

## WHY ALCOHOL RESTRICTIONS AT COMMUNITY EVENTS ARE IMPORTANT FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

- **Alcohol at community events provides easy access to alcohol for underage youth who could have friends over age 21 who purchase alcohol for them.** Restrictions or bans on alcohol at community events reduces social access to alcohol.
- **At sporting events, alcohol use can fuel outbreaks of fighting and other forms of disruptive behavior among fans.** Stadiums can implement policies that discontinue alcohol sales during the second half of a sporting event, or prohibit the sale of alcohol in the stands to reduce alcohol-related problems at these events.
- **Alcohol at community events increases the risk of alcohol-impaired patrons driving after an event.** Banning the sale of alcohol at an event, or restricting the hours during which alcoholic beverages can be sold might reduce the likelihood that patrons will drive drunk after the event.

### **Considerations for Establishing This Policy in Your Community**

**ISSUE:** Stadium owners and other event organizers may oppose bans or restrictions on the sale of alcohol for fear that such restrictions could reduce participation in events or reduce profits because revenue from alcohol sales would be eliminated.

**RESPONSE:** *Although some events may draw smaller crowds as a result of an alcohol ban, many events would not lose a significant number of participants. Instead, such events would likely draw more families who want to enjoy an event that is safe and free from alcohol-related problems.*

**ISSUE:** Some community members might believe that the restrictions will be more effective if they are implemented voluntarily and have the support of the event organizers.

**RESPONSE:** *Community members can approach event organizers first. If event organizers do not voluntarily implement alcohol restrictions, concerned community members can present the organizers with a strong argument which could encourage them to impose their own alcohol restrictions at their event. If event organizers cannot be persuaded to implement their own restrictions, community members might want to take the following steps:*

- Gather information about any problems associated with specific events (contact: police department, licensing agency, managers of facilities, security personnel, event coordinators, business and property owners near the event).
- Evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, and enforcement of existing alcohol control policies for community events.

- Identify alcohol control policies that address the problems associated with community events, and attempt to pass local ordinances requiring such policies.

**Note:** Community members are strongly urged to consult with a local attorney to learn about state law requirements before attempting to pass a local ordinance on restricting alcohol at community events.

### **Considerations for Implementation**

- **Event organizers should ensure that all staff, paid and voluntary, are aware of event policies and are trained to comply with these policies.**
- **Mechanisms need to be in place to enforce event policies.** As with any policy, alcohol restrictions at community events must be enforced in order to be effective. A monitoring system, such as security guards, management spot-checks, or surveillance cameras, can ensure that employees are complying with event rules.

### **How Alcohol Restrictions at Community Events Fit into a Larger Context**

Youth obtain alcohol from commercial and social sources. With effective alcohol restrictions at community events, both commercial and social access to alcohol can be reduced. It will be more difficult for teens to purchase alcohol themselves and for them to obtain it from others.

Additionally, alcohol restrictions send a clear message that alcohol at youth-oriented events is not acceptable. Communities also need to implement and enforce policies that reduce commercial and social access to alcohol outside of community events.

Efforts by event organizers to restrict alcohol use at community events can serve to educate the community about the need for alcohol control policies and build community support for other prevention efforts such as:

- sponsorship restrictions
- zoning ordinances
- billboard bans and advertising restrictions
- restrictions in public places

Sources: Cassidy, D., Flora, J., Foote, D. *Alcohol Use at Community Events: Creating Policies to Prevent Problems*. San Diego Alcohol Program and Applied Communication Technology, 1987. University of Minnesota, Alcohol Epidemiology Program, website, February 2001.