



Alcohol Policy

UPDATE

“To most people involved in alcohol policy, trade policy and disputes seemed arcane, complicated and largely irrelevant. But those days are gone.”

— Jim Grieshaber-Otto and David Jernigan, *The Globe Magazine*, Winter 2001, www.ias.org.uk/theglobe

For Health or For Profit?

International trade negotiations tackle alcohol policy

As nations worldwide gear up for another round of international trade negotiations, alcohol policy researchers are sounding the alarm: alcohol policies designed to protect public health and safety are in peril and no one's minding the store.

According to an article published in the Winter edition of *The GLOBE Magazine*, free trade treaties have already weakened international alcohol-related advertising regulations (Sweden), retail monopolies (Finland) and taxation practices (Chile, Japan, Korea, Norway and Denmark). Developing countries have experienced rapid growth in alcohol consumption and are particularly at risk of health and social problems due to weak alcohol regulations.

Western nations have led the fight to liberalize markets. Canada, for example, has challenged alcohol monopolies in the US and differential tax rates in Japan. Yet this strategy is not without pitfalls. Indeed, a background document on EU bargaining positions published recently in the *Guardian* suggests that provincial alcohol monopolies such as the LCBO are high on the international trade barrier hit list.

Foreign Affairs officials insist that Canadians are protected. But experts such as Vancouver trade policy consultant, Jim Grieshaber-Otto, and US alcohol policy researcher, David

Jernigan, are not so sure. They worry that health interests may be subjugated to broader economic goals. Their advice: *"Public health voices need to be heard, in the relevant industries, in professional journals in the public health fields, in the news media, in international health fora and at trade negotiations."*

To help you brush up on the issues, here are a few useful links and resources:

- *The GATS: Impacts of the international "services" treaty on health-based alcohol regulation*
www.stakes.fi/nat/nat01/nr.3/english/gats.htm.
- *Trade treaties, alcohol and public health*
www.ias.org.uk/theglobe/2001gapa2.htm.
- *Towards a Global Alcohol Policy: alcohol, public health and the role of the WHO*
www.who.int/bulletin/pdf/2000/issue4/bu0534.pdf.

For information on Canada's international trade negotiation and investment policy, visit strategis.ic.gc.ca. The website also contains background information on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), currently under negotiation, as well as contact information for officials heading various work groups. At the provincial level, get in touch with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, 416-325-6940.

Quick Quiz #2

Alcohol Controls

This quiz is part of the new Alcohol Policy 101 series designed to orient APU readers to alcohol-related laws and policies. Please visit the Resources Section of our website for the answers, including links to background documents. Good luck!

True or False?

- ___ 1. Ontario's beverage alcohol retail market was estimated to be worth \$7.2 billion in 2000-1.
- ___ 2. The Liquor Licence Board of Ontario (LLBO) is a quasi-judicial government agency with broad powers to regulate alcohol sale, service, and consumption.
- ___ 3. There are over 2,000 liquor, beer and wine stores and vint/brew-your-own outlets across the province.
- ___ 4. In addition to retail alcohol outlets, there are some 16,000 licensed establishments and 80,000 licensed special events held annually in Ontario.
- ___ 5. Heavy drinkers are responsible for most alcohol problems.
- ___ 6. Educating people about responsible drinking is the most effective way to reduce alcohol problems.

True or False?

- ___ 7. Most alcohol in Ontario is sold by the private sector.
- ___ 8. Last year, Ontario alcohol retailers transferred \$2.5 billion in grants, taxes, fees and profits to federal, provincial and municipal governments.
- ___ 9. Ontario's liquor laws are enforced by 42 liquor inspectors.
- ___ 10. Two out of three Ontarians oppose alcohol sales in corner stores.

Bonus Questions:

- 11. When was the LCBO established?
- 12. What proportion of Ontario residents live within 10 minutes of a liquor store?

Research

** Denotes Canadian content*

Corner

Below are interesting recent articles on alcohol policy and prevention issues. For copies or to borrow a journal, contact the CAMH-ARF Library, isd@camh.net, 416-535-8501 ext. 6144. For additional research and news items, see the APOLNET Listserv bi-weekly *News Digest* or bi-monthly *Alcohol Research Update*. To subscribe or view the archive visit www.apolnet.org.

- *Alcohol and breast feeding: calculation of time to zero level in milk.* * Ho, E, Collantes A, Kapur MB, Moretti M, Koren G. *Biology of the Neonate* 2001; 80(3): 219-222.
- *Alcohol servers' estimates of young people's ages.* Willner, P and G Rowe. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy* 2001; 8(4):375-383.
- *Binge drinking among underage college students: A test of a restraint-based conceptualization of risk of alcohol abuse.* Collins RL et al. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* 2001;15(4):333-340. <http://www.health.org/research/res-brf/research2.asp?ID=558>
- *Childhood adversity in alcohol- and drug-dependent women presenting to out-patient treatment.* Raine Berry and J Douglas Sellman. *Drug and Alcohol Review* Dec 2001; 20(4):361-367. <http://www.health.org/research/res-brf/research2.asp?ID=579>
- *College alcohol abuse: A review of the problems, issues, and prevention approaches.* Vicary JR, Karshin CM. *Journal of Primary Prevention* 2002; 22(3):299-331. <http://www.health.org/research/res-brf/research2.asp?ID=645>
- *Law enforcement: policy and practice in Australia.* Findlay, Robyn A, Mary C Sheehan, Jeremy Davey, et al. *Drugs: Education, Prevention & Policy* Feb 2002; 9(1):85-94. <http://taylorandfrancis.metapress.com>.
- *Liquor traffic fatalities.* Cohen DA, Mason K, Scribner R. *Preventive Medicine* 2002;34(2):187-19. <http://www.health.org/research/res-brf/research2.asp>.
- *Progression into and out of binge drinking among high school students.* D'Amico EJ et al. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* 2001; 15(4):341-349. <http://www.health.org/research/res-brf/research2.asp?ID=557>
- *Relative efficacy of a brief motivational intervention for college student drinkers.* Murphy JG et al. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* 2001; 15(4):373-379. <http://www.health.org/research/res-brf/research2.asp?ID=547>
- *Relative influence of smoking on drinking and drinking on smoking among high school students in a rural tobacco-growing county.* Ritchey, PN, Reid, GS, Hasse, LA. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 2001; 29(6):386-394. <http://www.health.org/research/res-brf/research2.asp?ID=546>
- *Relation between average alcohol consumption and disease: an overview.* * Gutjahr, Elisabeth, Gerhard Gmel, Jürgen Rehm. *European Addiction Research* 2001; 7(3):117-127.
- *Volition and alcohol-risk reduction - The role of action orientation in the reduction of alcohol-related harm among college student drinkers.* Palfai TP, AM McNally, M Roy. *Addictive Behaviors* March 2002; 27(2): 309-317.

Round Up

“ Got a question? comment? announcement? Get connected!
Join the APOLNET Listserv, www.apolnet.org/subscribe.html.”

Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Framework in the works

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) will be working in partnership with the FOCUS Resource Centre (FRC) at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health to develop a provincial health promotion/prevention framework to address alcohol and other drug problems. The framework is expected to "articulate a vision and goals that reflect the aspirations and shared commitment of Ontario communities and health intermediaries to prevent and reduce the harmful effects of the misuse of alcohol and other drugs." Healthy Horizons Consulting will be conducting the background research and regional consultations. Recommendations for a draft AOD Prevention Framework are to be submitted to the MOHLTC in Summer 2002. For more information, contact Marianne Kobus-Matthews, FRC Acting Manager, 416-535-8501 ext. 4552. To participate in the consultations, contact John McCready, john.mccready@sympatico.ca, or visit www.frcentre.net.

Drunk driver sues town for \$2 million

A Saskatchewan town is on the hook for \$2 million for failing to take reasonable steps to make an unpaved back road safe for motorists — including those too drunk to be behind the wheel. In a 5-4 ruling handed down by Canada's Supreme Court on March 28, Shellbrook must pay damages to a man who was rendered a quadriplegic after the truck in which he was a passenger flipped over on a

treacherous and unsigned stretch of road. According to published reports, the driver had a blood alcohol content more than twice the legal limit. While the facts of the case are somewhat unique, the ruling is the latest in a rising tide of alcohol-related liability that is spurring municipalities, employers and others to take a second look at policies governing alcohol use on their premises and at sponsored events. For an excellent overview of the implications of recent court cases, see *Employer Host Liability - Who's Left Holding the Bottle?* in the July 2001 issue of **Municipal Liability Risk Management**, www.butterworths.ca. Also recommended is a 36-page article by lawyer Timothy P. Alexander, entitled *New Targets in Liquor Liability Claims*. It is available on the website of Blaney McMurtry Barristers and Solicitors, www.blaney.com.

BC reforms liquor licensing system

On March 15, the BC government announced a four-pronged strategy to modernize the province's liquor licensing system. Licence categories for premises serving alcohol will be reduced to two (food primary and liquor primary) from the current nineteen. Licensees will be eligible to serve alcohol between 9AM and 4AM. Restaurants will be allowed to sell alcohol without food, a requirement originally designed to promote moderation and slow the effects of alcohol. Effective April 2, BC's 290 beer and wine stores will be allowed to sell spirits and apply to increase their floor space to 2,000 square feet. The

moratorium on the number of beer and wine stores, in place since 1992, will be lifted, with regulations governing the application process to be released in late spring. Finally, the network of 144 agency stores operating in rural communities too small to support a full-fledged liquor store will be expanded, and the rule prohibiting liquor outlets from being located within 20 km of one another will be eliminated. Local governments will be able to restrict venue capacity, hours of operation, and type of facility to be licensed. According to background documents prepared by the Ministry of Public Safety and the Solicitor General, the policy changes will benefit the province's tourism and hospitality industries and allow officials to focus on public safety concerns like illegal liquor sales, overcrowding, over-consumption and sales to minors. However, the BC & Yukon Hotels' Association, the BC Government and Service Employees Union and several municipalities, including the City of Nelson, are not so sure. They have voiced strong concerns, noting among other things, that the proposed changes would increase access to alcohol for groups at risk of problems, have a potentially negative impact on community safety and, if privatization of provincial liquor stores were to go ahead, cost the public treasury more than \$600 million annually in lost revenue. For more information, or to view the legislative debates related to this announcement, search www.bc.gov.ca or www.legis.gov.bc.ca using the keywords: "liquor licensing."

News & Views

“ Air Your Stuff! Add your alcohol-related PSAs to the AEM Database on www.apolnet.org and they'll appear on the website of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters ... and perhaps even a radio or TV station near you! ”

New Resources

Canadian research on effective substance abuse prevention programming is sorely lacking. To address the gap, Health Canada recently released *Preventing Substance Use Problems Among Young People: A Compendium of Best Practices*. This 288-page report discusses 14 principles for developing and implementing programs to prevent alcohol, tobacco and drug use/misuse among youth, aged 7 to 24. It also showcases 33 proven programs identified through an international review of the literature, and 39 exemplary Canadian programs nominated by experts in the field and judged by the authors to be worthy of inclusion. The full report is posted on the website of the Office of Canada's Drug Strategy, www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/cds-sca/cds/pdf/substanceyoungpeople.pdf. Unfortunately, the design is not very user-friendly so you may want to use the search function in Acrobat and print only the pages you need. To order a free copy call 613-954-5995. Those with interest and a bit of time to spare may want to browse through the comprehensive list of international **Best Practices** in the Resources section of our website.

Fundraising fever - for some an occasional inconvenience, for others a permanent pain. Ever mindful of your health needs, we have updated APN's popular *Directory of Potential Sources of Funding for Substance Abuse and Injury Prevention Programs*. The new version has contact and summary information for over 190 government, community and private funders, as well as practical tips for developing effective proposals. Complimentary copies have been distributed to some 100 health and safety groups across Ontario. Additional copies may be downloaded free of charge from the APN website. Selected funders will also be added to the searchable Key Contacts Database. Print copies are \$12 each, including shipping and handling.

About Us

Alcohol Policy Update (APU) is a free quarterly fax-newsletter of the Alcohol Policy Network. APN is a project of the Ontario Public Health Association. Our mission is to facilitate the development of policies that prevent problems associated with alcohol use and enhance the health, safety and well-being of individuals and communities across Ontario.

APN offers a range of products and services including information and referral, regional workshops and seminars, publications and a comprehensive website called APOLNET.

APN does not take public positions on issues although individual members and the Ontario Public Health Association may do so. Information appearing in this newsletter reflects the views of staff and not necessarily the positions of OPHA.

APU is distributed via fax to over 700 subscribers active in substance abuse prevention, injury prevention and public health. It can also be downloaded from the Resources section of our website, www.apolnet.org.

For more details on this newsletter or our other products and services, please contact Paula Neves, Project Manager, apn@opha.on.ca, or Ana Almeida, Web Development and Training Consultant, apolnet@opha.on.ca.

Alcohol Policy Network

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How would you rate this issue of Alcohol Policy Update...

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
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What impact does APU have on your work? (Please check all that apply)

Comments and suggestions:

- This newsletter helps me understand alcohol policy better.
- I've followed up on a program/article/resource you've profiled.
- I've taken action on an issue after reading about it here.
- This newsletter is irrelevant/boring/not very informative.
- Other: _____

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- Often

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