

American Medical Association
Physicians dedicated to the health of America

A Matter of Degree

The National Effort to Reduce High-Risk Drinking
Among College Students



Editor's Note: See enclosed copy of the full-page ad appearing in Friday's Chronicle of Higher Education, questioning the NASULGC/Anheuser-Busch partnership

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A Matter of Degree, a Program of the American Medical Association to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students, Calls on NASULGC to End its Partnership with Anheuser-Busch

National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges Partnering with Anheuser-Busch in NCAA Ad Campaign Featuring University Mascots

Chicago – The American Medical Association program, A Matter of Degree: The National Effort to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students (AMOD), is asking the members of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC) to reconsider their ongoing partnership with Anheuser-Busch. The latest product of this liaison is the current Anheuser-Busch television advertising campaign, which features member-university mascots promoting safe celebrations during the NCAA Final Four championship playoffs and closes with the Budweiser logo.

“While we support well-intentioned efforts to address the alcohol-fueled violence that occurred last season, this ad campaign is simply another marketing opportunity for the nation’s largest brewer to brand themselves with America’s youth and normalize the dangerous misperception that alcohol and college go hand-in-hand,” said Richard Yoast, PhD, director of AMOD. “We question NASULGC’s rationale for partnering with the producer of a product that we know contributes to the majority of alcohol-related problems at their institutions. This ad is little more than a promotion of drinking under the guise of public service.”

“Drinking is a serious concern for all university officials and should not be ‘normalized’ through associations with beloved college symbols during athletic events,” Yoast added. “We encourage our colleagues in higher education to develop effective prevention strategies that are not under the influence of those who profit from the sale of alcohol.”

Parents of college students agree, according to a recent study by the AMA’s A Matter of Degree Program. Ninety-five percent of parents believe excessive alcohol

consumption is a serious threat to their children, and 68 percent noted alcohol advertising and promotions as an important contributing factor.

Additionally, 81 percent would prefer to send their child to a college that had strong policies or programs to deter underage and binge drinking, and 77 percent of voting parents favor banning alcohol advertising in college sports.

According to the Harvard School of Public Health, 44 percent of college students binge drink, and nearly one in four do so frequently, placing themselves and others at risk for alcohol-fueled sexual assault and other violence, vandalism and academic failure.

A New Approach to an Old Problem

A Matter of Degree: The National Effort to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students (AMOD) is a collaboration of the American Medical Association and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. AMOD is a multi-year, national pilot project designed to test an innovative approach to reducing college binge drinking and related harms caused for non-drinking or moderate drinking students, as well as community residents. The Harvard School of Public Health is conducting an extensive evaluation of the project.

The 10 campus-community partnerships of AMOD go beyond traditional prevention efforts that focus on the individual drinker, recognizing that the social environment influences individual decision making. These “town-gown” collaborations – college administrators, elected officials, students, parents, law enforcement, concerned bar owners and others – work together to address alcohol advertising and marketing, institutional policies and practices, local ordinances, and cultural beliefs and behaviors – that converge to encourage high-risk drinking.

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