Public Health and Alcohol Policy

Dispelling Myths, Forging Solutions

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Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of America
December 7, 2009
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Takeaway Messages:

1) We are not crazy, or even the enemy
2) What we want is reasonable, based in science, and benefits everyone
3) Wholesalers and public health have more in common that you think
4) We will go away once the problems do
Top 5 Myths about Public Health

1. Neo-Prohibitionists

[Images of historical posters and photographs related to prohibition movements]
Top 5 Myths about Public Health

2. California Hippies
Top 5 Myths about Public Health

3. Kill-joys, buzz-killers
Top 5 Myths about Public Health

4. Anti-Business
Top 5 Myths about Public Health

5. Nanny State
Realities About Public Health

“Public health is what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions for people to be healthy.”

-- Institute of Medicine, The Future of Public Health, 1988

PREVENTION is the core pillar of public health.
Realities About Public Health

Education alone has proven to be a dismal failure

“There is not a single public health crisis in the history of mankind that has been solved by handing out brochures.”

– Harold Goldstein, director, California Center for Public Health Advocacy
Realities About Public Health

Parents Cannot be Expected to Shoulder the Burden Alone

Other ways we help parents:
• Speed limits, speed bumps
• Child pornography laws
• Child labor laws
• Toy safety laws
• Food safety laws
Why Big Alcohol Can’t Police Itself

A Review of Advertising Self-Regulation in the Distilled Spirits Industry

• Examined 7 DISCUS Code Reports 2004-2007
  • Complaints and decisions made by Review Board
  • Analyzed variables
  • Reasoning for the decisions
Results

- From 2004 to 2007, DISCUS reported 78 complaints

**AD SPENDING TOPPED $1.9 BILLION DURING PERIOD**

- 93 individual ads
  - Average = 23 ads/year
  - 43 (46%) were found to violate the Code
  - 35 (81% of violations) resulted in a change by the advertiser, either by removing the ad, or promising to comply in the future
Results

- Worst “repeat offender” brands:
  - Skyy Vodka (8 complaints)
  - Svedka Vodka (6 complaints)

- Worst “repeat offender” companies:
  - Diageo (14 complaints)
  - Campari (11 complaints)
Results

- The most common complaints by far were about ads with sexual content

- 22 complaints alleged that ads overexposed youth

- Complaints by industry members 12.7 times more likely to be found in violation
Results

- 34% of complaints were from companies with DISCUS member on board

- Of these, 13% were in violation

- Complaints regarding ads from companies with a member on the DISCUS board were three times less likely to be found in violation of the Code
Barriers to Effective Self-Regulation

1) lack of public awareness – current reports
2) lack of an independent review
3) subjective nature of guidelines
4) lack of penalties and enforcement power
The Myth of the Family Winery
Global Corporations Behind California Wine

- E&J Gallo Winery: Italian imports
- Foster's Group: Based in Australia
- Trinchero Family Estates: Australian imports
- Brown-Forman: Based in Kentucky
- Constellation: Based in New York
- Diageo: Based in England

French imports
What We Want

1) Stop making products that appeal to youth, and stop deceiving regulators about alcopops being “beer.”
†“Except in the U.S. markets where Smirnoff Ice is a malt beverage”
What We Want

2) Stop marketing in youth-friendly venues (e.g., concerts, sports)

Diageo Deal with P. Diddy

Budweiser Super Bowl Ad
What We Want

3) Stop using sex to sell products
What We Want

4) Stop obstructing public policy efforts to alleviate alcohol problems federal, state, and local levels

5) Stop excluding public health advocates from regulatory discussions

6) Stop acting like public health is the enemy, because when alcohol-related problems go down, everyone wins
Forging Solutions

KEY FACTORS in creating healthy CONDITIONS in communities
Scientifically-proven influencers of underage and excessive drinking:

1) Price – youth especially sensitive
2) Access – over-concentration of retail outlets
3) Marketing – making alcohol appear essential to fun, success, etc.
Increase Alcohol Prices

- One of the most effective prevention strategies
- Youth are especially sensitive to price
- Alcohol taxes can generate new revenue
- Lots of activity in states due to economy
What We Have in Common

1) Wanting our communities to be free of harm caused by alcohol

2) Wanting to maintain an orderly, regulated marketplace

3) Keeping the 21st Amendment, state-based regulatory system intact

4) Ensuring that wholesalers remain a strong buffer between the producer and retailer tiers...yes, Marin Institute wants this... and...
What We Want – Ultimate Goal

To put ourselves out of business, not you… so how to work together?

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