

## STUDY OVERVIEW

### Local Policies to Restrict High-Alcohol Beverages

In 2008 we conducted a nationwide telephone survey to determine whether low-cost, high-alcohol beverages such as malt liquor and fortified wine are perceived as a problem in large cities, and to examine what has been done at the local level to restrict their sale and use. We solicited two respondents (one official responsible for alcohol policymaking and one enforcement officer) from each of the 115 largest cities and metro areas in the U.S. for a 30-minute telephone interview. Our findings show that malt liquor and fortified wine are perceived to be a problem in the majority of large U.S. cities. City officials said the problems are associated with the consumption of high-alcohol malt liquor and fortified wine.

#### Problems Associated with Malt Liquor Sales

Public consumption and inebriation	Underage drinking
Loitering, panhandling, harassment of pedestrians	Driving while intoxicated, auto accidents
Disorderly conduct	Pedestrian accidents
Broken glass, litter, graffiti	Illegal drug use
Public urination and defecation	Prostitution
Trespassing	Gang violence, shootings
Property damage	Assaults, sexual assaults
Burglaries and petty theft	Homicides

Officials also said that some retailers contribute to the problem by selling malt liquor too cheaply, selling to intoxicated persons, and selling to minors. They said these retailers often sell single cigarettes, drug paraphernalia and pornography, creating a bad atmosphere around the store and creating a base for drug dealers.

We asked city officials whether there was any policy in the city “specifically intended to restrict the off-premise sale or consumption of high-alcohol malt liquor or fortified wine.” Thirty of the cities (26%) were found to have policies, later verified by legal research (*see Malt Liquor Policies in U.S. Cities*). We chose three of the cities to study in more depth: Washington, D.C., Santa Ana, California, and Seattle, Washington. Results show that cities have used a variety of creative approaches to restrict these problematic beverages, often overcoming significant barriers to do so.

### **Peer-reviewed journal articles about this study**

Jones-Webb R, Nelson T, McKee P, Toomey T. 2013. An implementation model to increase the effectiveness of alcohol control policies. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, Epub ahead of print

McKee P, Nelson TF, Toomey TL, Shimotsu ST, Hannan PJ, Jones-Webb RJ. 2013. Adopting local alcohol policies: A case study of community efforts to regulate malt liquor sales. *American Journal of Health Promotion*. Jan-Feb;26(3):e86-94.

Jones-Webb R, McKee P, Toomey T, Hannan P, Miazga M, Barajas E, Nelson T. 2011. Regulating malt liquor in urban areas in the U.S. *Contemporary Drug Problems* 38: Spring.

Barajas E, McKee P, Hannan P, Nelson T, Jones-Webb R. 2011. Effects of policies to restrict malt liquor sales on neighborhood crime. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 46(10).

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