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Preventing Alcohol Problems



What Really Works to Prevent Alcohol Problems

Join Together (JTO), a project of the Boston University School of Public Health, helps answer this question with “**Ten Drug and Alcohol Policies That Will Save Lives.**” Endorsed by several public health organizations, including the Marin Institute, this guide draws on scientific research to educate politicians and voters about policies that can prevent and reduce alcohol and drug problems. JTO is sending this guide to every elected official across the nation. The 10 policies include:

1. Increase alcohol prices through taxes, particularly on beer.
2. Limit alcohol advertising and promotional activities that target youth.
3. Adopt laws to prevent alcohol-related deaths among young people.
4. Require equal insurance coverage for drug and alcohol treatment.
5. Support the development of effective medications for addiction treatment.
6. Make screening for alcohol and drug problems routine.
7. Give higher payments to providers who get better results.
8. Require effective treatment and supervised aftercare programs.
9. Repeal policies that prevent ex-offenders from participating in society.
10. Support the work of community coalitions.

For detailed information or to order copies visit www.jointogether.org



We are an alcohol industry watchdog and a resource for communities preventing alcohol problems.

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Super Brawl: Coming to a Town Near You



The Super Bowl delivers many superlatives; the largest TV audience of the year, the most private parties (exceeding even New Year's Eve), and the highest priced TV advertising. Sadly, the Super Bowl may also be the best time to experience alcohol's widespread "secondhand" effects and assess the enormous costs to our nation.

Secondhand Effects

Public recognition of tobacco's impact on the health of non-smokers from passive exposure to cigarette smoke was a critical turning point in building momentum for the tobacco control movement. With the exception of drinking-driving crashes, we are less accustomed to thinking about the secondhand effects of alcohol. But alcohol's external impacts are even greater than those of tobacco. In addition to innocent lives lost and injuries to non-drinkers



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Oakland Tells Liquor Stores "Shape Up or Shut Down"

The City of Oakland, California has a message for local liquor stores: If your store causes problems, you may lose your business. The City has increased enforcement of a law that requires liquor stores be "good neighbors" by cleaning up problems in and around their property. Any store that doesn't clean up its act will be put out of business.

Oakland is using a local ordinance, passed in 1994, that allows the city to hold alcohol retailers operating under the old code—so called "grandfathered" or "deemed-approved" establishments—to newer standards if the business in question causes nuisances to its neighbors. Nuisance violations can range from minor infractions like litter and graffiti, to more serious problems like drug dealing, prostitution, and selling alcohol to underage persons. If activities in and around the establishment disturb neighbors and community

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Thumbs Up...

to Cody CAN (Change Attitudes Now) in Cody, Wyoming, a nonprofit student-run program that rewards drug-free students. Instead of punishing students who use alcohol and other drugs, CAN's philosophy is to encourage and reward



youth who make healthy choices. CAN members receive daily rewards such as access to high-end technology and discounts from local businesses, which serve as a reminder that drug-free environments are something to celebrate.



Thumbs Down...

to Spirit Sciences USA, for marketing RU-21—a new over-the-counter pill that supposedly helps prevent hangovers. Health advocates are concerned about products like RU-21 because they send the message that taking a pill can make drinking risk-free. RU-21 may cure a hangover, but it can't eliminate the many negative physical and social consequences associated with alcohol including drinking-driving crashes, liver failure, arrests, alcohol poisoning and vandalism.



Thumbs Up...

to the Lane County Coalition to Prevent Substance Abuse for opposing the Oregon Liquor Control Commission's (OLCC) new pilot program to allow liquor sales in grocery stores. Since the OLCC claims the program will increase needed revenue for the state, the Lane County Coalition will promote other solutions that could raise revenue without increasing availability—like raising beer and wine taxes. The Coalition also plans to educate elected officials on the negative effects of increased alcohol availability in communities.

Six percent of American workers call in sick the day after the Super Bowl -- NFL.com

resulting from alcohol-related crashes, alcohol is a contributing factor in roughly half of all injury deaths (fires, falls, drowning), most cases of homicide, and a significant percentage of all other violent crimes including rape. Alcohol use results in more than \$100 billion in lost productivity both from premature death and an estimated 500 million lost workdays each year. Alcohol use is also strongly correlated with family violence. And, although alcohol alone does not cause violence against women, experts in the field acknowledge that alcohol use often triggers or exacerbates incidents of violence in the home.

A Super Size Dose of Trouble

Both research and anecdotal observations suggest that Super Bowl Sunday brings an extra large dose of alcohol-related problems to communities across the country. Each year, long before anyone knows which football teams will be in the national championship, people are preparing for the downside of Super Bowl Sunday—and not just in Jacksonville, Florida, where the next one will be played on February 6, 2005.

Police and sheriff's departments across the country have already scheduled extra officers in case celebrations after the next Super Bowl turn violent—as they have in Oakland, Denver, Dallas and Boston when those cities' football teams were in the Super Bowl. Trauma centers and emergency medical response teams are making sure they will be ready for the excess alcohol-related highway deaths and injuries—on average 32 percent higher than on other non-holiday Sundays in California—that follow the Super Bowl broadcast each year. People who work in shelters for victims of family violence are ensuring appropriate coverage because, like other major holidays, Super Bowl Sunday is often an extra busy day.

Preparation Not Prevention

While public officials recognize the need to be ready for Super Bowl Sunday's extraordinary—but not unexpected—demands on public health and safety services, they appear to treat

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Stop paying for Super Bowl's secondhand alcohol impacts

1. Promote Responsible Beverage Service
2. Talk Back to irresponsible beer ads
3. Learn more and take action at www.MarinInstitute.org

Super Bowl Sunday like an earthquake or hurricane—a natural force, whose destruction can be minimized, but not prevented. In reality, most of the impacts associated with Super Bowl Sunday are fueled by alcohol. Addressing the availability and promotion of alcoholic beverages can prevent many of these consequences.

But far from taking steps to reduce alcohol's negative impact, the City Council of Jacksonville, Florida—at the request of the National Football League—has suspended many local laws that prevent alcohol-related problems. Laws against open containers, noise pollution, and outdoor alcohol sales will not be enforced within a designated 2½ mile entertainment zone starting 18 days before the game. A similar party zone, created for the 2004 Super Bowl in Houston, drew 150,000 people and resulted, according to the *Houston Chronicle*, in “one shooting and a mere 125 arrests.” Houston had budgeted more than a million dollars in police overtime to control the crowds of “drunken revelers.” But the Mardi-Gras atmosphere cultivated in Houston spread via TV to every sports bar and Super Bowl party in the country—with predictable results.

Who Pays?

Even if you can avoid alcohol-impaired drivers and street violence on Super Bowl Sunday, you will still pay for some of the day's festivities. The burden of addressing alcohol's secondhand impacts on Super Bowl Sunday falls disproportionately on taxpayers—who underwrite the cost of public safety response, public works, and the criminal justice system. The alcohol industry, which reaps profits from high sales volume, offsets only a tiny percentage of such costs through excise taxes, license fees and fines.

It is time to stop passively paying for alcohol-related problems that most of us do not create. Working to prevent some of those problems on Super Bowl Sunday is one place to begin.



Alcohol 101: Concurrent Sales of Alcohol

More locations can mean more problems

When a business sells alcohol, but primarily has another product focus, it's called “concurrent sales of alcohol.” For instance, retail establishments such as mini-marts, convenience stores, and supermarkets sell groceries, but are also licensed to sell alcohol. The sale of malt liquor at a gas station, wine at the grocery store, and beer at a football stadium are all examples of concurrent sales.

Concurrent sales of alcohol do not necessarily cause problems, but they do increase the overall number of alcohol outlets in an area. Research confirms that communities with more alcohol outlets experience increased problems such as homicide, violence, and drinking-driving.¹ Furthermore, research shows that making alcohol more readily available leads to increased alcohol consumption in a community.² This, in turn, results in alcohol-related problems such as high-risk drinking, negative health effects, and lost work productivity.

There may be an emerging trend of states transitioning from liquor store sales to concurrent sales of alcohol with grocery or gas. For example, The Oregon Liquor Control Commission recently launched a pilot program to allow grocery stores to sell alcohol, asserting that additional locations will be an added convenience to shoppers and will generate revenue for the state. The decision about concurrent sales should be carefully considered since it will have an impact on availability of alcohol and may result in more problems and costs to the community.

1. Scribner, Richard, et. al. “Alcohol Availability and Homicide in New Orleans.” *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, May 1999.

Scribner, Richard, et. al. “The Risk of Assaultive Violence and Alcohol Availability in Los Angeles County” *American Journal of Public Health*, March 1995.

Scribner, Richard, et. al. “Alcohol Outlet Density and Motor Vehicle Crashes in Los Angeles County Cities.” *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, July 1994.

2. MacDonald, Scott. “The Impact of Increased Availability of Wine in Grocery Stores on Consumption: four case histories” *British Journal of Addiction* 81, 381-387, 1986.

residents, the City can demand that the store reduce problems. If problems continue, the City can revoke the store's operating permit and force it to close. The law, known as a "deemed-approved" ordinance, affects only businesses within city limits and allows the community to set standards for business that sell or serve alcohol. Several cities in California have these laws, including Vallejo, Oxnard, and San Diego.

Although Oakland's law has been on the books for 10 years, the City recently stepped up enforcement efforts. Under the direction of the Neighborhood Law Corps (NLC), the City put out a "report card" in April 2004 on the impact of liquor stores in Oakland. The report, called "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly; A Report Card and Recommendations on Oakland's Liquor Stores," graded each store based on the number and types of violations reported. Community members then had 60 days to send their comments to the NLC for inclusion in the findings. Final results are pending, but the City has already categorized 11 of its 359 stores as "ugly" and plans to use these findings as the basis for enforcement efforts.



West Oakland, California is saturated with liquor stores

“Residents have the right to expect city government to address the problems they see in their neighborhoods.”

-- Alex Nguyen, Executive Director, Neighborhood Law Corps

“This report card is a catalyst in making some really great things happen,” says Joan Kiley of the Alcohol Policy Network, in Berkeley, California. “Liquor stores can be magnets for nuisance and crime activity. Enforcing the deemed-approved ordinance is a way to make neighborhoods more livable for community residents.”

Many Oakland residents are thrilled with the action taken by the City and are excited to see the problem stores close. “These liquor stores are preventing our neighborhoods from recovery,” says West Oakland resident Karin Mac Donald. “We need to figure out how to revoke their liquor licenses or figure out some way to shut them down.” While other residents would like to see problem stores transformed into community markets rather than shut down completely, almost everyone agrees that something needs to be done.¹

The City has started enforcing code compliance at some of its most problematic stores and there are plans to address several more before year's end. “Residents have the right to expect city government to address the problems they see in their neighborhoods,” said Alex Nguyen, executive director of the Neighborhood Law Corps. “That's why it is so important for people to call the police and file complaints. We won't know about it unless people tell us.” For more information, contact the Neighborhood Law Corps at www.neighborhoodlawcorps.org or 510-238-6628.

1. *Boston Globe*, July 10, 2004.



Environmental Prevention at Home

...it's easy as 1-2-3

The corner liquor store isn't the only place where teens get alcohol—many times they get it at home. Factors that contribute to underage access in the home include unlocked liquor cabinets and wine cellars, beer in the fridge and alcohol at family events. It's important for parents to be aware that alcohol availability in the home can contribute to underage drinking. Here are steps to help parents make alcohol-safe choices for their children:

At Home:

1. **Be a role model** – parents establish the family norm on alcohol use and alcohol-related expectations for their children. Be aware of the choices you make and how they can impact your child.
2. **Availability** – reducing teens' access to alcohol is important and should be part of a parent's approach to keep alcohol from their children. There are laws, such as social host liability, that hold people liable for providing alcohol to underage youth who are not their own children.
3. **Have an alcohol-free home** – the simplest way to prevent young people from accessing alcohol in the home is to not store it in the home.

Away From Home:

4. **Alcohol providers** – ask older siblings or other young adults where local teens may be obtaining alcohol. If they are purchasing the alcohol themselves, try to identify the retailers and report them to local police.
5. **Build alliances** – to ensure that your child doesn't end up in an environment where alcohol is readily available, know your child's friends and their parents. Don't assume anything—ask other families if they allow young people to drink in their homes.

Resources for Parents & Teens

- ◆ Parents, Teens, and Alcohol: A Dangerous Mix
www.familyeducation.com/article
- ◆ Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center: Regulatory Strategies for Preventing Youth Access to Alcohol
www.udetc.org/documents/accesslaws.pdf
- ◆ The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth: Prevalence of Underage Drinking www.camy.org/factsheets
- ◆ The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information: Cost of Underage Drinking www.mimh200.mimh.edu/PieDb/01354.htm



Cost of Alcohol Abuse in California

In 2001, the cost of alcohol abuse in California totaled \$17.8 billion for health services, substance abuse treatment and prevention, lost productivity from premature deaths, and justice system costs.

Nearly 13,000 Californians died in 2001 as a result of alcohol abuse. These deaths represented lost productivity of nearly \$8 billion and more than 358,000 life years.

Criminal justice system costs attributed to alcohol were \$6.7 billion including police enforcement, judicial and legal services and corrections.

Health care and justice system costs amount to 18 cents a drink, while the beverage industry pays (through excise taxes, license fees, and fines) less than one cent per drink.

Source: Wendy Max, Ph.D., Friedner D. Wittman, Ph.D., Brad Stark, Allyson West. 2004. *The Cost of Alcohol Abuse in California*. Institute for Health & Aging, University of California, San Francisco and Institute for the Study of Social Change, University of California, Berkeley.



Californians Pay the Price *Alcohol Abuse Costs Billions*

Alcohol abuse in California carries a heavy price tag—more than \$500 per year for every California taxpayer—according to a 2004 report by the Institute for Health and Aging and the Institute for the Study of Social Change. In 2001, the cost of alcohol in California came to \$17.8 billion—including the cost of health care, alcohol abuse treatment and prevention, the value of lives lost prematurely, and criminal justice system costs.

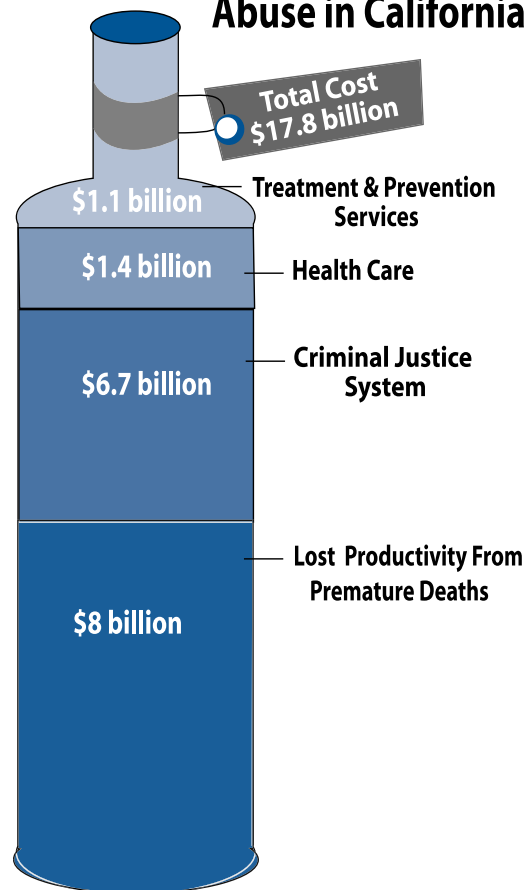
Lives lost prematurely due to alcohol abuse represents the largest cost for the State. More than 13,000 Californians died as a result of alcohol abuse, including 3,600 whose death was caused by alcohol directly, 5,100 who died of an alcohol-related diagnosis, and 4,400 who died of an injury attributed to alcohol. The total value of productivity lost as a result of alcohol-attributed incidents was \$8 billion.

What is the alcohol industry paying to offset some of these costs? Data shows that the alcohol industry paid approximately \$330 million in 2001 to California in excise taxes, fines, and fees. This figure includes \$42 million in Alcoholic Beverage Control license fees and fines, and \$130 million in excise taxes on beer sales, \$19 million on wine sales and \$138 million on spirits. After the alcohol industry paid this \$330 million in 2001, California was still left with a \$17.46 billion tab.

To alleviate the cost of alcohol abuse in California, the report's authors offer the following solutions:

- ◆ **Increase the price of a drink.** We know that when the price of an alcoholic beverage increases, consumption rates and alcohol-related problems decrease.
- ◆ **Raise alcohol license fees on retailers.** On average a retailer pays \$365 per year to renew an alcohol license. Alcohol retailers use more public services, particularly public safety, than any other type of commercial outlet. For that reason, the State should raise annual alcohol license fees to offset the extra costs spent responding to problems at licensed establishments.
- ◆ **Increase taxes on alcohol producers and distributors.** Excise taxes in

Cost of Alcohol Abuse in California



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California for beer and spirits are midrange compared to other states, and are among the lowest in the nation for wine. A tax increase on the alcohol industry could compensate the State for public health programs, justice and safety personnel as well as government social programs.

For the full report, visit the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation at www.schwabfoundation.org/index.php/articles/516

Source: Institute for Health & Aging, University of California, San Francisco and Institute for the Study of Social Change, University of California, Berkeley



California Lawmakers on Alcohol Industry Dole

Want to know how much your California State Senator or Assembly Member accepted from the alcohol industry? Some took nothing, but most accepted thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from alcohol interests in the 2003-2004 session. The contributors include companies like Anheuser-Busch and Coors, and trade organizations like the California Beer & Beverage Distributors and the Distilled Spirits Council.



Top Recipients of Alcohol Industry Contributions (2003-2004)

Assembly 6-Pack

FIREBAUGH, MARCO ANTONIO (D-50)	\$12,000
AGHAZARIAN, GREG (R-26)	\$11,950
SAMUELIAN, STEVEN N. (R-29)	\$11,950
MC CARTHY, KEVIN O. (R-32)	\$9,450
NUNEZ, FABIAN (D-46)	\$9,000
WYLAND, MARK (R-74)	\$8,500

Senate 6-Pack

BURTON, JOHN L. (D-3)	\$117,782
MACHADO, MICHAEL J. (D-5)	\$27,750
BRULTE, JAMES L. (R-31)	\$19,000
CHESBRO, WESLEY P. (D-2)	\$16,500
PERATA, DON (D-9)	\$16,000
BATTIN, JIM (R-37)	\$9,750

To see how much of the total **\$620,000 in contributions** these and other lawmakers accepted visit www.MarinInstitute.org/contributions



Legislative Update

Federal

On September 23, the attorneys general of **Oregon**, **California**, and **Washington** filed an *amicus* brief with the U.S. Supreme Court opposing Michigan and New York's law banning out-of-state vineyards from selling directly to customers. The AG's want winemakers to be allowed to ship their product directly to customers in all 50 states. Twenty states prohibit direct interstate shipment of wine to consumers; others allow it with restrictions. For more information visit www.coalitionforfreetrade.org (Associated Press)

State and Local

Arizona: In August, Arizona lawmakers passed HB 2570, which will extend alcohol sales from 1 a.m. to 2 a.m. statewide. (*Tucson Citizen*, August 25, 2004)

In September, **Pima County** supervisors welcomed a proposal to boost liquor taxes by 10 cents on restaurant and bar sales of beer, wine and distilled spirits. The money would pay for programs for treatment, prevention and law enforcement against underage drinking. All five supervisors will consider asking for state legislation to raise the luxury tax on liquor sales. It would be either a statewide boost or a bill authorizing city and county governments to tax liquor sales. The Legislature last raised the luxury tax on alcohol in 1984. Currently, the tax varies by the type of drink. (*Arizona Daily Star*, September 11, 2004)

Kentucky: On July 30, the state decided not to appeal a Kentucky Court of Appeals ruling overturning its assertion that local governments could not regulate the sale of packaged liquor, such as unopened bottles of whiskey and vodka bought from state owned liquor stores. Liquor stores around Kentucky may sell packaged liquor on Sundays with the approval of local governments. (*Associated Press*, September 4, 2004)

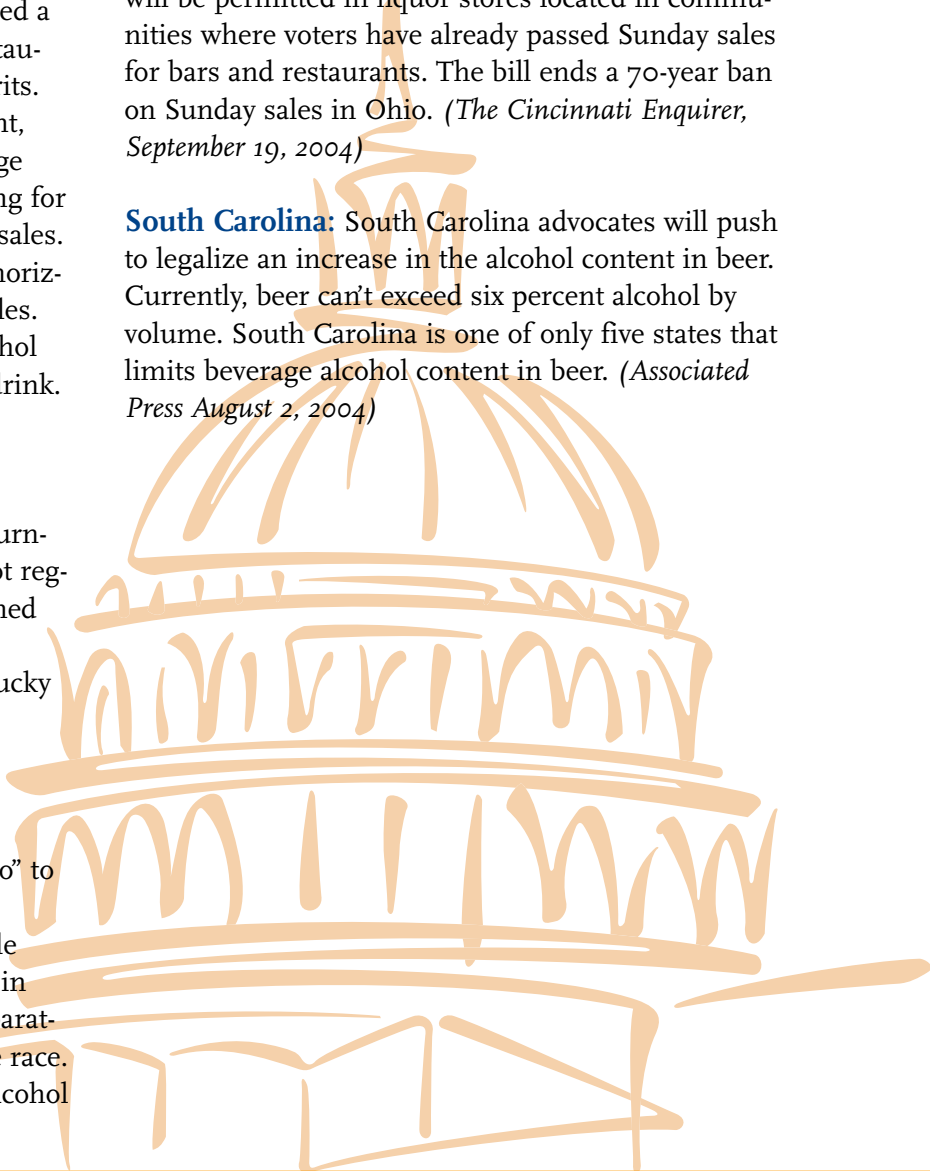
On November 2, **Caldwell County** voters said "no" to allowing alcohol to be sold by the drink in local restaurants. Of the 6,470 votes cast, 3,285 people said "no" to alcohol; while 2,764 votes were cast in favor of the local option—meaning 521 votes separated the two sides on the issue in this county-wide race. As a whole, the County voted down the sale of alcohol

in qualifying restaurants, but four of **Caldwell County's** 13 precincts—Eddy Creek, Bucksnot, Airport and Butler—voted in favor of allowing the sale of liquor by the drink. (*Times Leader Online*, November 3, 2004)

Massachusetts: Rockport, which has been alcohol free for nearly 148 years, will decide whether to leave the group of 17 dry communities in the state and restore the sale of beer, wine and liquor in restaurants, inns and event halls. Residents will vote on the measure in April 2005. (*Associated Press*, September 13, 2004)

Ohio: Senate Bill 164 was signed into law in September, rolling back Ohio's ban on Sunday liquor sales. Previously, Ohioans could only buy beer and wine on Sundays. Under the law, Sunday spirits sales will be permitted in liquor stores located in communities where voters have already passed Sunday sales for bars and restaurants. The bill ends a 70-year ban on Sunday sales in Ohio. (*The Cincinnati Enquirer*, September 19, 2004)

South Carolina: South Carolina advocates will push to legalize an increase in the alcohol content in beer. Currently, beer can't exceed six percent alcohol by volume. South Carolina is one of only five states that limits beverage alcohol content in beer. (*Associated Press* August 2, 2004)



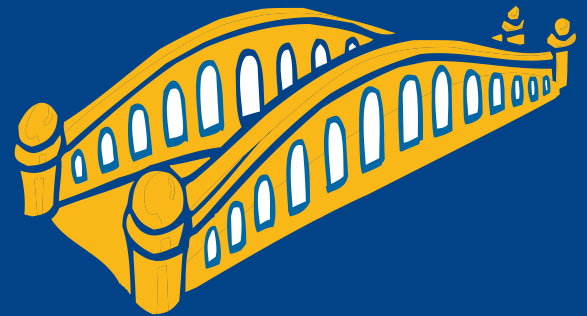


Bridging the Gap

Treatment, Recovery & Prevention

In September 2004, the Marin Institute took an important step to begin mobilizing the recovery, treatment and prevention communities. Held at the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation, “Bridging the Gap” brought public health professionals in the fields of alcohol and other drug prevention, treatment and recovery together to begin building a cohesive movement to advance common agendas. In the past, the different groups have at times found themselves isolated from one another or competing for funding, although they often share a similar vision. “It is high time to embrace our common vision rather than our differences. Creating a more cohesive movement has the potential to improve our physical and social environments and increase resources for *both* treatment and prevention”, said Mark Pertschuk, executive director of the Marin Institute.

Common areas of concern include systematic discrimination against people with alcohol and drug problems by insurance companies, acceptance of abstinence from alcohol use in social situations, alcohol excise taxes, and the lack of adequate adolescent treatment and prevention resources. A report from the group including recommendations for next steps is forthcoming.



LGBT Community Seeks Solutions to Alcohol-Related Problems

Concerned that alcohol and other drug problems disproportionately impact LGBT communities,¹ a team of national prevention and treatment leaders met in Chicago in September to develop solutions to address this urgent public health problem. Participants identified key environmental factors that contribute to alcohol problems in the LGBT community—such as alcohol ads that target LGBT individuals and serving practices in some bars—and began to develop solutions. The intensive one-day strategy session was sponsored by the Marin Institute, the American Medical Association, the Chicago Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health, and the Youth Leadership Institute. The event was well received in the community and earned local media attention. The Marin Institute is currently developing recommendations for future activities based on the National Academy of Science’s report, “Reducing Underage Drinking”.



1. National Association of Lesbian and Gay Addiction Professionals (NALGAP), briefing paper, July 2002.