

News Release

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Majority of States Fail to Address Youth Exposure to Alcohol Marketing

Baltimore, MD - Reducing youth exposure to alcohol advertising and marketing is a missed opportunity for states to improve public health, according to a new review of state alcohol advertising laws from the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

The report examines the extent to which states' alcohol advertising laws incorporate eight different best practices to reduce youth exposure to alcohol advertising and marketing, and finds only eleven states use more than one of the eight and no state uses more than five. The report is available on CAMY's website, www.camy.org.

"We know quite a bit about how to reduce youth exposure to alcohol marketing and advertising," said David Jernigan, PhD, CAMY director. "Unfortunately, this report shows states have a long way to go towards using that knowledge to reduce youth exposure."

Alcohol is responsible for 4,700 deaths per year among young people under the age of 21. At least 14 studies have found that the more young people are exposed to alcohol advertising and marketing, the more likely they are to drink, or if they are already drinking, to drink more.

"Although the federal government has exercised primary responsibility with respect to regulating alcohol marketing, states have concurrent jurisdiction as outlined in the 21st Amendment of the Constitution," said James Mosher, JD, the report's lead author and consultant to the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth. "It's therefore disappointing to see how inactive states are in this legislative and regulatory arena."

The report identifies eight best practices states could use to address youth exposure to alcohol marketing and advertising:

- Prohibit false or misleading advertising;
- Prohibit alcohol advertising that targets minors;
- Establish jurisdiction over in-state electronic media (TV and radio);
- Restrict outdoor alcohol advertising in locations where children are likely to be present;
- Restrict alcohol advertising on alcohol retail outlet windows and outside areas;
- Prohibit alcohol advertising on college campuses;
- Restrict alcohol sponsorship of civic events; and,
- Limit the alcohol industry's ability to provide free goods (giveaways).

The authors then assessed each state's use of these strategies. Each state's law was rated as either "BP" (all elements of the best practice are present), "I" (at least one but not all elements of the best practice is present) or "--" (the state does not address the regulatory category, the law has none of the elements of the best practice, or the law may be unenforceable).

"Twenty-two states have no best practices across the eight policies, meaning almost half of all states in the U.S. are doing far less than they could to keep alcohol marketing from reaching youth," concluded Jernigan. "This report should open people's eyes to the unrealized potential of state action in this arena."

The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 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. The Center was founded in 2002 at Georgetown University with funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The Center moved to the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in 2008 and is currently funded by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For more information, visit www.camy.org.

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