HOW ALCOHOL ADVERTISING AFFECTS OUR YOUTH

Alcohol Advertising is Dangerous to Our Youth

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is concerned about the impact of alcohol advertising on youth. The association between youth exposure to alcohol advertisement and underage drinking is well documented—the more ads that youth see, the more likely they are to drink.¹

- In 2008, advertisers spent close to $7 billion on outdoor advertising nationwide.²
- Many youth who live in urban areas are exposed to alcohol advertisements almost as soon as they walk out the door.²
- Substantial literature shows that alcohol advertisements are disproportionately located in African-American neighborhoods.²
- Other recent research shows that the more alcohol advertising that youth view, the more alcohol they are likely to use or, “each additional advertisement seen (by youth) above the monthly average of 23, increased the number of drinks consumed by 1%...youth in markets with greater alcohol advertising expenditures drank more...”.³
- Underage youth are drawn to alcohol advertisements that include music, animal and people characters, story and humor. Youths reported wanting to purchase the products from the advertisements that they liked the most. The most popular alcohol ads among youths used animals as the main characters.⁴

Limiting Alcohol Ads Can Help Prevent Underage Drinking

- Many studies support the idea of increasing restrictions on alcohol advertising as an effective way of supporting underage drinking prevention and protecting youth.⁵
- One study shows that decreasing the amount of alcohol advertising in public will reduce the amount of alcohol that is used in that particular area. The author reported that a ban on beer and wine or on spirits, by one type of media, would reduce use by about 5%.⁵
- Because of the risk of alcohol advertising to youth, and because “youth who initiate use of alcohol at an earlier age are much more at risk to develop alcohol dependence later in life, many cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., San Diego, Philadelphia and San Francisco have banned alcohol ads on public transportation.”⁷
RESOURCES:


