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SPOTLIGHT

A RESOURCE TOOL FOR THE PREVENTION OF UNDERAGE DRINKING

Beware: Energy Drinks can be Dangerous...

Inside this issue:

New Trend: Girls and Alcohol	2
Mississippi News	3

“The beauty of this category [alcopops] is that it brings in new drinkers, people who really don’t like the tastes of beer.”

-Anheuser-Busch spokeswoman

Especially when combined with alcohol, as this is the newest trend in drinking behaviors.

The combination of caffeine and the higher alcohol content in these drinks has dangerous consequences. It essentially prevents or delays the individual from “sleeping it off”, thus there is a greater chance of more alcohol consumption, drunk driving, alcohol-related injuries, and sexual assaults.

It doesn’t require much know-how to realize that the marketing strategies of these drinks are targeted to youth.

These caffeinated al-

coholic beverages are a cheaper alternative to their non-caffeinated counterparts. Research has indicated that price can be a large factor in a minor’s attempt to purchase alcohol.

Therefore, the low price of these alcoholic energy drinks is a big draw for many underage consumers.

Another concern is what is referred to as brand confusion. It is very difficult to tell the difference between those that contain alcohol and those that do not. This introduces a compliance check issue when the retailer can’t even distinguish between the two.

The marketing messages of these drinks mirror those of nonalcoholic energy drinks, which are well-known to be popular among youth.

Let’s continue to stay abreast of news about this dangerous new craze!



New Trends: Girls and Alcohol

We are all advocates for gender equality, but this is one part of it that is unfortunate. These days, adolescent girls and boys are drinking at the same rates. This is not because boys are drinking less, but rather because girls are drinking more. This is a fairly recent trend in underage drinking and something that calls for our attention.

The gender differences between girls and boys are not as clear-cut as they have been in the past. This pattern tends to surprise many of us because we are still in the mindset that girls and boys exhibit very different behaviors in

adolescence.

So why are girls drinking more? Parents and prevention professionals alike tend to significantly underestimate girls' risky behaviors.

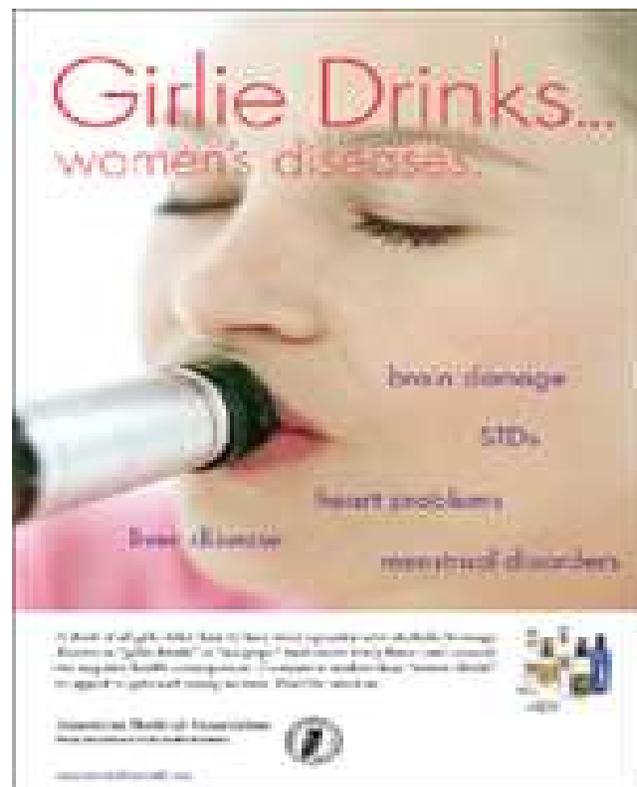
Researchers cite the family interaction theory as an explanation. The parent-child attachment, particularly that of mother and daughter, is a strong indicator of the likelihood that the girls will engage in drinking. A mother (or mother figure) who knows her daughters' friends, her whereabouts, and is straightforward about her nonuse expectations is more likely to have a daughter who refrains from

substance abuse. Therefore, it may be that less supervision of our daughters and decreased attention to the pressures they face is linked to their increase in alcohol consumption.

In addition to early prevention efforts, we also want to encourage positive parenting practices by drawing attention to the differences between perceptions and actual behaviors. Parents can use this knowledge to talk to their daughters about the dangers and consequences of underage drinking.

- Girls who binge drink are estimated to be 63% more likely to become teen mothers.
- Heavy alcohol use is associated with decreased bone density and weakened bones, which in turn can lead to osteoporosis and compromised bone health. This is especially problematic with girls, whose bones are still developing.
- Girls who binge drink are three times more likely to think about committing or to attempt suicide than girls who do not consume alcohol at all.
- Heavy alcohol consumption is linked to menstrual disorders and an increased risk of infertility.
- Females are more susceptible to alcohol-related medical disorders, such as liver disease, cardiac problems and brain dysfunction, compared to their male counterparts

- American Medical Association



MISSISSIPPI NEWS

Mississippians Advocating Against Underage Drinking Task Force

We are really excited to report that the MAAUD Task Force is underway with their initiatives to reduce underage drinking in Mississippi. At their kickoff retreat in November, members created a mission statement, which reads “to develop and sustain initiatives that inform and advocate against underage drinking in Mississippi.” Members divided into subcommittees that will target various aspects of a successful coalition—advocacy, communications, strategic planning, recruitment, and social media campaigns. To learn more, contact Caroline Ranck at cranck@dreaminc.org.

Have you heard?

DREAM, Inc developed a character-based curriculum for students in Kindergarten through the fifth grade. Smart Choices provides students with the knowledge and skills to make healthy decisions, from substance abuse to safety to nutrition. The process has begun to have this program evidence-based. To order, please contact Blakeney Smith at 601-933-9184.

2nd Annual Mississippi School for Addiction Professionals Scheduled!

January 20-23, 2009
Hattiesburg, MS

Registration can be completed online.

Visit www.themsschool.ms for more information.



Pass this website along to youth in your community! It offers prevention tips and information that kids can relate to.

<http://www.thecoolspot.gov/>

**HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY
HOLIDAY SEASON!**