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Drinking Problems

The Ventura County edition of *Prevention File* is published in cooperation with the Ventura County Behavioral Health Department, Training, Applied Research, Alcohol and Drug Prevention and Community Mental Health Promotion Division. Please address all comments to Kathy Staples, manager of the Training, Applied Research, Alcohol and Drug Prevention and Community Mental Health Promotion Division, 300 N. Hillmont Ave., Ventura, CA 93003 or call 805/652-6096. E-mail: [Kathleen.Staples@mail.co.ventura.ca.us](mailto:Kathleen.Staples@mail.co.ventura.ca.us)

# PREVENTION— Everybody's Business

**ALL TOO OFTEN FOR PEOPLE WORKING IN ALCOHOL PROBLEM PREVENTION** the business community is synonymous with those who sell alcohol and is considered to be part of the problem. However, those in the business community—including alcohol retailers—can be valuable allies when it comes to environmental and policy approaches to preventing underage and binge drinking.

For example, hotels and motels are not businesses that readily come to mind when it comes to prevention. But, as the Alcohol Epidemiology Program at the School of Public Health, University of Minnesota, points out, young people may be able to access alcohol at unsupervised parties held at hotels and motels where adults over the age of 21 or underage youths have rented a room. In addition, youths may obtain alcohol at events, such as wedding receptions, held at hotels. Whether the supply of alcohol to underage persons is either indirectly related to the hotel (e.g., an adult rents a room where underage drinking occurs) or directly related (e.g., employees hired by the hotel for a wedding reception sell alcohol to an underage person), these facilities can play a part in restricting youth access to alcohol, as follows:

**Restrict the number of persons who can occupy a room at one time.** Limiting the number of persons who can occupy a hotel room (e.g., no

more than four people at a time) may aid hotel managers in controlling parties or gatherings involving underage drinkers.

**Prohibit parties on hotel property that create a noise disturbance.** Such policies can aid hotel managers in controlling underage drinking, which is often accompanied by loud noise and disruptive behavior. These policies have the additional advantage of preventing the disturbance of other hotel guests.

**Regularly monitor hotel parking lots and other unsupervised areas.** Monitoring of hotel parking lots, pools, and other unsupervised areas may prevent gatherings in which underage drinking is likely to occur.



Ojai Valley Inn and Spa

**Post signs at the registration desk and in each room informing adult renters of their legal liability of providing alcohol to youths.**

Hotel owners may also want to require adult renters to sign a statement upon registration indicating that the renter understands and agrees to abide by the law.

**Restrict room rental to persons 18 years of age or older.** Check the age identification of all persons appearing under 25. Hotel owners may reduce underage drinking on their property, and thus reduce their legal liability, by implementing policies that restrict persons under the age of 18 from renting rooms. However, under some state laws, hotel/motel owners may be prohibited from placing such age restrictions on renters of hotel rooms.

**Allow only trained servers to serve alcohol at hotel events.** Hotel owners should require all alcohol servers and sellers hired for wedding receptions or other events that are held at the hotel to be trained in responsible beverage service. In addition, all alcohol servers and sellers employed in a hotel's restaurant or bar should be required to have server training in avoiding service to underage youths and service to intoxication.

**Require event planners to hire extra security for events in which alcohol will be served.** All alcohol at hotel events should be monitored by a hotel employee or security guard to make sure that youth do not have access to the alcohol (e.g., ensuring that youth cannot serve themselves beer from kegs that are unpurvised).

**Hire extra security during sporting events.** Hotels should hire extra security when there is an event in town that draws a large percentage of underage youth, such as high school sports tournaments, college games, or other sporting events.

Of course, all those in the business of selling alcoholic beverages—bars, restaurants, grocery stores, convenience store, liquor stores and so on—have important roles to play in preventing alcohol problems by engaging in responsible

sales and serving practices. That means having sound management policies and staff training programs aimed at not selling alcohol to those under age 21 and not serving any patron to the point of intoxication (see *Prevention File*, Ventura County, Fall 2003).

But it's not just those in the hospitality industry who can contribute to community prevention efforts. All businesses can establish a normative environment that discourages underage and binge drinking by establishing policies and procedures to discourage workplace alcohol use, which refers to the consumption of alcohol that occurs within two hours before going to work, in the process of conducting work tasks, during lunch breaks or other breaks, at down times, and at work-related meetings or scheduled events. Results of workplace drinking surveys reveal that a significant number of employees: 1) routinely consume alcohol prior to showing up for work, 2) report to work under the influence of alcohol, and 3) drink or become intoxicated on the job.

There are special issues surrounding alcohol use in the workplace when employees under the age of 21 are involved. Youth consumption of alcohol in the workplace involves not only a violation of an organization's alcohol policy and an increased risk for poor performance and serious injury, but it is also a violation of state law.

According to the Alcohol Epidemiology Program, several problems specifically concerning underage drinking in the workplace include the provision of alcohol to underage employees by co-workers over the age of 21, the availability of alcohol at company social events where underage youth are present, and youth access to alcohol in workplaces that have a license to sell alcoholic beverages.

Employers have a responsibility to provide a safe work environment for their employees. If an organization is negligent in providing such

an environment, it can be held legally and/or financially liable for harm that befalls its employees. In relation to underage access to alcohol, an organization can be held liable if an underage employee obtains alcohol at work or at a company event and that employee is later injured or causes injury to another person. To reduce such liability, organizations need to implement specific, written policies that address youth access to alcohol in the workplace."

**It's not just those in the hospitality industry who can contribute to community prevention efforts. All businesses can establish a normative environment that discourages underage and binge drinking.**

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's report *College Drinking: Changing the Culture* includes a series of recommendations on what colleges and universities can do to reduce the problem of high-risk or binge drinking by students that emphasize the role that businesses can play in prevention. The report calls for the creation of "joint college-community interventions to reduce student drinking problems. As well as the creation a task force or coalition representing relevant constituencies on campus (including students) and in the community (including local businesses) to develop and monitor college drinking initiatives."

The business community will play an important role in Ventura

County's new countywide community partnership to both establish and maintain standards for alcohol sales and service and contribute to a normative environment that does not tolerate high risk and binge drinking. □

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# LAW ENFORCEMENT: PARTNERS IN PREVENTION

IT'S NOT JUST A MATTER of "crack downs" and "getting tough" when it comes to problems related to high-risk drinking. Law enforcement officials—police officers, highway patrol officers, sheriff's deputies and alcohol beverage control agents—can play an important role in preventing alcohol problems, especially when they work collaboratively with each other and community members.

For example, policies affecting underage access to alcohol are at the heart of environmental approaches to reducing problems related to high-risk drinking by youths. However, such policies cannot be fully effective without enforcement. It is imperative that local law enforcement provides effective and consistent enforcement of policies affecting underage access to alcohol. Without such enforcement, communities may begin to view alcohol control policies as meaningless and violations of such policies as acceptable.

But the role of police in enforcing laws aimed at reducing youth access to alcohol should not be limited to punishing youths who violate these laws. Instead, law enforcement agencies can take a more preventive approach by including a variety of strategies in their efforts to reduce commercial access to alcohol by young people, investing time and effort in identifying and punishing adults over the age of 21 who illegally provide or sell alcohol to underage youth, and taking measures to train police officers in more effective strategies of enforcing youth access laws.

The Alcohol Epidemiology Program, a research program within the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, recommends the following law enforcement strategies to reduce youth access to alcohol:

- Ask underage youth who are caught drinking to disclose the source of their alcohol. Although youths are often reluctant to divulge the identity of their alcohol supplier,

police can provide incentives for disclosure, such as reduced penalties for the underage offender. With this information, police can then give a citation to the adult supplier.

- Conduct a minimum of two compliance checks in each licensed alcohol establishment each year. Police need to consistently enforce penalties against alcohol establishments that serve or sell alcohol to underage persons. Enforcement may be accomplished through strategies such as random compliance checks by local law enforcement. Compliance checks have been shown to substantially reduce sales to minors.
- Conduct weekly walk-throughs of licensed establishments. Regular visits to licensed establishments may help establish a police presence and serve as a reminder to merchants that police intend to punish merchants who provide alcohol to underage youths.
- Develop a system to monitor alcohol-related problems associated with community events and specific establishments. Such a system may help identify specific problem areas in the community, which may guide future law enforcement efforts and policy development.
- Consistently enforce laws against adult providers and social hosts. Penalties against adult providers must be consistently enforced. Social host liability policies can help penalize adult providers and policies such as keg registration can assist law enforcement in identifying adults who provide alcohol to underage persons.
- Routinely conduct investigative checks of adults who are approached outside alcohol outlets and asked to buy alcohol for youth. Youthful-look-

ing persons can be employed to approach an adult outside stores that sell alcohol and ask the adult to buy alcohol for them. Adults who do buy alcohol for the underage-appearing person can then be approached by an officer and informed of the penalties for provision of alcohol to minors.

- Work with parents, schools, churches, youth and other community members concerned about underage access to alcohol. Such

collaborations may help police identify and prevent underage drinking parties before they happen. For example, if a high school teacher hears about plans for an upcoming party at a student's house, he or she can notify the police who can then visit the home where the party is to take place.

According to the Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center, which is funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, consumption of alcohol by youths at high school and college parties presents difficult law enforcement challenges. Community norms often tolerate or even condone parties; attitudes towards law enforcement involvement in the parties can sometimes be negative. The parties themselves are dangerous, unpredictable, and hard to control. A lack of or improper enforcement techniques can make things worse rather than better. But law enforcement can take proactive approaches to underage drinking parties that can help to prevent them before they start and minimize the potential for tragedy and exposure to liability while maximizing opportunities to educate the public on the dangers of youth and alcohol.

Traditional police responses to underage drinking parties usually involve the dispatch of one or two officers directly to the violator's house.



The mere presence of a police car often causes partygoers to scatter to their vehicles and flee the scene. For those who decide to stay, the officers often just ask them to lower the volume on the stereo and pour out the alcohol. Generally, enforcement action is not necessarily taken and rarely is this situation used as an opportunity to educate youth, their parents, or the community as a whole. The result is a repetition of calls for service either later that night or the following weekend. The impression that underage drinking parties will be tolerated is therefore reinforced.

Ventura County's recently funded State Incentive Grant will focus on three kinds of environmental risk factors shown by research to affect rates of underage and binge drinking. One is the availability of alcohol—such as the number and density of alcohol outlets, low prices and drink specials, and house and beach parties where alcohol is available to underage guests. Another is the community laws and norms that tolerate binge drinking, such as advertising and promotion of alcoholic beverages and inadequate enforcement of laws regarding sale of alcohol to minors. Another is the tendency of many adults to look upon binge drinking as a harmless "rite of passage" for youth (see *Prevention File*, Fall 2004). Law enforcement has a role to play in responding to each of those risk factors.

Ventura County law enforcement officials in a number of jurisdictions are already actively engaged in prevention efforts, from Thousand Oaks, where bike officers work with decoys in "shoulder tap" operations and participate in a bar task force (see *Prevention File*, Spring 2004) to Oxnard, which dedicated a senior police officer to work on alcohol issues, especially related to high-risk alcohol establishments (see *Prevention File*, Summer 2003).

Ventura County's new countywide community partnership will seek to develop a unified environmental prevention system that will encourage new ties between law enforcement officials and other community agencies and prevention specialists to expand research-based environmental prevention strategies. □

For more information on the role that law enforcement can play in prevention go to the Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center at [www.udetc.org](http://www.udetc.org) and the Alcohol Epidemiology Program at [www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/](http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/)

# City Hall is On



THERE MAY BE SOME TRUTH TO THE ADAGE, "You can't fight city hall," but when it comes to fighting alcohol-related problems, city hall can be an important ally. Local governments have unique powers that they can bring to bear when it comes to promoting public health and safety, including reducing risks associated with the sales and service of alcoholic beverages.

Modern zoning ordinances came into widespread use throughout the United States following a 1926 Supreme Court ruling that cities, counties, and other locally governed jurisdictions have the power to protect the public's "health, safety, welfare, and morals"

California law gives municipalities—cities for incorporated areas and counties for unincorporated areas—a wide range of legal prerogatives that they can use to address alcohol-related risks. With community support and vigilant enforcement, these prevention measures can sustain environments that are less likely to experience alcohol-related disruption and damage.

Local governments have the power to control alcohol-related problems both through formal code measures and in more informal ways, according to a guide on environmental prevention from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Communities have a significant opportunity to manage the potentially troublesome aspects of retail alcohol availability by limiting alcohol outlets through the local zoning code as follows:

- Density restrictions can limit the number of alcohol outlets by population, geographic area, or as a percentage of all retail alcohol outlets in a given commercial area.
- Restrictions on hours of operation can limit the times when alcoholic beverages can be sold.

- Spacing restrictions can specify a minimum distance between alcohol outlets and schools, churches, residences, parks, playgrounds, or other community sites.
- Standards of operation and facility design can ensure that outlet premises are securely maintained and that staff members are trained not to sell alcohol to underage youths, intoxicated individuals, or those likely to drive. Zoning ordinances may also require certain architectural design features to prevent theft or loitering.
- Types of alcohol outlets can be limited to certain zones or disallowed altogether. For example, bars that offer live entertainment generally are not permitted in residential areas.

**Local governments have the power to control alcohol-related problems both through formal code measures and in more informal ways.**

Some communities do not permit drive-through outlets anywhere.

For example, Santa Paula's City Council used its zoning power to address concerns about alcohol-related homicides by enacting an ordinance that requires outlets to train their employees in responsible beverage service to reduce risk for intoxication as a condition of doing business in the city. (see "Serving up responsibility in Santa Paula," *Prevention File* Ventura County, Winter 2002).

Other measures that local jurisdictions can take include:

**Negotiated agreements with specific alcohol outlet operators.** For example, the Oxnard City Council took steps to revoke a special use permit for a problematic alcohol outlet after community complaints and police observation of overcrowding, lack of security, and violation of other provisions of the permit (see "A historic first: Oxnard revokes club's right to serve alcohol," *Prevention File* Ventura County, Winter 2002)

**Prevention of access to alcohol by underage would-be drinkers.** Ventura county cities have joined with state alcoholic beverage control offi-

# Your Side

cialists in a Hospitality Oversight Committee that can marshal city legal staff, fire safety inspectors, and building code officials to concentrate attention on nuisance outlets that condone service to minors or obviously intoxicated patrons. (see "Changing for the better in Ventura," *Prevention File* Ventura County, Fall 2003)

## Property management procedures and architectural designs that encourage prevention.

The City of Ventura's community development policies favor the addition of restaurants that can serve alcohol within its downtown specific plan (DTSP) area because downtown emphasizes a pedestrian environment. On the other hand, the city is opposed to any new off-sale licenses along Ventura Avenue because of the existing high concentration of such businesses along that commercial corridor.

**Regulations for the sale and use of alcohol in public places and at public events.** Filmore's holiday observances in city parks, Ventura County's annual Pride festival, and Cinco de Mayo celebrations are examples of how localities can conduct public events safely, following guidelines offered in "Keeping your public event festive and safe: A planning guide for Ventura County communities," commissioned by the Ventura County Department of Behavioral Health. (see "Assessing community events to reduce alcohol problems," *Prevention File* Ventura County, Fall 2003)

## Local use permit conditions embody prevention research

California local government continues to embrace CUPs—conditional use permits—as a way to supplement state alcoholic beverage control (ABC) licensure. A 2004 study of 19 comparable cities around the state, conducted by the City of Ventura's community development department, found that 16 of the 19 were imposing CUPs to one extent or another in the management of local alcohol sales and service.

CUPs, as prevention tools, have been studied for over a decade by UC Berkeley researcher Friedner

Wittman, PhD, and his colleagues. He describes a range of conditions to curtail alcohol-related problems by restricting activities in and around the business locations, including:

- Authorizing police officers to enter a licensed alcohol outlet at any time to determine whether any regulations have been violated.
- Ensuring the presence of an on-duty employee over the age of 21 at all times when alcoholic beverages are sold.
- Hiring security guards to protect patrons and prevent damage to the premises.
- Preventing underage youth from entering the premises during certain hours or without an accompanying adult.
- Requiring Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) training for staff of retail alcohol establishments and short-term permit events.
- Requiring soundproofing and fencing to avoid disturbing neighbors.
- Restricting nude entertainment.
- Restricting the hours and days when alcohol is sold.

Ventura county jurisdictions are using these

prevention tools in a number of ways. Ongoing prevention research points to the positive impacts of these approaches, and the Ventura city council is even now considering the adoption of additional, more rigorous, options already in place in Oxnard and in a growing number of other California localities.

## Ventura City Council Investigates Options

Prompted by community concerns about the extent of alcohol-related crime (for example, over 40 percent of all arrests and nearly two-thirds of domestic violence arrests) and with the largest number—263—of ABC licenses in the county, the city of Ventura, in 2004, embarked on a year-long study of alcohol sales licensure and permitting. City staff from the police and community development departments met with members of community and business groups leading up to a September 2004 report to the council. The report summarized existing control measures, assessed tools in place in comparable cities, and described measures that might benefit Ventura, including establishing a CUP ordinance and a self-funded local alcohol monitoring and enforcement program.



According to the report, under current policies local controls are limited to reviews of new state ABC license applications. The police department now recommends ABC license conditions, such as restricted hours of sale, required external lighting, limits on outdoor sales and service, requirement for uniformed (private) security personnel, and restrictions on outside advertising, size of product (for example, no sale of 40 ounce containers of high-alcohol beer), and times for happy hours or live music. However, chronic state ABC under-staffing can hamper subsequent enforcement of such conditions. Imposition of local CUPs would give local authorities a chance to intervene with problem outlets without have to wait for lengthy state ABC processes that in some instances can consume half a year.

As a corollary to the CUP process, the report also outlined two additional provisions to oversee local alcohol sales and service. Following the lead of Oakland, Vallejo, Santa Cruz, and Oxnard, the city council might amend the Municipal Code to create a "Deemed Approved" ordinance. Such a provision would establish standards for existing alcohol outlets, supplementing existing the "Public Nuisance" laws by addressing litter, loitering, graffiti, unruly behavior, and noise that can be generated by alcohol retailing.

The city staff report also described how Ventura might establish an annual fee to finance a more active local role in alcohol sales regulation and enforcement. Santa Rosa, Alameda County, Oakland, and Santa Cruz have already enacted such programs. But not everyone supports such fees, expressing concerns about its effectiveness and a perception that they "punish" non-problem outlets. During an August meeting prior to the Council hearing Andrew Casana of the California Restaurant Association said: "Get rid of the bad apples, but don't punish those businesses doing the right thing" (*The Ventura Star*). Casana was also one of 15 members

of the public who spoke to the city council on September 20, 2004, when it considered the staff report. Other speakers included representatives of community councils and business associations.

The council voted unanimous to approve further staff review of the various options, including consideration of a sliding alcohol permit fee reflecting the degree of health and safety risk likely associated with various types of alcohol retail settings. The sliding fee is an alternative to a flat \$500 annual assessment on each license as originally floated during the August city council meeting with business interests.

"The Council voted to continue consideration of the policy discussion and requested that staff conduct additional research. We do not (yet) have a return date to Council scheduled at this time," Ventura community development planner Stratis Perros told *Prevention File*.

As the experiences of cities in Ventura County demonstrate, city hall does have an important role to play in preventing alcohol-related problems. And, as the current Ventura city council exploration demonstrates, these measures can encompass a range of options, including the ability to generate local revenues to monitor and enforce local conditions designed to promote health and safety for the benefit of the entire community, business and residents alike.

To learn more about city hall as a prevention ally, access these references on the Web:

- Center for Health Improvement. Alcohol Availability (addresses conditional use permits, general ordinances, and zoning ordinances as practices by California local governments). [www.healthpolicycoach.org/doc.asp?id=121](http://www.healthpolicycoach.org/doc.asp?id=121)
- The Role of the Community in Problems Related to Alcohol Availability, chapter 2, in *Preventing Problems Related to Alcohol Availability: Environmental Approaches (Reference Guide)*—DHHS Publication No. (SMA)99-3298. [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/bv.fcgi?rid=hstat5.chapter.15922](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/bv.fcgi?rid=hstat5.chapter.15922) □

**As the experiences of cities in Ventura County demonstrate, city hall does have an important role to play in preventing alcohol-related problems.**

# A CALL TO



STUDENT DEATHS RELATED TO DRINKING are as much a harbinger of the beginning of each academic year as freshman orientation—six in Oregon alone in Fall 2004, including one high school student. Nationwide, at least 1,400 college student deaths a year are linked to alcohol, according to a report from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

"High-risk drinking also results in serious injuries, assaults, and other health and academic problems, and is a major factor in damage to institutional property. The relative scarcity of headlines about college drinking belies an important fact: that the consequences of excessive college drinking are more widespread and destructive than most people realize. While only isolated incidents tend to make news, many school presidents conclude that these pervasive, albeit less obvious, problems are occurring on their campuses at the same time. It is a persistent and costly problem that affects virtually all residential colleges, college communities, and college students, whether they drink or not" (*A Call to Action*, NIAAA, 2003).

But colleges and their surrounding communities are taking steps to reduce problems related to student drinking based on emerging research showing that prevention strategies that affect the campus environment as a whole can have a large-scale impact on the entire campus community. This approach represents a shift in thinking about prevention and suggests new leadership roles that postsecondary administrators, faculty, other campus officials, students and community members alike can play to reduce problems associated with alcohol use and to promote academic achievement.

# ACTION To Reduce College Drinking Problems

The U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention report *Environmental Management: A Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Alcohol and Other Drug Use on College Campuses* says that focusing on campus environments, student decisions to drink or use other drugs are shaped by:

- campus social norms and expectancies
- campus policies and procedures
- availability of alcohol and other drugs
- enforcement of regulations and laws
- availability of alcohol-free social and recreational options

The Center points out that one of the chief lessons taught by nearly two decades of prevention research is the need for a comprehensive approach, one that not only addresses the specific educational needs of individuals but also seeks to bring about basic change at the institutional, community and public policy level. This approach is grounded in the firmly established principle that the decisions that people make about alcohol and other drug use will be shaped by the physical, social, economic, and legal environment that in turn can be shaped by a committed group of local prevention advocates, higher education officials, government officials, and others.

Consistent with current prevention research, the Center believes a broader approach to student alcohol and other drug use is needed, one that reflects a more complete understanding of how societal conditions drive alcohol use and the magnitude of alcohol-related problems. The multi-pronged environmental approach includes:

- college presidential leadership on alcohol issues
- formation of campus alcohol task forces
- reform of campus alcohol policies and programs
- a broad reexamination of campus conditions, including academic standards and requirements, the campus infrastructure, and the academic calendar. For example, professors

could be encourage to give exams on Fridays to reduce mid-week partying or conduct Saturday morning classes.

- formation of campus and community coalitions that focus on environmental change strategies
- The Center also recommends that colleges and universities conduct ongoing process and outcome evaluations of alcohol prevention activities, both on campus and in the surrounding community, in order to identify specific problems and responses and monitor whether.

## Essence of environmental management

The Center points out that traditional approaches to prevention have tacitly accepted the world as it is and then tried to teach students as individuals how to resist its temptations. However, environmental management calls for college officials, working in conjunction with the local community, to change the campus and community environment that contributes to alcohol problems. Such change can be brought about through an integrated combination of programs, policies, and public education campaigns. With the environmental management approach, there is a coordinated effort to change the world—that is, the campus and community environment—in order to produce a large-scale impact on the entire campus population, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

That approach is echoed by the NIAAA *Call to Action* report, which says that the research strongly supports the use of comprehensive, integrated programs with multiple complementary components that target the student population as a whole and the college and the surrounding community. Specific environmental strategies include:

*Increased enforcement of minimum drinking age laws:* Compared to other programs aimed at youth in general, increasing the legal age for purchase and consumption of alcohol has been

the most successful effort to date in reducing underage drinking and alcohol-related problems. Most studies suggest that higher legal drinking ages reduce alcohol consumption, and over half found that a higher legal drinking age is associated with decreased rates of traffic crashes. Studies also indicate that policies are less effective if they are not consistently enforced. Moreover, the certainty of consequences is more important than severity in deterring undesirable behavior.

*Implementation, increased publicity, and enforcement of other laws to reduce alcohol-impaired driving.* Using sobriety checkpoints and providing server training intervention can reduce injury and deaths caused by alcohol-impaired driving and related injuries and deaths. Comprehensive community interventions have also shown that increased enforcement and



Moorpark College

publicity of laws to reduce alcohol-impaired driving have produced significant reductions in the types of motor vehicle crashes most likely to involve alcohol and alcohol-related traffic deaths.

*Restrictions on alcohol retail outlet density.* Studies of the number of alcohol licenses or outlets per population size have found a relationship between the density of alcohol outlets, consumption, and related problems such as violence, other crime, and health problems. One study, targeting college students specifically, found higher levels of drinking and binges drinking

## Creating a Research-Based Campus Alcohol Program

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism offers the following advice to campuses and communities as they develop prevention programs:

### Why Do It?

- Excessive drinking affects all students, increases institutional costs, and hurts town-gown relationships.
- Research-based strategies are more effective than quick fixes and produce quantifiable results.
- Effective programs improve student health and safety and contribute to a meaningful legacy.

### Where to Begin?

- Commit to a long-term, research-based approach.
- Persuade the larger campus community of the wisdom of this approach.

### How Do I Take Action?

- Collect basic information about the nature and extent of student drinking as a first step.
- Design a comprehensive program using the "3-in-1" framework recommended by the Task Force, which is a comprehensive, integrated programs with multiple complementary components that target: (1) individuals, including at-risk or alcohol-dependent drinkers, (2) the student population as a whole, and (3) the college and the surrounding community.
- Incorporate strategies that address the particular problems on your campus.
- Secure outside support for your program.

### How Can I Sustain Interest in the Program?

- Create administrative norms that help institutionalize the program.
- Monitor program results and publicize them.
- Continue the conversation on this issue with all members of the campus community, local community leaders, and your peers; use this dialogue to improve and update the program to respond to changing conditions on campus.

among underage and older college students when a larger number of businesses sold alcohol within one mile of campus. Numbers of

outlets may be restricted directly or indirectly through policies that make licenses more difficult to obtain such as increasing the cost of a license.

*Increased prices and excise taxes on alcoholic beverages.* A substantial body of research has shown that higher alcoholic beverage prices or taxes are associated with lower levels of alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems. In addition, higher beer prices tend to decrease drinking and binge drinking among U.S. college students. Other research has found associations between higher alcoholic beverage taxes and lower rates of some types of violent and lower rates of sexually transmitted diseases, as well as with increases in college graduation rates.

*Responsible beverage service policies in social and commercial settings.* Studies suggest that bartenders, waiters, and others in the hospitality

industry would welcome written policies about responsible service of alcohol and training in how to implement them appropriately. Policies could include serving alcohol in standard sizes, limiting sales of pitchers, cutting off service of alcohol to intoxicated patrons, promoting alcohol-free drinks and food, and eliminating last-call announcements. Servers and other staff could receive training in skills such as slowing alcohol service, refusing service to intoxicated patrons, checking age identification, and detecting false identification. To prevent sales to underage patrons, it is important to back identification policies with penalties for noncompliance.

*Campus and community coalitions.* Such coalitions involving all major stakeholders may be critical to implement these strategies effectively. A number of comprehensive community efforts have been designed to reduce alcohol and other substance use and related negative consequences among underage youth, including college students, and among adults and their outcomes demonstrate the potential effectiveness of this approach in college communities.

This approach reframes the issue as a community problem, not simply a college problem, brings together the range of players needed to address it, and sets the stage for cooperative action.

### College Prevention in Ventura County

Ventura County is home to three community colleges serving over 34,000 students—Ventura College (13,000 students), Oxnard College (6,500) and Moorpark College (14,500)—as well as California Lutheran University (2,900) in Thousand Oaks, the newly established California State University-Channel Islands (2,500) in Camarillo, branch and satellite campuses of California State University Northridge and the University of California at Santa Barbara (in Ventura). Over the next two decades Cal State Channel Islands is expected to serve more than 15,000 full-time equivalent students.

While campuses have implemented a number of prevention measures and programs, the newly

funded countywide prevention collaboration (see *Prevention File*, Vol. 19, No. 4, Fall 2004) to reduce underage and binge drinking offers an opportunity for a research-based, coordinated prevention effort countywide through support of a campus/community coalition to:

- Identify and recruit coalition members from campuses and surrounding communities who share a common interest in reducing underage and binge drinking by students
- Survey students regarding alcohol use, related problems and environmental factors contributing to those problems
- Conduct environmental assessments regarding alcohol availability and community "hotspots" related to alcohol use
- Develop a strategic plan to implement policies aimed at reducing problems related to underage and binge drinking

For additional information on collegiate prevention strategies, see *A Call to Action* at [www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/Reports/TaskForce/CallToAction\\_01.aspx](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/Reports/TaskForce/CallToAction_01.aspx) and *Environmental Management: A Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Alcohol and Other Drug Use on College Campuses* at [www.edc.org/hecl/pubs/enviro-mgmt.html](http://www.edc.org/hecl/pubs/enviro-mgmt.html).