

## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL ON SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS

CSA Report 1-A-04

Subject: AMA Policy Consolidation: Labeling, Advertising, and Promotion of Alcoholic Beverages

Presented by: J. Chris Hawk, III, MD, Chair

Referred to: Reference Committee D  
(Jerome C. Cohen, MD, Chair)

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### 1 Introduction

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3 This report is a Council on Scientific Affairs initiative to consolidate several current policies of  
4 our American Medical Association (AMA) on the issues of alcoholic beverage labeling,  
5 advertising, and promotion. These policies incorporate various levels of restrictions, and target  
6 various locations or venues where alcohol is used, advertised, or promoted. Additionally, these  
7 policies address alcoholic beverages from the perspective of providing accurate health  
8 information to adults and youth in appropriate ways so as to reduce abuse of alcohol and to  
9 prevent its promotion to and use by minors. As a whole, these policies form a strong stance  
10 supporting the reduction of harmful and underage use of alcohol, encouraging accurate labeling,  
11 and supporting restrictions on advertising that may contribute to the consumption of alcohol by  
12 minors or the potentially hazardous consumption of alcohol by adults. Consolidation will  
13 facilitate use of these policies by advocates in and outside of our membership. These policies  
14 remain relevant as the alcoholic beverage industry continues to try to expand its advertising  
15 reach, particularly with regard to college-age students. Additionally, existing AMA programs are  
16 devoted to reducing binge-drinking on campuses.

17  
18 As stated in Policy H-600.111 (AMA Policy Database), the purpose of policy consolidation is to  
19 make information on AMA policy more accessible. Policy consolidation also will improve the  
20 organization of the AMA *Policy Finder* program database. **The purpose of policy consolidation**  
21 **does not include the establishment of new policy positions.** Consequently, Policy H-600.111  
22 states that the recommendations in policy consolidation reports cannot be amended and must be  
23 voted upon in their entirety. Changes in AMA policy can be accomplished through other types of  
24 reports or by resolutions that are submitted to the AMA House of Delegates.

25  
26 This report consolidates 10 policies from section 30 and one policy from section 95 of the *Policy*  
27 *Finder* program database. The Council proposes that the consolidated policy be retained in  
28 Section 30 and be renumbered to facilitate searching of the policy database.

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30 In considering policies for consolidation, the Council employed the following approach:

- 31  
32 (1) Search the current AMA Policy Database (search terms included alcohol, alcoholic,  
33 beverages, label, labeling, advertising, advertisement, drinking).  
34  
35 (2) Identify outmoded and outdated policies.

- 1 (3) Group similar policies (or parts of policies) together into one section. To facilitate  
2 review and comparison, all pertinent AMA policies or policy elements reflected in the  
3 consolidation are cited in their entirety.  
4
- 5 (4) Edit the language of each proposed policy so that it is coherent and easily understood,  
6 without altering its meaning or intent.  
7
- 8 (5) Recommend that the House adopt the consolidated policies on the labeling, advertising,  
9 and promotion of alcoholic beverages in their entirety and that the House rescind current  
10 AMA policies that are duplicative or outmoded. To that end, Policy H-30.976--  
11 Advertising and Promotion of Alcoholic Beverages; Policy H-30.949--Hard Liquor  
12 Advertising; and Policy H-30.954--Prohibiting Beer Ads on Television are recommended  
13 to be directly rescinded. These policies contain inconsistent messages on the advertising  
14 of wine, beer, and distilled spirits and are superceded by a more comprehensive policy  
15 statement regarding restrictions on advertising (Policy H-95.972). Policy H-95.972 is  
16 incorporated as part of the consolidation process.  
17

18 Two appendices are attached to this report, to facilitate comparison and tracking of proposed  
19 policy changes.  
20

- 21 • *Appendix A* (pages 3 to 5 presents the Council’s recommended language for the  
22 consolidated House policy on the Labeling, Advertising, and Promotion of Alcoholic  
23 Beverages.  
24
- 25 • *Appendix B* (page 6) presents 3 current policies that the Council believes should be  
26 rescinded.  
27

## 28 RECOMMENDATIONS

29

30 The Council on Scientific Affairs proposes that the AMA House of Delegates adopt the following  
31 recommendations:  
32

- 33 1. That the consolidated policy listed in Appendix A be added to the AMA Policy Database.  
34 **(Directive to Take Action)**  
35
- 36 2. That the following policies be rescinded because they are outdated or duplicative of policies  
37 presented in Appendix A:  
38  
39 Policy H-30.949 Hard Liquor Advertising  
40 Policy H-30.954 Prohibiting Beer Ads on Television  
41 Policy H-30.976 Advertising and Promotion of Alcoholic Beverages  
42 **(Rescind AMA Policy)**

Fiscal Note: Less than \$500. Staff time to check, edit, and otherwise update AMA policies in  
“Policy Finder.”

APPENDIX A

PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION OF HOUSE POLICY ON LABELING, ADVERTISING,  
AND PROMOTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

**H-30.XXX Labeling, Advertising, and Promotion of Alcoholic Beverages**

Our AMA

1. (a) Supports accurate and appropriate labeling disclosing the alcohol content of all beverages, including so-called “nonalcoholic” beer and other substances as well, including over-the-counter and prescription medications, with removal of “nonalcoholic” from the label of any substance containing any alcohol; (b) supports efforts to educate the public and consumers about the alcohol content of so-called “nonalcoholic” beverages and other substances, including medications, especially as related to consumption by minors; (c) urges the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco ~~and Firearms~~ and Explosives (ATF) and other appropriate federal regulatory agencies to continue to reject proposals by the alcoholic beverage industry for authorization to place beneficial health claims for its products on container labels; and (d) urges the development of federal legislation to require nutritional labels on alcoholic beverages in accordance with the Nutritional Labeling and Educational Act; **H-30.946; H-30.947; H-30.957(1,2)**.
2. (a) Expresses its strong disapproval of any consumption of “nonalcoholic beer” by persons under 21 years of age, which creates an image of drinking alcoholic beverages and thereby may encourage the illegal underaged use of alcohol; (b) recommends that health education labels be used on all alcoholic beverage containers and in all alcoholic beverage advertising (with the messages focusing on the hazards of alcohol consumption by specific population groups especially at risk, such as pregnant women, as well as the dangers of irresponsible use to all sectors of the populace); and (c) recommends that the alcohol beverage industry be encouraged to accurately label all product containers as to ingredients, preservatives, and ethanol content (by percent, rather than by proof); **H-30.957(3); 30.984(4,5)**
3. Actively supports and will work for a total statutory prohibition of advertising of all alcoholic beverages except for inside retail or wholesale outlets. Pursuant to that goal, our AMA (a) supports continued research, educational, and promotional activities dealing with issues of alcohol advertising and health education to provide more definitive evidence on whether, and in what manner, advertising contributes to alcohol abuse; (b) opposes the use of the radio and television to promote drinking; (c) will work with state and local medical societies to support the elimination of advertising of alcoholic beverages from all mass transit systems; (d) urges college and university authorities to bar alcoholic beverage companies from sponsoring athletic events, music concerts, cultural events, and parties on school campuses, and from advertising their products or their logo in school publications; and (e) urges its constituent state associations to support state legislation to bar the promotion of alcoholic beverage consumption on school campuses and in advertising in school publications; **H-30.953; H-30.971(1,2); H-30.981; H-30.984(1); H-30.990; H-95.972**.
4. Urges producers and distributors of alcoholic beverages to discontinue advertising directed toward youth, such as promotions on high school and college campuses; (b) urges advertisers and broadcasters to cooperate in eliminating television program content that depicts the irresponsible use of alcohol without showing its adverse consequences (examples of such use include driving after drinking, drinking while pregnant, or drinking to enhance performance

1 or win social acceptance); (c) supports continued warnings against the irresponsible use of  
2 alcohol and challenges the liquor, beer, and wine trade groups to include in their advertising  
3 specific warnings against driving after drinking; and (d) commends those automobile and  
4 alcoholic beverage companies that have advertised against driving while under the influence  
5 of alcohol. (H-30.978; 30.984(2,3); 30.991)

6 -----  
7 Reflects current policies:

8  
9 **H-30.946 Health Claims on Alcoholic Beverage Labels**

10 The AMA urges the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) to continue to reject  
11 proposals by the alcoholic beverage industry for authorization to place beneficial health claims  
12 for its products on container labels. (Res. 439, A-97)

13  
14 **H-30.947 Nutritional Labels on Alcoholic Products**

15 The AMA will initiate the development of federal legislation to require nutritional labels on  
16 alcoholic beverages in accordance with the Nutritional Labeling and Educational Act. (Res. 401,  
17 A-97)

18  
19 **H-30.953 Alcoholic Beverage Ads in Mass Transit Systems**

20 The AMA will work with state and local medical societies to support the elimination of  
21 advertising of alcoholic beverages from all mass transit systems. (Res.225, A-93)

22  
23 **H-30.957 Age Requirement for Purchase of Nonalcoholic Beer**

24 Our AMA (1) supports accurate and appropriate labeling disclosing the alcohol content of all  
25 beverages, including so-called “nonalcoholic” beer and other substances as well, including over-  
26 the-counter and prescription medications, with removal of “nonalcoholic” from the label of any  
27 substance containing any alcohol; (2) supports efforts to educate the public and consumers  
28 relating to the alcohol content of so-called “nonalcoholic” beverages and other substances,  
29 including medications, especially as related to consumption by minors; and (3) expresses its  
30 strong disapproval of any consumption of “nonalcoholic beer” by persons under 21 years of age,  
31 which creates an image of drinking alcoholic beverages and thereby may encourage the illegal  
32 underaged use of alcohol. (Sub. Res. 217, I-91; Reaffirmed: Sunset Report, I-01)

33  
34 **H-30.971 Promoting Illegal Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages on College Campuses**

35 Our AMA (1) urges college and university authorities to bar alcoholic beverage companies from  
36 sponsoring athletic events, music concerts, cultural events and parties on school campuses, and  
37 from advertising their products or their logo in school publications; and (2) urges its constituent  
38 state associations to support state legislation to bar the promotion of alcoholic beverage  
39 consumption on school campuses and in advertising in school publications. (Res. 110, I-89;  
40 Reaffirmed: Sunset Report, A-00)

41  
42 **H-30.978 Warning on Drinking and Driving**

43 The AMA supports continued warnings against the irresponsible use of alcohol and challenges  
44 the liquor, beer, and wine trade groups to include in their advertising specific warnings against  
45 driving after drinking. (Sub. Res. 62, I-87; Reaffirmed: Sunset Report, I-97)

46  
47 **H-30.981 Total Ban on Alcoholic Beverage Advertisement**

48 The AMA supports continued research, educational, and promotional activities dealing with  
49 issues of alcohol advertising and health education. (Sub. Res. 74, A-87; Reaffirmed: Sunset  
50 Report, I-97)

1 **H-30.984 Alcohol Advertising and Depiction in the Public Media**

2 Our AMA recommends: (1) that additional well-designed research be conducted under impartial  
3 and independent auspices to provide more definitive evidence on whether, and in what manner,  
4 advertising contributes to alcohol abuse;  
5 (2) that producers and distributors of alcoholic beverages discontinue advertising directed toward  
6 youth, such as promotions on high school and college campuses;  
7 (3) that advertisers and broadcasters cooperate in eliminating television program content that  
8 depicts the irresponsible use of alcohol without showing its adverse consequences (examples of  
9 such use include driving after drinking, drinking while pregnant or drinking to enhance  
10 performance or win social acceptance);  
11 (4) that health education labels be used on all alcoholic beverage containers and in all alcoholic  
12 beverage advertising (with the messages focusing on the hazards of alcohol consumption by  
13 specific population groups especially at risk, such as pregnant women, as well as the dangers of  
14 irresponsible use to all sectors of the populace); and  
15 (5) that the alcohol beverage industry be encouraged to accurately label all product containers as  
16 to ingredients, preservatives and ethanol content (by percent, rather than by proof). (BOT Rep Q,  
17 A-86; Reaffirmed: Sunset Report, I-96; Reaffirmation A-97; Reaffirmation I-01)

18  
19 **H-30.990 Alcoholic Beverages Advertising Ban**

20 The AMA opposes the use of the airwaves to promote drinking and will draft model legislation  
21 which prohibits the televised advertisement of all alcoholic beverages. (Res. 94, A-83;  
22 Reaffirmed: CLRPD Rep. I-93-1; Modified by: Res. 203, I-94)

23  
24 **H-30.991 Advertising Against Drunk Driving**

25 The AMA commends those automobile and alcoholic beverage companies that have advertised  
26 against driving while under the influence of alcohol. (Res. 140, A-83; Reaffirmed: CLRPD Rep.  
27 I-93-1)

28  
29 **H-95.972 Substance Abuse as a Public Health Hazard**

30 It is the policy of the AMA to actively support and work for a total statutory prohibition of  
31 advertising of alcoholic beverages except for inside retail or wholesale outlets. (Res. 166, A-90;  
32 CLRPD Rep. 1-A-94)

APPENDIX B

CURRENT AMA POLICIES RECOMMENDED FOR DELETION

**H-30.949 Hard Liquor Advertising.**

The AMA will seek immediate legislative and regulatory action at the federal level to prohibit the televised advertisement of hard liquor beverages. (Res. 432, A-96)

**H-30.954 Prohibiting Beer Ads on Television.**

The AMA requests Congress to ban all beer advertising on television. (Res. 410, I-92; Reaffirmed: BOT Rep. 28, A-03)

**H-30.976 Advertising and Promotion of Alcoholic Beverages.**

Our AMA supports federal legislation that would restrict advertising and promotion of beer and other alcoholic beverages. (Res. 137, A-89; Reaffirmed: Sunset Report, A-00)