Exchange is a quarterly newsletter of the American Medical Association Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, which manages a number of programs and initiatives to reduce high-risk drinking among college students and reduce underage drinking through coalitions.

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Youth to Beer Industry: Don’t target me.
Underage Drinking Events Escalate

Violence is perhaps the most troubling consequence of alcohol consumption by underage youth. Numerous studies from the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMPY) and the Office of the Surgeon General have shown that exposure to advertising and marketing can have significant consequences. In addition, underground drinking has been linked to an increased risk of violence, and the American Medical Association has called for increased efforts to address this issue.

According to the new AMA policies, the organization will work with medical specialty societies, which administer the physician-focused programs—Reducing Underage Drinking Through Coalitions and A Matter of Degree— to address community efforts and medical consequences of drinking by young people, found that underground drinking is associated with brain damage—possibly permanent—as well as learning and memory deficits and impaired intellectual development.


Keg Tracking Legislation Trend Continues

Even if the parents don’t intend in tragedy, those parties are disruptive to communities when neighbors complain about noise, violence and destruction of property.

Another state that saw success was Louisiana, whose law became effective in August.

“We have been working on the law for seven years. Keg parties have been a real concern especially in our rural areas,” said Shannon Sires, director of the Louisiana Alliance to Prevent Underage Drinking. In Missouri, several communities had legislated regulating keg sales, but people would not buy the law by going to a nearby community without keg tracking.

“We needed a statewide- wide law that shows all adults from providing kegs to kids,” said Marcy Naid-Henney, project director of Missouri’s Youth/Adult Alliance. Missouri’s law goes into effect next July. Nearly two dozen states have enacted keg tracking legislation.

Underage Drinking Causes Far More Than Just a Few Beers

The American Medical Association, the nation’s largest medical society, is calling for increased awareness about the harms caused by underage drinking, more research, and increased taxes on alcohol. Studies show that increased alcohol access for adolescents can help reduce consumption, especially by underage drinkers.

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On June 27, more than 40 youth “marched” on Washington, DC to highlight the problem of underage drinking and the targeting of teens by the alcohol industry, especially beer manufacturers. The team held a rally in front of the Beer Institute, a trade association whose members produce 90 percent of the beer brewed in America and manufacture malt-based, alcohol-infused beverages that are extremely popular among underage youth.

The youth were in the DC area as part of a three-day advocacy training. They were taught to attend because of demonstrated leadership in their local state (Reducing Underage Drinking Campaigns (RUDC)). The planning team included nineteen students from Missouri, Rebeccha Black from Pennsylvania, Delia Ortega from Texas, Colin Heffron from Connecticut, and Jessica Ponte and Johnny Nicholas from Louisiana. Supported by Janet Williams, national RUDC staff, the team developed talking points for fellow youth attendees, wrote testimonies, strategized about the rally logistics and made media calls. Once the rally began, everyone took action and entered the building, talking to the media and letting everyone know that “we are not a target.”

“The alcohol industry spends $4 billion a year promoting its products,” said Jeremy. “The alcohol industry itself says that if you drink our product you will be a popular teen to enjoy a beer or hard lemonade,” said Jeremy. “The alcohol industry is not adequately monitoring its advertising and marketing code by removing all models and actors from its ads and not showing the product,” said Janet Williams.

Following the rally, these teen representatives shared their message with the Beer Institute offices in order to present a resolution signed by all the rally attendees. But this was no easy task. When the team representatives made their way towards the door of the office building, a guard stopped them, and when they tried to take an elevator to the Beer Institute office, the electricity was cut and骚扰ed locked.

“I could not believe what was happening,” said Janet. “This was an unintentional group that had an important message to deliver. Plan A, was all being captured on camera by a television crew.”

With interventions from an unlikely source, the Beer Institute’s interns, the youth were able to sign a petition and succeed in a 40-minute private meeting with Becker. And while no minutes were changed, the Beer Institute got the message.

Media coverage included ABC Radio Network, Brennan News Service and UPI.

The National Youth Advocacy Assembly (NYAA) is a three-day advocacy training for teens in leadership roles in their local communities. Topics centered in the assembly included alcohol use campaigns, counteracting alcohol industry tactics, continuing to be an advocate in college, media advocacy 101, and preparing to testify before elected officials.

The 2003 NYAA was hosted by the National Capital Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking and held at the Conference Center in Lansdowne, Virginia.

The press conference at the Beer Institute drove television and radio crews to hear what the youth had to say about alcohol advertising.

“If you drink our product you will be a popular teen to enjoy a beer or hard lemonade,” said Jeremy. “The alcohol industry is not adequately monitoring its advertising and marketing code by removing all models and actors from its ads and not showing the product,” said Janet Williams.

“Teens are the ones who buy the beer, and if the alcohol industry wants teens to drink their product, they have to market their product to us,” said Jeremy. “This was an unintentional group that had an important message to deliver. Plan A, was all being captured on camera by a television crew.”

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New York Assemblywoman Michelle Capotosto reads the resolution that was signed by more than 90 youth advocates calling on the Beer Institute to follow its own code of advertising ethics.

Several youth advocates talk with Becker about how the voluntary code is meaningless and that the ad clearly illustrates that underage youth are being targeted.
Greek Re-evolution at University of Nebraska

By Tom Workman, Associate Director, NU Directions

The University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL) has launched a “Greek Re-evolution” to bring about cultural change and address high-risk drinking among Greek students on campus. The two-year grant project is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Based on findings from the 2003 Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study, Lehigh affiliated students at UNL had a binge drinking rate of 54 percent, compared to a 50 percent rate among the general student population. While recent Harvard data has found that binge drinking rates continue to decline among the general population at UNL, the binge rate for Greek students has remained unchanged.

Lehigh University Sees Drop in Alcohol Numbers

By Y. Sarah Suh, Integrated Marketing Communications

In just six years, Lehigh University has seen a 30 percent decline in underage student ability to get alcohol without showing an ID at off-campus bars and clubs, according to the newly released College Alcohol Study conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health. The College Alcohol Study also shows a 10 percent decline in the number of underage students who received alcohol from someone under the age of 21 and a 25 percent drop in the number of underage students who made alcohol purchases without being asked. Students reported a 7 percent drop in getting beer or wine while drinking, a 6 percent drop in doing something that they regretted and a 5 percent drop in getting behind in school work. Lehigh also saw a decrease in the negative second-hand effects of others from students who had been drinking. Students reported a 10 percent drop in being pushed, hit, or assaulted in the past year.

Lehigh was a leader in the transformation of its campus culture by a strong campus-community partnership, according to John Smeaton, vice-provost for student affairs and director of the Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Education and Awareness. To make ExChange more relevant and responsive to your needs and a more effective communications tool to help advocates reach their objectives, we need your help. Thank you for participating in our survey. Your answers will help us to improve future issues of ExChange.

Tell Us What You Think: ExChange Newsletter Survey

To make ExChange more relevant and responsive to your needs and a more effective communications tool to help advocates reach their objectives, we need your help. Please answer this survey, cut it out and fax it to 312-464-4024, OR take the survey on-line at www.ama-assn.org/go/exchangesurvey

1. How useful is ExChange to you?
   Very Useful
   Not at all Useful

2. How relevant to you are the topics covered in ExChange?
   Extremely Relevant
   Not at all Relevant

3. The number of topics covered in an issue of ExChange...
   Increase
   Decrease
   Stay the same

4. What are the top three alcohol issues you would like to see addressed in future issues of ExChange?
   [ ] Health and safety
   [ ] Lindbergh Commission
   [ ] Media

5. Have you ever adopted a method or program you first heard about or read about in an issue of ExChange?
   Yes
   No

6. Please order the following types of information that could be covered in ExChange by authorship to you, with “1” being most useful, “2” being second most useful, etc.
   Coalition updates
   Legislative updates
   Practical tips
   Research
   Other (please specify below)

7. From whom do you receive ExChange?
   American Medical Association
   Coalition office
   Colleague
   Other (please specify below)

8. How do you generally read ExChange?
   [ ] Print
   [ ] Web page

9. When do you pass it on to others?
   [ ] Colleagues
   [ ] Coalition members
   [ ] Board members
   [ ] Other (please specify below)

10. If ExChange only has an online version, do you think it is as useful, less useful, or about the same?
    [ ] More useful
    [ ] Less useful
    [ ] About the same

11. Why do you think that?

Thank you for your participation in our survey. Your answers will help us to improve future issues of ExChange.
New Alcohol Policy Web Site

Resource for Researchers, Advocates, Policy Makers

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism has launched a new Web site that provides searchable access to authoritative and detailed information on alcohol-related policies in the United States at both the state and federal levels.

The Alcohol Policy Information System (APIS) is designed for use by researchers as well as policy-makers, alcohol prevention and treatment advocates and practitioners, and members of the general public.

Alcohol-related policies covered by APIS include:
- Alcoholic beverage control
- Taxation and pricing
- Advertising, marketing, and mass media
- Transportation, crime, and public safety
- Health care services and financing
- Education
- Public services, functions, and programs
- Employment and workplace

APIS has an archive of every alcohol-related bill and regulation adopted at the state and federal levels since January 1, 2002, including the full text of each bill and regulation. APIS also includes tables comparing alcohol policies across jurisdictions as of a particular date and/or period of time.

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