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Statement from Richard Yoast, PhD, Director, Reducing Underage Drinking Through Coalitions

New Report on Point-of-Purchase Marketing from Alcohol Companies Proves Link to Underage Drinking

“The release today of ImpacTeen’s report on point-of-purchase alcohol displays/advertising is another reminder of how advertising adds to the epidemic of underage drinking in America. The study - Point of Purchase Alcohol Marketing, Advertising and Promotion - published in the April 11 issue of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. ImpacTeen is part of Bridging the Gap: Research Informing Practice for Healthy Youth Behavior, supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and administered by the University of Illinois at Chicago.

“There is no doubt that point-of-purchase marketing from the alcohol industry increases awareness of alcoholic products and drinking rates. But these pervasive on-site promotions influence more than just adult consumers.

“As this new report reveals, point-of-purchase advertising in and outside of stores bombard consumers of all ages, influencing purchases and spreading the inaccurate message to youth that drinking is a normal part of everyday life.

“If the alcohol industry admits it should minimize how many minors view their advertising in the media, how can they justify such widespread promotions in supermarkets, convenience stores and gas stations frequented by underage youth?

“The ImpacTeen study finds that nearly half of all stores that sell alcohol have displays standing three feet high, an intentionally low level used to target underage youth much like Big Tobacco employed in their own point-of-purchase ads. These brightly colored displays with youth-focused images in these promotions further demonstrates that underage youth are exactly who Big Alcohol have in mind as a consumer.

“Reducing Underage Drinking Through Coalitions are working with communities across America to reduce the availability and marketing of alcohol to youth. If we want to decrease the death, injury and health consequences of underage alcohol abuse, then we must keep promotion of products intended for adults only directed only at adults.”

Reducing Underage Drinking Through Coalitions is a national partnership of the American Medical Association and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that works with state coalitions on developing effective policies to address underage drinking at the state and local level.

[NOTE: The ImpactTeen Report is available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr>]