

## Reduce the easy availability of alcohol by making access to it more difficult

### **A. Why reducing access is important**

- Young people tell us that alcohol is easy to obtain from friends, parents, other adults and sales outlets, even though it is illegal to sell or provide it to them
- Too many alcohol sales outlets, through lack of training and self-enforcement, sell illegally to minors
- Too many parents and other adults, choosing to ignore underage drinking laws, purchase alcohol for youth or illegally provide it to them
- The legal drinking age of 21 years is not taken seriously because so many adults accept and even condone underage alcohol use. Young people internalize the message that drinking is a normal “rite of passage” to adulthood.

### **B. Supporting Statistics**

- Marin County’s underage drinking rate is higher than state and national averages and our youth are drinking too early, too often and too much.
  - 53% of Marin 11<sup>th</sup> graders report drinking in the past 30 days, compared to 37% in California and 47% nationally.
  - 37% of Marin 11<sup>th</sup> graders reporting binge drinking, compared to 23% statewide, placing Marin significantly higher than the state average
- In Marin County, friends and family members are the most common sources of alcohol for youth.
  - The Marin Youth Health Advisory Council (MYHAC) 2005 survey of approximately 3,000 Marin youth found that of those who drink, 77% of teens reported getting alcohol from friends and 14% reporting getting it from family members.

### **C. Model Strategies**

#### Elected Officials

- Limit the number/density of alcohol sales outlets
- Limit alcohol sales outlets near areas frequented by youth
- Ban public possession of alcohol in public buildings and public parks
- Implement Social Host Ordinances to reduce the number and frequency of teen parties involving alcohol

#### Law Enforcement

- Identify the source of alcohol in underage alcohol-related arrests
- Increase certainty of sanctions for outlets that sell to minors through referral of complaints to the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control

#### Alcohol Sales Outlets

- Train servers/clerks in underage access laws, recognizing Fake I.D.’s and other responsible beverage service practices
- Require I.D. for anyone who appears under age 30

#### Schools

- Notify parents when information about weekend parties is obtained
- Hold educational forums for parents which review and identify underage alcohol laws and liability concerns

#### Parents

- Don’t let your son/daughter go to a home party where alcohol is certain to be available and served.
- Don’t ever host or allow your son/daughter to host a party where alcohol or other drugs will be available and served.

## **Increase Enforcement of Existing Laws, School Policies and Community Regulations**

### **A. Why enforcement is important**

- Youth have little fear of getting caught or experiencing any negative consequences for underage alcohol use
- Adult routinely overlook and ignore underage alcohol use, communicating to young people that their behavior is okay
- Laws prohibiting underage alcohol purchase and sales are ignored or circumvented so often that they are not taken seriously by young people or adults
- Police often face parental hostility and lack of community support when underage drinking laws are enforced.
- Lack of or low levels of enforcement results in an increased probability of negative outcomes from underage drinking including DWI crashes, vandalism, violence and sexual assault and juvenile crime.

### **B. Supporting Statistics**

- In Marin County, youth say that the majority of teen drinking occurs in homes, a place where parents can certainly set limits.
  - The Marin Youth Health Advisory Council (MYHAC) 2005 survey of approximately 3,000 youth in Marin County found that nearly 80% of youth report that the primary place they see youth drinking is at house parties.
- Young people in Marin experience significant negative consequences associated with underage and binge drinking.
  - Community Violence Solutions reports that 35% of incidents of sexual assault in Marin involved alcohol, according to their 2003 Alcohol Facilitated Sexual Assault Survey of 1239 youth in Marin.
  - Thirty-seven (37%) percent of Marin 11<sup>th</sup> graders report driving after drinking, compared to an average of 27% in California.

### **C. Model Strategies**

#### Elected Officials

- Implement Conditional Use Permits and Deemed Approved Ordinances to set conditions on new and existing alcohol sales outlets

#### Law Enforcement

- Implement regular compliance checks to identify outlets that sell to underage youth
- Increase certainty of sanctions for outlets that sell to minors through referral of complaints to the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control

#### Alcohol Sales Outlets

- Be alert for adults that congregate outside outlets and purchase for youth; report such activity to the police

#### Schools

- Strongly discourage parents from providing alcohol, especially around Proms and Graduations

#### Parents

- Don't purchase alcohol for young people and/or illegally provide it to them
- If you have alcohol in the home, lock it up and keep track of the liquor cabinet.

## Reduce Youth Overexposure to Alcohol Marketing and Create Positive Community Norms

### **A. Why Norms are important**

- Whether they intentionally marketing their products to youth or not, the alcohol industry gets its message across to our kids
  - Alcohol is equated with fun, sex, glamour and self-confidence
  - The negative consequences of alcohol use are never shown
  - Alcohol is advertised and marketed with themes (sports, sex), visual images (cartoons, very young looking models) and methods (novelty items, clothing, interactive websites) that directly appeal to youth
- The sheer volume of alcohol marketing seeps into our children's minds without their even realizing its influence

### **B. Supporting Statistics**

- More children (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders) could recall the slogan and product for the Budweiser frogs (73%) than for Tony the Tiger (57%), Smokey The Bear (43%), or the Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers (39%). Only Bugs Bunny had a higher recall (80%).
- Youth see more ad for alcohol than they do for gum, sneakers, candy or chips

### **C. Model Strategies**

#### Elected Officials

- Ban alcohol ads in community sport facilities frequented by youth
- Limit alcohol advertising in outlet windows; ensure compliance with the Lee Law
- Ban alcohol sponsorship/promotion at family-oriented community events, festivals, and fairs
- Conduct public education campaigns to increase the public's knowledge of underage alcohol laws and sanctions

#### Law Enforcement

- Publicize outlet closings and license suspensions to increase community perception of risk and harm
- Share data on underage sales to youth and track alcohol-related incidents

#### Alcohol Sales Outlets

- Ensure your outlet is in compliance with the Lee Law
- Prominently display signage that indicates no underage sales policy and practice
- Provide incentives to clerks who identify underage purchasers/Fake I.D's

#### Schools

- Ban alcohol-related clothing, posters, promotional items and other products
- Incorporate media literacy training in classroom settings
- Adopt alcohol and drug policies that require participation in alcohol education classes as part of the consequence
- Train administrators on alcohol policy issues
- Coordinate enforcement with local police departments; increase utilization of School Resource Officers

#### Parents

- Talk with your kids frequently about the pressures of smoking, drinking and sex...and about the agreements to be made. Clearly express your values and expectations through discussions with your son/daughter and model those values to your kids regularly.
- Do not use scare tactics when talking with your kids. Talk about your expectations and make it clear that you will support them no matter what.