

American Medical Association

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AMA APPLAUDS NEW REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMBAT UNDERAGE DRINKING

WASHINGTON, D.C. –The American Medical Association (AMA) today joined with Members of Congress to draw attention to the growing national epidemic of underage drinking and discuss solutions to this problem. A newly released National Research Council and Institute of Medicine study, “Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility,” spurred the conference.

“Underage drinking is on the rise. To combat this problem we need a strategic approach that involves the entire community,” AMA Trustee J. Edward Hill, M.D. said.

Among other recommendations, the new study calls for the development of a national adult-oriented media campaign and the creation of a national partnership, including the alcohol industry, to stop underage drinking.

“This study provides a blueprint for a comprehensive, national plan to combat underage drinking, which is turning into an epidemic among our nation’s youth. We need to use all the tools and resources available to help our nation’s youth abstain from drinking,” Dr. Hill said.

The AMA has called for alcohol taxes to be increased and used for health education, enhanced law enforcement, and a national public relations campaign to inform underage drinkers of the harm they can inflict on themselves and others by their actions.

“The AMA has long been concerned about underage drinking, and its effects on our patients – the youth of America and their families,” Dr. Hill said. “The AMA Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse was created to help stop this problem.”

The AMA currently has two programs aimed at eliminating underage drinking through its Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse. *Reducing Underage Drinking Through Coalitions* works with community leaders to identify factors that contribute to underage drinking and then create solutions. *A Matter of Degree* works with campus communities to reduce college student drinking by moving beyond traditional prevention efforts and addressing the social environment that influences individual decision-making.

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