

DROWNED OUT: ALCOHOL INDUSTRY “RESPONSIBILITY” ADVERTISING ON TELEVISION, 2001–2005

I. Executive Summary

There is growing concern among policymakers and the general public about the impact of messages from popular and commercial cultures on youth perceptions, attitudes and health behaviors. The U.S. Congress recently asked the Department of Health and Human Services to monitor and report on rates of youth exposure to advertising and other media messages that encourage and discourage alcohol use.¹ Alcohol companies place television advertisements in both of these categories. Alcohol product advertising on television and per capita youth exposure to that advertising experienced historic increases between 2001 and 2005. However, youth² exposure³ to alcohol industry-sponsored “responsibility”⁴

advertisements remained at consistently low levels compared to their exposure to alcohol product commercials. For instance, from 2001 to 2005 youth were 239 times more likely to see a product advertisement for alcohol than an alcohol industry “responsibility” message about underage drinking and 32 times more likely to see an alcohol product advertisement than an industry-sponsored “responsibility” advertisement about drinking and driving or drinking safely. These findings come from an analysis by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) of 1,415,716 alcohol product advertisements and 41,333 alcohol industry-supported “responsibility” advertisements aired on U.S. television between

2001 and 2005, as reported in data licensed from Nielsen Media Research.

Other major findings from CAMY’s analysis include:

- Alcohol companies spent \$4.9 billion on television advertising between 2001 and 2005. They spent 2.1% of this amount (\$104 million) on “responsibility” advertisements.
- Of the 109 alcohol companies advertising alcohol on television from 2001 to 2005, 8 companies aired “responsibility” advertising.
- Of the 56 alcohol companies advertising alcohol on television in 2005, the most recent year for which data

¹ *Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act (STOP Act)*, Public Law 109–422, 109th Cong., 2d sess., 20 December 2006.

² In this report, unless otherwise noted, youth are defined as persons ages 12 to 20, and adults are defined as persons age 21 and over.

³ In this report, calculations of youth and adult exposure to alcohol advertising are based on “gross rating points,” which measure how much an audience segment is exposed to advertising per capita. Another way of measuring advertising exposure is “gross impressions” (the total number of times all members of a given audience are exposed to advertising). The adult population will almost always receive far more gross impressions than youth because there are far more adults in the population than youth. Gross rating points are calculated by dividing gross impressions by the relevant population (e.g., persons age 21 and over) and multiplying by 100. See Appendix A for a glossary of terms.

⁴ For the purposes of this report, “responsibility” advertisements had as their primary focus a message about drinking responsibly, avoiding drinking and driving, or discouraging underage drinking.

Table of Contents

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
II. WHY THE CONCERN	2
III. ABOUT THIS REPORT	2
IV. ALCOHOL INDUSTRY “RESPONSIBILITY” AND PRODUCT ADVERTISING ON TELEVISION, 2001–2005	4
V. YOUTH EXPOSURE TO ALCOHOL INDUSTRY “RESPONSIBILITY” AND PRODUCT ADVERTISING, 2001–2005 ..	8
VI. CONCLUSION	10
APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF ADVERTISING TERMS	12

The Center on
Alcohol Marketing and *Youth*

June 27, 2007

Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth
Georgetown University
Box 571444
3300 Whitehaven St. NW, Suite 5000
Washington, D.C. 20057
(202) 687-1019
www.camy.org

were available, 6 alcohol companies placed “responsibility” advertisements.

- Of the 300 alcohol brands that placed product advertising on television from 2001 to 2005, at a total

cost of \$4.7 billion, 25 brands placed “responsibility” advertising, at a total cost of \$104 million.

- More brands aired “responsibility” advertising in 2005 than in any prior year. Of the 174 alcohol

brands that placed product advertising on television in 2005, at a total cost of \$1 billion, 19 brands sponsored “responsibility” advertisements on television, at a total cost of \$28 million.

II. Why the Concern

Alcohol is the leading drug problem among America’s youth.⁵ In 2005, there were nearly 11 million underage drinkers, and almost 7.2 million underage binge drinkers in the United States.⁶ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that 45% of high school students reported drinking alcohol in the past month, while 29% reported binge drinking—typically defined as consuming five or more drinks on an occasion.⁷

Young binge drinkers were far more likely than other youth to engage in other risky behaviors, such as riding with a driver who had been drinking, being currently sexually active, smoking cigarettes or cigars, being a victim of dating violence, attempting suicide, and using illicit drugs.⁸ Each year, approximately 5,000 people under age 21 die from alcohol-related injuries involving underage drinking.⁹ The highest prevalence of alcohol dependence (addiction to alcohol) in the U.S. population is among youth ages 18 to 20, who usually began drinking years earlier.¹⁰

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, delaying onset of drinking among young people as long as possible has the dual benefit of preventing tragedies due to underage drinking, while also reducing young people’s risks of alcohol problems later in life.¹¹

A growing body of research studies has shown that the more young people are exposed to alcohol advertising, the more likely they are to drink or to increase their alcohol consumption.¹² Previous CAMY studies have shown that youth who saw alcohol advertising on television in 2005 were exposed to an average of 309 such advertisements. Each year from 2001 to 2005, between 20% and 25% of all alcohol product advertising placements were on programming that youth were more likely to be watching on a per capita basis than adults.¹³

III. About this Report

The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University (www.camy.org) 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 them 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.

⁵ National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, R.J. Bonnie and M.E. O’Connell, eds. (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2004), 1.

⁶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings* (Rockville, Md.: Office of Applied Studies, 2006). Available at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k5NSDUH/2k5results.htm#3.2> (accessed 28 November 2006). “Binge drinking” is defined as having five or more drinks on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past 30 days.

⁷ J.W. Miller, T.S. Naimi, R.D. Brewer, S.E. Jones, “Binge Drinking and Associated Health Risk Behaviors Among High School Students,” *Pediatrics* 119, no. 1 (2007): 76–85.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, *The Surgeon General’s Call to Action To Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking* (Washington, D.C., 2007), 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹² See e.g., L. Snyder, F. Milici, M. Slater, H. Sun, Y. Strizhakova, “Effects of Alcohol Advertising Exposure on Drinking Among Youth,” *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* 160 (2006): 18–24; R. Collins, P. Ellickson, D. McCaffrey, K. Hambersoomians, “Early Adolescent Exposure to Alcohol Advertising and its Relationship to Underage Drinking,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 40, no. 6 (2007): 527–34; A.W. Stacy, J.B. Zogg, J.B. Unger, C.W. Dent, “Exposure to Televised Alcohol Ads and Subsequent Adolescent Alcohol Use,” *American Journal of Health Behavior* 28, no. 6 (2004): 498–509.

¹³ Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, *Still Growing After All These Years: Youth Exposure to Alcohol Advertising on Television, 2001–2005* (Washington, D.C.: Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2006), 2.

Recent CAMY reports have documented that much of youth exposure to alcohol advertising comes in media that youth are more likely to be watching, on a per capita basis, than adults. For instance, in 2005, more than a third of youth exposure to alcohol advertising on television came from placements in publications or on programming with disproportionate youth audiences.¹⁴ Nearly three-quarters of youth exposure to a sample of more than 67,000 radio commercials for alcohol in summer 2004 was on programming more likely to be heard by youth, on a per capita basis, than by adults age 21 and above.¹⁵

As a companion to its reports on youth exposure to alcohol product advertising on television, in magazines and on the radio, CAMY commissioned Virtual Media Resources, Inc. (VMR), a media planning and research firm in Natick, Massachusetts, to analyze the alcohol industry's televised "responsibility" advertisements in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005. For the purposes of this report, "responsibility" advertisements had as their primary focus a message about drinking responsibly, avoiding drinking and driving, or discouraging underage drinking. While many alcohol product advertisements have included brief or small voluntary warning messages, which research has found to be ineffective,¹⁶ these were classified as product advertisements as long as the "responsibility" message was not the primary focus. CAMY has made no attempt to assess the effectiveness of the "responsibility" messages in the advertisements.

Advertising occurrence and audience data for this report came from Nielsen Monitor-Plus and Nielsen Media Research.^{17,18} Nielsen Monitor-Plus is an industry-standard source for advertising occurrence and expenditure data. It provides date, time, source, program and spending data for each commercial occurrence both nationally (on cable and broadcast television networks) and locally (in 210 local or "spot" markets, also known as Designated Market Areas or DMAs). Nielsen Monitor-Plus uses passive pattern recognition to capture and identify all commercial activity. Nationally and in the larger 108 Full Discovery Markets (FDMs), all activity is captured and identified; for the smaller 102 Automated Discovery Markets (ADM), commercials are captured and identified only after they have first appeared nationally or in FDMs.

Nielsen Media Research measures television audiences for national networks and in 210 local markets. Nielsen measures national audiences using a sample of approximately 9,000 households, containing more than 18,000 people who have agreed to participate. Local market samples depend on market size and range from 400 to 800 households. Local audiences are measured using different methodologies:

- In 10 markets, Nielsen uses "people meters" (set-top devices that allow viewers to register their presence by clicking a button) to measure audience size and composition.
- In 46 markets, Nielsen uses a combination of "set meters" (set-top boxes that record television tuning) to determine household ratings and written diaries to determine audience composition.
- In 154 markets, Nielsen deploys only written diaries to determine both audience size and composition during the "sweeps" months, typically February, May, July and November.

"Responsibility" advertisements in this report were identified through a review process by staff at VMR. Every alcohol industry television advertisement reported by Nielsen Monitor-Plus for the years 2001 through 2005 was viewed and classified as product, "responsibility" or other (including corporate image advertising, civic and other community advertising, and advertisements promoting specific events).¹⁹ "Responsibility" advertisements were then further classified by message and placed into one of two categories where the primary message concerned either 1) underage drinking or 2) warnings against driving after drinking or other safety or moderation messages.

¹⁴ Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, *Still Growing After All These Years*, 2.

¹⁵ D. Jernigan, J. Ostroff, C. Ross, T.S. Naimi, R.D. Brewer, "Youth Exposure to Alcohol Advertising on Radio—United States, June–August 2004," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 55, no. 34 (2006): 937–40.

¹⁶ R.J. Fox, D.M. Krugman, J.E. Fletcher, P.M. Fischer, "Adolescents' Attention to Beer and Cigarette Print Ads and Associated Product Warnings," *Journal of Advertising* 27, no. 3 (1998): 57–68.

¹⁷ This represents a change from earlier CAMY reports on alcohol industry "responsibility" advertising on television, which used TNS Media Intelligence (formerly known as CMR, or Competitive Media Reporting) for advertising occurrence data and Nielsen Media Research for audience data. As a result of the change in data source, the numbers in this report for years prior to 2004 may differ slightly from earlier CAMY reports on alcohol industry-funded "responsibility" advertising. CAMY would like to thank Gaye Pedlow and Carolyn Panzer of Diageo for providing information about Diageo's "responsibility" advertising, which allowed CAMY to classify more accurately that company's "responsibility" advertisements.

¹⁸ © 2007 Nielsen Media Research, Inc. Ratings and other data contained herein are the copyrighted property of Nielsen Media Research, Inc. Unauthorized use of this copyrighted material is expressly prohibited. Violators may be subject to criminal and civil penalties under Federal Law (17 USC 101 et seq.). All Rights Reserved.

¹⁹ Two advertisements – Jack Daniel's "Fashion" and Jack Daniel's "Friends" – have been classified on the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) website (<http://www.discus.org/responsibility/videos.asp>) as "responsibility" advertisements but did not fit the definition used in this report (i.e. "responsibility" advertisements had as their primary focus a message about drinking responsibly, avoiding drinking and driving, or discouraging underage drinking), and were classified as product advertisements. Another advertisement on the DISCUS website – Jack Daniel's "Pace Yourself" – was not captured by Nielsen Monitor-Plus during 2005 and was therefore not included in this analysis. All other "responsibility" advertisements listed on the DISCUS website were included if they aired between 2001 and 2005.

“Responsibility” advertising expenditures and youth and adult audience exposure were calculated for each of the years from 2001 to 2005 as well as for the entire period combined. Delivery of the two audiences was measured using gross rating points, an industry-standard measure of audience exposure. Gross rating points are the product of “reach” times “frequency.” Reach describes the percentage of a given demographic group that has the opportunity to see a given advertisement or campaign through exposure to specific media. Frequency indicates the number of times individuals have an opportunity to see a given advertisement or campaign through exposure to specific media, and is most often expressed as an average number of exposures. (See Appendix A for a glossary of terms.)

This report includes all advertising bought on broadcast networks, national cable networks and local broadcast stations. It does not include advertising bought directly on regional/local cable networks, channels or systems, or on Spanish-language networks. It also does not include television advertising paid for by alcohol industry associations or industry-funded organizations, nor does it include alcohol company expenditures on alcohol education in venues outside of television advertising.