

# Raise healthy kids, not the alcohol content of flavored alcoholic beverages

## Issue Overview

Alcohol is the number one youth drug problem in NH. In an average NH high school classroom seven of the students had at least five drinks in a row during the past month.<sup>1</sup> The costs of associated violence, crime, high risk sex, traffic crashes and other problems are staggering. The work-loss, medical care, and pain and suffering cost about half a million dollars every day in NH alone.<sup>2</sup>

Flavored alcoholic beverages (AKA Alcopops, Flavored malt beverages, or Maltalternatives) are alcoholic beverages that taste nothing like beer or alcohol. Flavored alcoholic beverages sold in New Hampshire include Mike's Hard Lemonade, Jack Daniels Citrus Jack Splash, Twisted Tea, Smirnoff Ice, and the alcohol infused energy drinks Tilt and Sparks.

Under current law in New Hampshire, the maximum alcohol content of a flavored alcoholic beverage sold in a grocery or convenience store is 6%, which percentage exceeds the alcohol content of most non – specialty beers.

Flavored alcoholic beverages appeal to underage youth and particularly to underage girls. Their sweet, non – alcoholic taste, their flashy internet advertising and price points practically guarantee it. Girls aged 12-20 see two ads for sweetened alcoholic beverages for every one that



women 21 and above see.<sup>3</sup> If you put all of the New Hampshire 10th graders who drank flavored alcoholic beverages last month together, they could fill almost every seat in the Rochester public schools.<sup>45</sup>

The sweet taste of flavored alcohol beverages makes excess consumption easier. The addition of caffeine and other stimulants to these beverages may reduce the perception of intoxication,

presenting even greater risk.<sup>6</sup>

We must work collectively to pursue opportunities to reduce the availability of alcohol to underage drinkers, the occasions for underage drinking and the demand for alcohol among young people. Expanding access to more potent flavored alcoholic beverages goes in the wrong direction.

## Proposed Solution

Any attempt by the beer industry to increase the maximum alcohol content of flavored alcoholic beverages beyond the current limit of 6% will require statutory change.

We must defeat any legislation introduced in the 2008 legislative session that would increase the maximum alcohol content of flavored alcoholic beverages beyond the current 6%.

## The 2008 Priorities for New Hampshire's Children

NH CAN is a statewide, nonpartisan network of nearly 100 child-serving organizations working to improve the health and well-being of New Hampshire's children by driving governmental policy, changing budget priorities, and inspiring community action. Each year, NH CAN develops a collective set of Priorities for New Hampshire's Children, a child-centered plan of action for the legislature, state leaders, state agencies, social service providers, schools, communities and families. The Priorities for New Hampshire's Children reflects the consensus of nearly 100 partner organizations, and creates a common call to action that can be shared across our state.

## Call to Action

- Be aware of these products, the risk they pose to youth, and continuing industry efforts to increase the alcohol content of flavored alcoholic beverages.
- Respond promptly to a request for legislative assistance from NHCAN and New Futures with testimony, direct communication, and other legislative advocacy to help defeat any legislation in 2008 that would increase the alcohol content of flavored alcoholic beverages sold in grocery and convenience stores.

## Find Out More

- New Futures is the lead NH CAN partner for this Priority. New Futures is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization working to reduce underage alcohol problems and increase access to treatment in New Hampshire through leadership and policy development. [www.new-futures.org](http://www.new-futures.org)



- The Marin Institute is an alcohol industry watchdog and a resource for solutions to community alcohol problems. [www.marininstitute.org/alcopops/](http://www.marininstitute.org/alcopops/)
- The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), Alcohol Policies Project has worked with thousands of organizations and individuals to promote a comprehensive, prevention-oriented policy strategy to change the role of alcohol in society. [www.cspinet.org/alcohol/](http://www.cspinet.org/alcohol/)
- New Hampshire General Court. You can follow the progress of the bill, or find contact information for your local representatives by going to <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/default.htm>
- Children's Alliance of New Hampshire: You can download copies of the complete Priorities for New Hampshire's Children, additional fact sheets, and information about the New Hampshire Child Advocacy Network at the Children's Alliance website, [www.childrennh.org](http://www.childrennh.org). You can also track the progress of all the Priorities-related bills, as well as contact your local representatives, under the "Get Active" link.

## References

(Endnotes)

- <sup>1</sup> NH Department of Education. 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results (YRBS). Accessed October 17, 2007 at [www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/instruction/HealthHIVAIDS/2005yrbsresultsrept.htm](http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/instruction/HealthHIVAIDS/2005yrbsresultsrept.htm)
- <sup>2</sup> Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE), October 2006. Accessed October 17, 2007 at: [www.udetc.org/factsheets/NewHampshire.pdf](http://www.udetc.org/factsheets/NewHampshire.pdf)
- <sup>3</sup> David H. Jernigan, PhD; Joshua Ostroff, BA; Craig Ross, MBA; James A. O'Hara III, MA (2004) "Sex Differences in Adolescent Exposure to Alcohol Advertising in Magazines" *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med.* 2004;158:629-634. Accessed October 3, 2007 at: <http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/158/7/629>
- <sup>4</sup> Monitoring the Future "Trends in 30-Day Prevalence of Use of Various Drugs for Eighth, Tenth, and Twelfth Graders" Accessed November 2, 2007 at: [www.monitoringthefuture.org/data/06data/pr06t3.pdf](http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/data/06data/pr06t3.pdf)
- <sup>5</sup> NH Department of Education. 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results (YRBS). Accessed October 17, 2007 at [www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/instruction/HealthHIVAIDS/2005yrbsresultsrept.htm](http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/instruction/HealthHIVAIDS/2005yrbsresultsrept.htm)
- <sup>6</sup> Marin Institute (2007). Alcohol, Energy Drinks, and Youth: A Dangerous Mix. Accessed November 2, 2007 at: [www.marininstitute.org/alcopops/energy\\_drink\\_report.htm](http://www.marininstitute.org/alcopops/energy_drink_report.htm)



**NH CAN is a project of the Children's Alliance of New Hampshire**

For more information on the *2008 Priorities for New Hampshire's Children*, please visit [www.ChildrenNH.org](http://www.ChildrenNH.org)  
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