

**How Alcohol Policies
Reduce Harm:
New Research and
Recommendations**

**A Summary of
Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity
(Second Edition, 2010)**

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for the Alcohol and Public Policy Group**

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What's New in ANOC2?

- New developments in epidemiological research, including alcohol's role in the global burden of disease
- A new chapter on the global structure and strategies of the alcohol industry
- Revised ratings of 42 policy-related strategies and interventions based on continued growth of the knowledge base
- New understandings of the policymaking process at the local, national and international levels, especially with respect to the role of the alcoholic beverage industry in research and policy

The changing international context of the alcohol industry

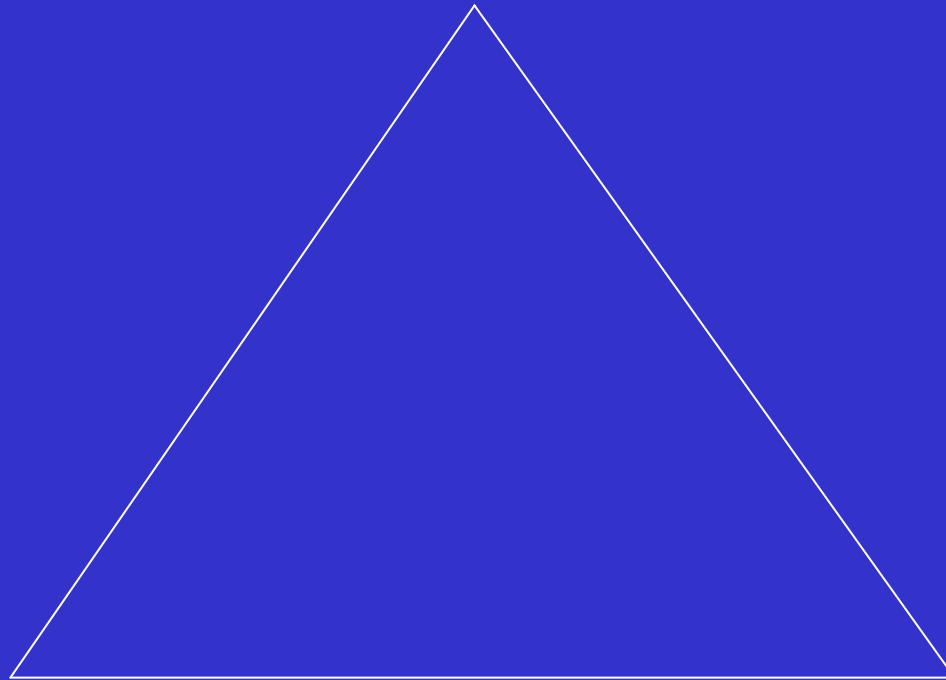
- Globalization of production, trade and marketing of alcohol products
- Role of the brewing, spirits and wine industries in product design (e.g., alcopops, light beer), marketing to young people, and policy development, especially in developing countries
- Increasing industry involvement in the collection, funding and interpretation of scientific information
- Growing sponsorship of prevention activities

The Alcoholic Beverage Industry

- Producers - brewers, distillers, vinters
(multinational, national, local)
- Wholesalers - marketing
- Retailers – distribution through bars, restaurants, off-premise sales
- Hospitality industry
- Advertisers
- Social aspect/public relations organizations
- Trade associations

Public Health Model of Corporate-borne Diseases

The Agent Alcohol



**Vector:
Alcohol Industry**

**Host: Vulnerable
Populations**

Strategies and Interventions Reviewed and Evaluated

- Pricing and Taxation
- Regulating Physical Availability
- Altering the Drinking Context
- Education and Persuasion
- Regulating Alcohol Promotion
- Drinking-Driving Countermeasures
- Treatment and Early Intervention

Ratings of 32 Policy-relevant Prevention Strategies and Interventions

- 1) Evidence of Effectiveness^a – the quality of scientific information
- 2) Breadth of Research Support^a – quantity and consistency of the evidence
- 3) Tested Across Cultures^a, e.,g. countries, regions, subgroups
- 4) Cost to Implement and Sustain^b – monetary and other costs

^aRating Scale: 0, +, ++, +++, (?)

^bRating Scale: Low, Moderate, High

Strategies and Interventions Reviewed and Evaluated

- Pricing and Taxation

Assumptions Underlying Alcohol Taxation and Other Price Controls

Policy

High taxes, prices

Assumption

Reduce demand by increasing economic cost of alcohol relative to alternative commodities

Pricing and Taxation

Strategy or Intervention	Effective-ness	Research Support	X-Cultural Testing	Cost
Alcohol Taxes	+++	+++	+++	Low
Minimum price	?	+	+	Low
Bans on price discounts and promotions	?	+	+	Low
Differential price by beverage	+	+	++	Low
Special or additional taxation on alcopops and youth-oriented beverages	+	+	++	Low

Pricing and Taxation

Evidence suggests that:

- People increase their drinking when prices are lowered, and decrease their consumption when prices rise.
- Adolescents and problem drinkers are no exception to this rule.
- Increased alcoholic beverage taxes and prices are related to reductions in alcohol-related problems.
- Alcohol taxes are thus an attractive instrument of alcohol policy because they can be used both to generate direct revenue and to reduce alcohol-related harm.
- The most important downside to raising alcohol taxes is smuggling and illegal in-country alcohol production.
- Behavioral economic principles apply to discount drink policies, price advertising, differential taxes on different alcohol products (e.g., alcolpops)

Strategies and Interventions Reviewed and Evaluated

- Regulating Physical Availability

Assumptions Underlying Restrictions on Alcohol Availability

Policy

Restrictions on time,
place, and density of
alcohol outlets

Assumption

Reduce demand by restricting
physical availability –
increase effort to obtain
alcohol. Reduce total
volume consumed as well as
alcohol-related problems

Regulating Physical Availability

Strategy or Intervention	Effectiveness	Research Support	Cross-National Testing	Cost
Ban on sales	+++	+++	++	High
Bans on drinking in public places	?	+	++	Moderate
Minimum legal purchase age	+++	+++	++	Low
Rationing	++	++	++	Moderate
Government monopoly of retail sales	++	+++	++	Low
Hours and days of sale restrictions	++	++	+++	Low
Restrictions on density of outlets	++	+++	++	Low
Different availability by alcohol strength	++	++	+	Low

Regulating Alcohol Availability

- Changes in availability can have large effects in nations or communities where there is popular support for these measures.
- The cost of restricting alcohol availability is cheap relative to the costs of health consequences related to drinking, especially heavy drinking.
- The most notable adverse effects of availability restrictions include increases in informal market activities (e.g., cross-border purchases; home production, illegal imports).

Regulating Alcohol Availability Through Minimum Legal Purchase Age (MPLA)

- In 1984 the US Congress passed the National Minimum Purchase Age Act, which encouraged states to adopt the age 21 purchase standard
- The number of young people who died in a crash when an intoxicated young driver was involved has declined by almost 63%

Strategies and Interventions Reviewed and Evaluated

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- Modifying the Drinking Context

Modifying the Drinking Context

Many prevention measures seek to re-define the contexts or change the environments where alcohol is typically sold and consumed (e.g., bars and restaurants), under the assumption that such changes can reduce alcohol-related aggression and intoxication

- Options include training bar staff, imposing voluntary house policies to refuse service, enforcement of regulations, community mobilization to influence problem establishments

Modifying the Drinking Environment

Strategy or Intervention	Effectiveness	Research Support	X-Cultural Testing	Cost
Staff training and house policies relating to responsible beverage service (RBS)	0/+	+++	++	Moderate
Staff and management training to better manage aggression	++	+	++	Moderate
Enhanced enforcement of on-premises laws and legal requirements	++	++	++	Moderate
Server liability	++	++	+	Low
Community action projects	++	++	++	Moderate to High
Voluntary codes of bar practice	0	++	++	Moderate
Late-night lockouts of licensed premises	0	+	+	Low to Moderate

Strategies and Interventions Reviewed and Evaluated

- Regulating Alcohol Promotion

Regulating alcohol promotion

- The marketing of alcohol is a global industry.
- Alcohol brands are advertised through television, radio, print, point-of-sale promotions, and the Internet.
- Exposure to repeated high-level alcohol promotion inculcates pro-drinking attitudes and increases the likelihood of heavier drinking.
- Alcohol advertising predisposes minors to drinking well before legal age of purchase.
- Advertising has been found to promote and reinforce perceptions of drinking as positive, glamorous, and relatively risk-free.



You deserve it!



3 Beers 1 winner

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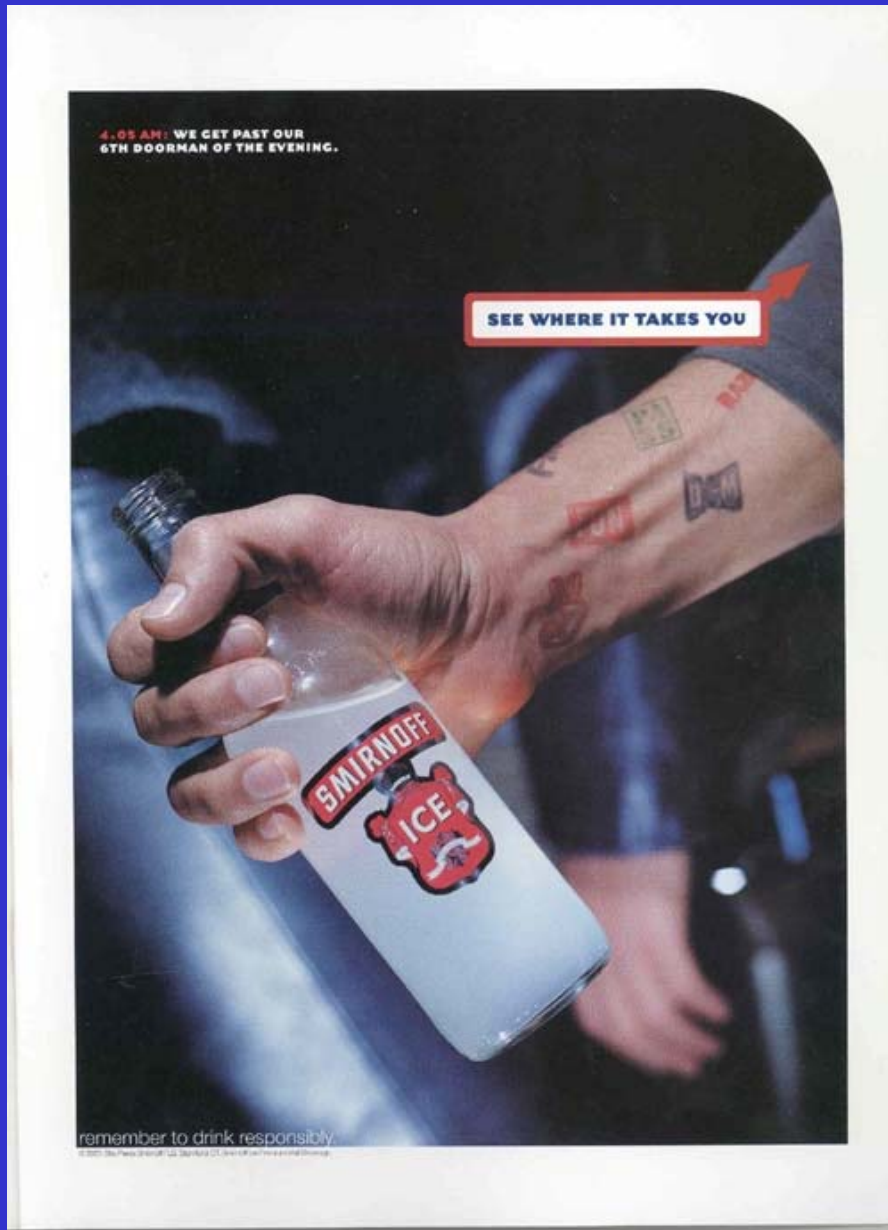
SMS GOLD to 06 40 40 40 or 40 40,
or select online at www.sobomw.com
~~and you could WIN tickets, cash, and more~~
~~to exciting events.~~



Drink responsibly. Only for 18 years and over.
Valid 1st September - 31st November 2008

Probably your best beer choice

Stamp of Approval



4:06 A.M. WE GET PAST
OUR SIXTH DOORMAN OF
THE EVENING

SEE WHERE IT TAKES YOU

Assumption Underlying Regulation of Alcohol Marketing

Policy

Regulating alcohol advertising and other marketing

Assumption

Reducing exposure to marketing that normalizes drinking and links it with social aspirations will slow recruitment of young drinkers and reduce heavier drinking

Social modeling of excessive drinking contributes to underage drinking problems

Policy Options

- No regulation
- Industry self-regulation
- Partial bans
- Total bans

Restrictions on Marketing

Strategy or Intervention	Effective-ness	Research Support	Cross-National Testing	Cost
Legal restrictions on exposure	+ / ++	+++	++	Low
Legal restrictions on content	?	0	0	Low
Alcohol industry's voluntary self-regulation codes	0	++	++	Low

Regulating alcohol promotion

Industry Self-regulation Codes

- Self-regulation tends to be fragile and largely ineffective.
- These codes may work best where the media, advertising, and alcohol industries are all involved, and an independent body has powers to approve or veto advertisements, rule on complaints, and impose sanctions.
- Few countries currently have all these components.

Model Policy: Loi Evan

- Passed in 1985 but not defined and enforced until 1991
- Definition of alcoholic drinks (1.2%)
- No advertising targeted at young people
- No ads on TV or in movies
- No sponsorship of cultural or sporting events

Model Policy: Loi Evan

- Advertising permitted only in the press for adults, on billboards, on radio
- Messages and images should refer only to the qualities of the product such as origin, composition, production, etc.
- A health message must be included on each ad

Strategies and Interventions Reviewed and Evaluated

- Drinking-Driving Countermeasures

Assumptions Underlying Drink-driving Policy Options

Policy

Assumption

Drink-driving
countermeasures

Reduce drink driving through
deterrence, punishment and
social pressure

Drinking-Driving Countermeasures

Strategy or Intervention	Effectiveness	Research Support	X-Cultural Testing	Cost
Sobriety check points	++	+++	+++	Moderate
Random breath testing	+++	++	+	Moderate
Lowered BAC Limits	+++	+++	++	Low
Administrative license suspension	++	++	++	Moderate
Low BAC for young drivers (“zero tolerance”)	+++	++	+	Low
Graduated licensing for novice drivers	++	++	++	Low
Designated drivers and ride services	O	+	+	Moderate
Severity of punishment	O/+	++	++	Moderate

Random Breath Testing (RBT)

- Motorists are stopped at random by police and required to take a preliminary breath test, even if they are in no way suspected of having committed an offence or been involved in an accident.
- Highly visible, non-selective testing can have a sustained effect in reducing drinking-driving and the associated crashes, injuries, and deaths.

Summary: Drinking-Driving Countermeasures

- Consistently produce long-term problem reductions of between 5% and 30%.
- Deterrence-based approaches, using innovations such as Random Breath Testing, yield few arrests but substantial accident reductions.
- Another effective measure is the use of graduated licensing for novice drivers, which limits the conditions of driving during the first few years of licensing.

Strategies and Interventions Reviewed and Evaluated

- Education and Persuasion

Assumptions Underlying Education and Persuasion Policy Options

Policy

Provide information to adults and young people especially through mass media and school-based alcohol education programs

Assumption

Health information increases knowledge, changes attitudes and prevents drinking problems

Education Strategies

- School-based alcohol education programs are among the most popular types of prevention programs for policymakers.
- Approaches include giving information, values clarification, building self-esteem, teaching general social skills, and “alternatives” approaches that provide activities inconsistent with alcohol use (e.g., sports).

Education and Persuasion

Strategy or Intervention	Effective-ness	Research Support	Cross-National Testing	Cost
Classroom education	0	+++	++	Moderate
College student education	+	+	+	Moderate
Mass media campaigns, including drink-driving campaigns	0	+++	++	Moderate
Warning labels and signs	0	+	+	Low
Social marketing	0	++	+	Moderate to high

Summary: Education Strategies

- The impact of education and persuasion programs tends to be small at best.
- When positive effects are found, they do not persist.
- Among the hundreds of studies, only a few show lasting effects (after 3 years) (Foxcroft et al. 2003).
- The time is past for arguments on behalf of *substituting* education for other, more effective approaches.
- If educational approaches are to be used, they should be implemented within the framework of broader environmental interventions that address availability of alcohol.

Education and Persuasion Strategies

Public service announcements (PSAs)

- Messages prepared by nongovernmental organizations, health agencies, and media organizations that deal with responsible drinking, the hazards of drinking-driving, and related topics.

Despite their good intentions, PSAs are an ineffective antidote to the high-quality pro-drinking messages that appear much more frequently as paid advertisements in the mass media.

Strategies and Interventions Reviewed and Evaluated

- Treatment and Early Intervention

Assumptions Underlying Treatment and Early Intervention

Policy

Increase availability of treatment programs

Conduct screening and brief intervention in health care settings

Assumption

Problem drinking is responsive to various therapeutic interventions

Heavy drinkers can be motivated to drink moderately before they acquire alcohol dependence

Treatment and Early Intervention Services

- In general, exposure to any treatment is associated with significant reductions in alcohol use and related problems, regardless of the type of intervention used.
- Regarding specific treatment modalities, the weight of evidence suggests that behavioral treatments are likely to be more effective than insight-oriented therapies

Residential Treatment

- There is no consistent evidence that intensive in-patient treatment provides more benefit than less intensive outpatient treatment
- Residential treatment may be indicated for patients who:
 - 1) are highly resistant to treatment;
 - 2) have few financial resources;
 - 3) come from environments that are not conducive to recovery;
 - 4) have more serious, coexisting medical or psychiatric conditions

(Finney et al., 1996).

Adjuncts to treatment

- Naltrexone, an opioid antagonist, and acamprosate, an amino acid derivative, have shown positive effects in the prevention of relapse.
- AA attendance alone may be better than no intervention at all and can have an incremental effect when combined with formal treatment

Brief interventions

- Consist of one to three sessions of counseling or advice delivered in general medical settings.
- Randomized controlled trials (conducted in a variety of settings) indicate that clinically significant changes in drinking behavior and related problems can follow from brief interventions with non-alcoholic heavy drinkers.

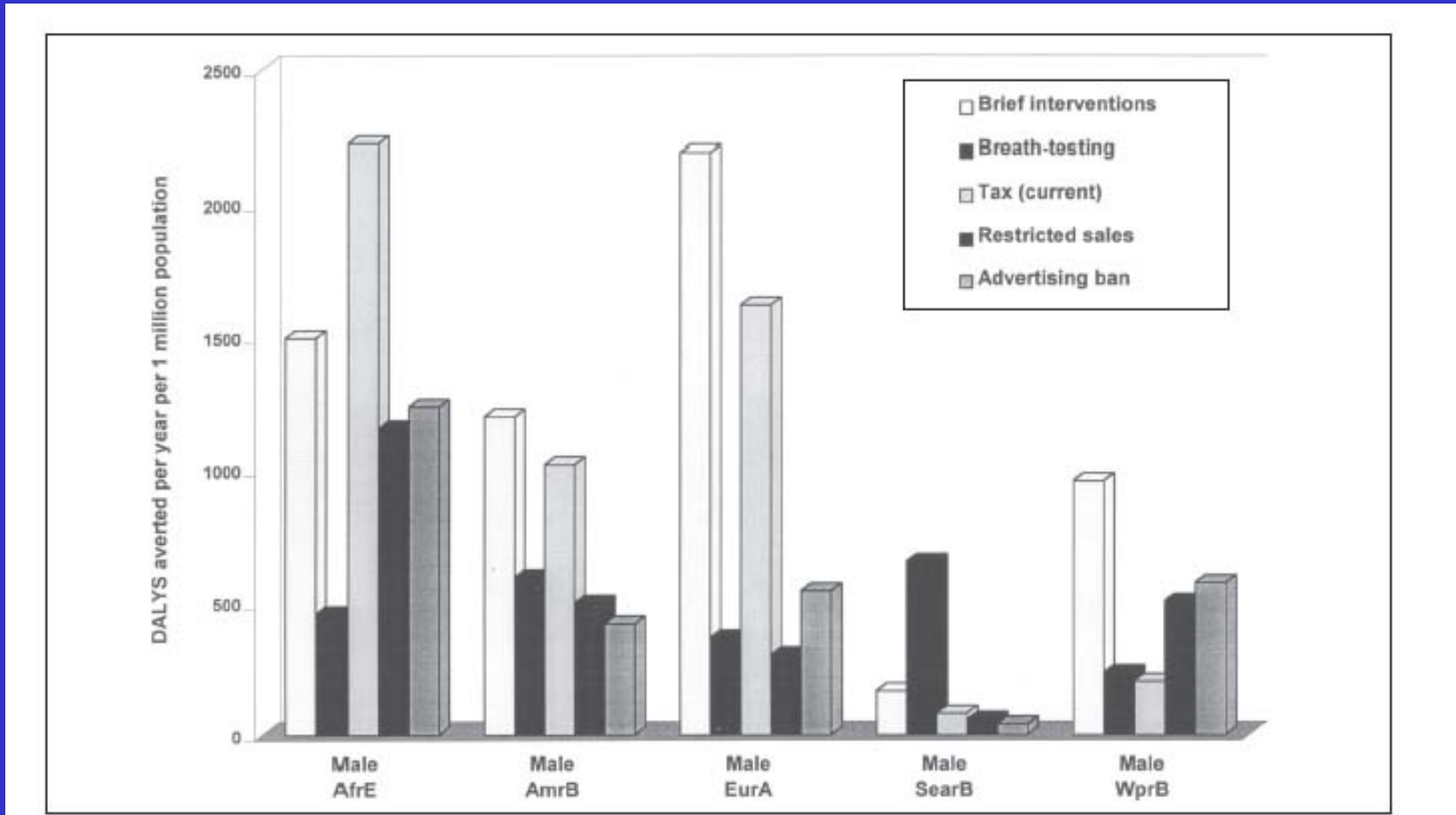
Treatment and Early Intervention

Strategy or Intervention	Effectiveness	Research Support	Cross-national Testing	Cost
Brief intervention with at-risk drinkers	+++	+++	+++	Moderate
Mutual help/self-help attendance	++	++	++	Low
Mandatory treatment of drink-driving repeat offenders	+	++	+	Moderate
Medical and social detoxification	+++	++	++	High
Talk therapies	++	+++	++	Moderate
Pharmaceutical therapies	+	++	++	Moderate

Best Practices

- Minimum legal purchase age
- Government monopoly
- Restriction on hours or days of sale, outlet density
- Alcohol taxes
- Lower alcohol strength
- Random Breath Testing
- Lowered BAC limits
- Administrative license suspension
- Graduated licensing for novice drivers
- Brief interventions for hazardous drinkers
- Treatment and detox

Cost Effectiveness of 5 Effective Policy Options in 5 WHO Regions



From: Chisholm, D., Rehm, J., Van Ommeren, M. & Monteiro, M. (2004) Reducing the global burden of hazardous alcohol use: A comparative cost-effectiveness Analysis. *Journal of the Studies on Alcohol* 65:782-793.

What can be done when there is insufficient evidence?

- Policy changes should be made with caution and with a sense of experimentation to determine whether they have their intended effects.
- Strengthen the links between science and policy so that promising research findings are identified, synthesized and effectively communicated to the policymakers and the public.
- Use the Precautionary Principle: the introduction of new alcohol products (e.g., high alcohol content malt beverages), removal of restrictions on hours of sale, and the promotion of alcohol through marketing and advertising should be guided by likely risk, rather than by potential profit. Shift the burden of proof to the alcohol industry asking them to demonstrate that their policies are NOT harmful.
- Use theory to guide policy

Conclusions

- Opportunities for effective, evidence-based alcohol policies are more available than ever to better serve the public good.
- Alcohol policies that limit access to alcoholic beverages, discourage driving under the influence of alcohol, reduce the legal purchasing age for alcoholic beverages, and increase the price of alcohol, are likely to reduce the harm linked to underage drinking
- Alcohol problems can be minimized or prevented using a coordinated, systematic policy response.