

## DEFINITIONS

### Malt Liquor and Fortified Wine

**High-alcohol malt liquor:** An inexpensive lager beer which typically has a higher alcohol content than other beer, ranging from 6-10 percent alcohol by volume, as compared to 4-5 percent for regular beer. Malt liquor is often sold in large containers, such as 40-ounce bottles, which are sold chilled and wrapped in a brown paper bag, facilitating immediate and public consumption. One 40-oz. bottle of malt liquor (sometimes called a “40” or a “Bumper”) has nearly as much alcohol as a six-pack of regular beer, but sells for a fraction of the cost. Some malt liquor brand names are Colt 45, Olde English, Steel Reserve, Hurricane, and Mickey’s.

Research on malt liquor consumers has found that: a) African Americans are twice as likely as whites to be malt liquor drinkers<sup>1</sup>, b) malt liquor drinkers are more likely to be homeless, unemployed, and receiving public assistance than regular beer or hard liquor drinkers<sup>2</sup>, and c) malt liquor’s low price may attract younger drinkers<sup>3</sup>. The disproportionate use of malt liquor by African Americans, low income individuals, and youth is of concern because its consumption has been linked with problems such as heavier drinking and illicit drug use<sup>4</sup>.

**Fortified wine:** Wine to which alcohol (spirits) has been added to boost the content to around 15-20 percent alcohol by volume, as compared to 9-15 percent for other wines. Inexpensive fortified wine, sometimes known as “bum wine” or “hooch,” is commonly associated with street drinking and chronic inebriates. Some brand names are Night Train, Thunderbird, Cisco, Wild Irish Rose, and MD (“Mad Dog”) 20/20.

Local communities have sought restrictions on sales of high-alcohol malt liquor and fortified wine due to their association with nuisance crimes such as public drunkenness, public urination, loitering, panhandling, vandalism and broken glass, as well as with more serious crimes such as assaults and robberies. These consumption-related behaviors can have a negative impact on the quality of life in neighborhoods and increase the burden of law enforcement.

### References

<sup>1</sup>Greenfield TK, Brown-Taylor D, Bond J. Ethnic subgroups consumption of malt liquor beer and fortified wine, based on the Year 2000 U.S. National Alcohol Survey. Presented at: 24th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Research Society on Alcoholism. Montreal, Canada, June 23-38, 2001.

<sup>2</sup>Bluthenthal RN, Brown Taylor D, Guzman-Becerra N, Robinson PL. Characteristics of malt liquor beer drinkers in a low-income, racial minority community sample. *Alcohol: Clin Expl Res* 2005 Mar; 29(3):402-409.

<sup>3</sup>Chen MJ, Paschall MJ, Grube JW. Motives for malt liquor consumption in a sample of community college students. *Addict Behav* 2006; 31(8):1295-1307.

<sup>4</sup>Collins RL, Bradizza CM, Vincent PC. Young-adult malt liquor drinkers: prediction of alcohol problems and marijuana use. *Addict Behav* 2007; 21(2):138-146.