentage of depictions of alcohol use of any music genre appearing on MTV, BET, CMT and VH-1.¹⁸ An analysis of alcohol depictions in rap music found that alcohol use was portrayed as conveying elements of disinhibition, rebellion, identity, pleasure, sensuality, and personal power.¹⁹

African-American youth are increasingly viewed by marketers as trendsetters for the entire youth population. While inner-city African Americans ages 15 to 19 were only 8% of all teens in the mid-1990s, "...for most of the 1990s, hordes of suburban kids—both black and white—have followed inner-city idols'

[sic] in adopting everything from music to clothing to language.... Targeting this relatively small group of teens may open the door to the larger, more affluent, white, suburban market."²⁰

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has noted that, "while many factors influence an underage person's drinking decisions, including among other things parents, peers, and media, there is reason to believe that advertising plays a role."²¹ Research studies have found that exposure to and liking of alcohol advertisements affect young people's beliefs about drinking, intentions to drink, and actual drinking behavior.²²

Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth

www.camy.org

The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University monitors the marketing practices of the alcohol industry to focus attention and action on industry practices that jeopardize the health and safety of America's youth. Reducing high rates of underage alcohol consumption and the suffering caused by alcohol-related injuries and deaths among young people requires using the public health strategies of limiting the access to and the appeal of alcohol to underage persons.

The Center is supported by grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to Georgetown University.

Virtual Media Resources

The Center commissioned Virtual Media Resources to conduct this analysis. Virtual Media Resources is a media research, planning, market analysis and consulting firm based in Natick, Massachusetts, serving communications organizations and marketers in a wide variety of market segments and media. VMR was established in 1992 to provide an independent research firm serving advertising agencies, and has grown to service over 100 clients across the United States and Canada, including retail, publishing, financial, automotive, public health and other fields.

Acknowledgements

The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth would like to thank the following researchers for their independent review of this report. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the foundations or the reviewers.

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¹⁶ B.F. Grant and D.A. Dawson, "Age at Onset of Alcohol Use and Its Association with DSM-IV Alcohol Abuse and Dependence: Results from the National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey," *Journal of Substance Abuse* 9 (1997): 103-110; R. Hingson et al, *Age of Drinking Onset and Unintentional Injury Involvement after Drinking* (Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Jan. 2001).

¹⁷ D.F. Roberts et al., *Substance Use in Popular Movies and Music* (Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 1999).

¹⁸ R.H. DuRant et al., "Tobacco and Alcohol Use Behaviors Portrayed in Music Videos: A Content Analysis," *American Journal of Public Health* 87, no. 7 (1997): 1131-1135.

¹⁹ D. Herd, "Contesting Culture: Alcohol-Related Identity Movements in Contemporary African-American Communities," *Contemporary Drug Problems* (Winter 1993): 739-758.

²⁰ M. Spiegler, "Marketing Street Culture: Bringing Hip-Hop Style to the Mainstream," *American Demographics* (November 1996), 30, 34.

²¹ Federal Trade Commission, *Self-Regulation in the Alcohol Industry: A Review of Industry Efforts to Avoid Promoting Alcohol to Underage Consumers* (Washington, DC: FTC, 1999), 4.

²² Joel Grube, "Television Alcohol Portrayals, Alcohol Advertising and Alcohol Expectancies among Children and Adolescents," in *Effects of the Mass Media on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol*, eds. S.E. Martin and P. Mail (Bethesda: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 1995), 105-121; S.E. Martin et al, "Alcohol Advertising and Youth," *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* 26, no. 6 (2002): 900-906.

About This Report

This report is based on data sources and methods that are available to ad agencies and advertisers as they make their decisions about where to place their advertising. VMR used industry-standard sources and adhered to industry-standard methodologies in conducting this analysis. Advertising occurrence and expenditure data came from TNS Media Intelligence/CMR (formerly known as Competitive Media Reporting or CMR) and Media Monitors Inc. (MMI). Audience data for magazines came from Simmons Market Research Bureau

(SMRB), drawing on their national adult and teen surveys published in the fall of 2002, with a combined total of 22,362 respondents. Audience data for radio came from Arbitron Ratings, based on a total of 441,389 respondents. Additional data on television and magazine audiences for this report came directly from networks and magazines.

The measures in this report are standard to the advertising research field but may not be familiar to the general reader. “Reach” refers to the percentage of a tar-

get population that has the potential to see an ad or a campaign through exposure to selected media. “Frequency” indicates the number of times individuals are exposed to an ad or campaign, and is most often expressed as an average number of exposures. “Gross rating points” or “GRPs” are the product of reach and frequency, and as such are a standard measure of total advertising exposure. Further information on sources and methodology used may be found in Appendix A. Appendix B provides a glossary of advertising research terminology.