

YOUTH ACCESS TO ALCOHOL SURVEY

SUMMARY REPORT

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PREPARED FOR:
ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION

PREPARED BY:
ALCOHOL EPIDEMIOLOGY PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

EILEEN M. HARWOOD, PhD
PROJECT DIRECTOR

ALEXANDER C. WAGENAAR, PhD
DIRECTOR

DEBRA H. BERNAT, MA
RESEARCH ASSISTANT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Youth Access to Alcohol Public Opinion follow-up survey is a national opinion survey of U.S. adults, assessing knowledge of, attitudes towards, and levels of public support for a variety of alcohol related public policies. The intent of the follow-up survey was to assess, for a second time, public opinions on a broad range of alcohol policies and to assess changes in support from 1997 to 2001. The follow-up survey was conducted from April to December 2001. Data were collected by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.; analyzed by researchers in the Division of Epidemiology at the University of Minnesota, under the direction of Alexander C. Wagenaar, PhD; and supported by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

A random sample of adults from the contiguous states and the District of Columbia were surveyed in 1997 (7,021) and in 2001 (5,736) by telephone. Their opinions were statistically weighted to make the results representative of non-institutionalized adults, age 18 and over, living in the geographical area surveyed.

This report summarizes results of the 2001 follow-up survey and initial analyses examining changes over time from 1997 to 2001. Some highlights of our findings are presented below.

Norms, Beliefs and Concerns Regarding Alcohol

- 88% of respondents **believe** that half or more of adults drink alcohol regularly. Yet, only 30% **actually** drink regularly (once per week or more).
- Among several youth related issues, respondents expressed very high levels of concern for drunk driving (98%) and teen drinking (96%).

Opinions about Alcohol Policies in 2001

- 29 of 33 alcohol policies included in the survey received high levels of public support (50% or more).
- Respondents expressed most support for policies restricting public drinking, requiring training for servers and bar owners, using tip lines to report illegal use and sales, and penalizing adult providers (85% or more).
- Respondents expressed least support for state control of liquor sales, banning happy hours, increasing alcohol taxes by \$.05 per drink to be used for any government purpose, and banning beer keg sales to individuals (50% or less).
- Largest demographic group differences occurred between men and women and younger (18-24) and older (25+) respondents.
- Little differences in support were found based on respondents' political party or self-identified liberalism/conservatism.

Changes from 1997 to 2001 in Support for Alcohol Policies

- 28 policy-related questions were repeated from 1997 to 2001. Seven of the 28 received statistically significant increases in support over time (4% to 33% increases); eight received significant decreases in support over time (3% to 8% decreases).
- The greatest increases in support from 1997 to 2001 were for leniency on youth offenders (33% increase) and state control of liquor sales (18% increase).
- The greatest decrease in support from 1997 to 2001 was for raising alcohol taxes for general, unspecified governmental use (8% decrease).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	I
TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
TABLE OF TABLES AND FIGURES	2
1.0 INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 SURVEY DESIGN	5
1.2 SAMPLE SELECTION	6
1.3 DATA COLLECTION METHODS	7
1.4 ANALYTICAL METHODS	7
2.0 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS	9
2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	9
2.2 BEHAVIORAL AND EXPERIENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS	10
3.0 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT: PUBLIC CONCERNS AND KNOWLEDGE	12
3.1 PUBLIC CONCERNS	12
3.2 PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE	13
4.0 ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS ON POLICIES AFFECTING YOUTH ACCESS TO ALCOHOL	14
4.1 ATTITUDES ON YOUTH DRINKING	14
4.2 ALCOHOL REGULATION	15
4.3 ALCOHOL RETAIL REGULATIONS	16
4.4 ALCOHOL TAXES	16
4.5 RESTRICT ALCOHOL IN LOCATIONS	17
5.0 ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS ON ENFORCEMENT AND PUNISHMENT	18
5.1 PERCEPTIONS OF PUNISHMENT EFFECTIVENESS	18
5.2 POLICIES AFFECTING ALCOHOL PROVIDERS AND SELLERS	18
5.3 POLICIES AFFECTING YOUTH WHO DRINK	19
6.0 ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS ON ALCOHOL ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION	19
6.1 POLICIES THAT RESTRICT ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION	19
7.0 CONCLUSIONS	20
7.1 POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND OPINIONS ON ALCOHOL POLICIES	20
7.2 GENDER AND AGE AND OPINIONS ON ALCOHOL POLICIES	21
7.3 RANK ORDER OF POLICY OPINIONS	21
7.4 COMPARING 2001 TO 1997 RESULTS	23
8.0 REFERENCES	23
9.0 CHARTS AND FIGURES OF SURVEY RESULTS	24
10.0 APPENDICES	90
APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGICAL DETAILS	91
APPENDIX B: SURVEY INSTRUMENT	102

TABLE OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES

TABLE 1: SURVEY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS	11
TABLE 2: RESPONDENTS' PARTY AFFILIATION BY POLITICAL IDEOLOGY	12
TABLE 3: RANK ORDER OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR ALCOHOL POLICIES WITH MOST AND LEAST SUPPORTIVE GROUPS.....	22
TABLE 4: PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR ALCOHOL POLICIES: CHANGES FROM 1997 TO 2001.....	24

FIGURES

FIGURE 1.0: BELIEFS AND PUBLIC CONCERNS.....	25
FIGURE 1.1: CONCERN ABOUT DRUNK DRIVING	26
FIGURE 1.2: CONCERN ABOUT TEEN DRINKING	27
FIGURE 1.3: CONCERN ABOUT TEEN SMOKING	28
FIGURE 1.4: CONCERN ABOUT TEEN SEX AND PREGNANCY	29
FIGURE 1.5: PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICAN DRINKING NORMS.....	30
FIGURE 2.0: PUBLIC AWARENESS	31
FIGURE 2.1: KNOWLEDGE OF ALCOHOL AND VIOLENCE	32
FIGURE 2.2: KNOWLEDGE OF TAXES ON ALCOHOL	33
FIGURE 2.3: KNOWLEDGE OF ALCOHOL-RELATED TRAFFIC DEATHS.....	34
FIGURE 2.4: KNOWLEDGE OF EASY ALCOHOL BUYS FOR TEENS.....	35
FIGURE 2.5: KNOWLEDGE OF ALCOHOL AND TEEN SEX.....	36
FIGURE 2.6: KNOWLEDGE OF MARKETING OF ALCOHOL TO YOUTH AND MINORITIES.....	37
FIGURE 3.0: ATTITUDES ON YOUTH DRINKING	38
FIGURE 3.1: FAVOR LOWERING DRINKING AGE.....	39
FIGURE 3.2: AGE AT WHICH IT IS OK TO DRINK	40
FIGURE 3.3: AGE AT WHICH IT IS OK TO GET DRUNK.....	41
FIGURE 4.0: ALCOHOL REGULATIONS.....	42
FIGURE 4.1: FAVOR KEG REGISTRATION.....	43
FIGURE 4.2: FAVOR A BAN ON SALE OF BEER KEGS TO PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS	44
FIGURE 4.3: FAVOR A BAN ON HOME DELIVERIES OF ALCOHOL.....	45
FIGURE 4.4: FAVOR BAN ON INTERNET SALES OF ALCOHOL	46
FIGURE 4.5: FAVOR A BAN ON HAPPY HOURS.....	47
FIGURE 4.6: FAVOR BAN ON TEENS IN BARS	48
FIGURE 4.7: FAVOR CHECKING EVERYONE'S ID.....	49
FIGURE 4.8 FAVOR LOCAL CONTROL OF ALCOHOL SALES AND CONSUMPTION.....	50
FIGURE 5.0: ALCOHOL RETAIL REGULATIONS.....	51
FIGURE 5.1: FAVOR STATE OWNED OUTLETS	52
FIGURE 5.2: LIQUOR STORES AREN'T CAREFUL ENOUGH.....	53
FIGURE 5.3: FAVOR SERVERS 21 YEARS OR OLDER	54
FIGURE 5.4: FAVOR TRAINING FOR OWNERS	55
FIGURE 5.5: FAVOR TRAINING FOR SERVERS.....	56
FIGURE 5.6: FAVOR TRAINING FOR SERVERS, EVEN WITH HARM	57
FIGURE 6.0: ALCOHOL TAXES.....	58
FIGURE 6.1: FAVOR TAXATION TO PAY FOR ALCOHOL PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROGRAMS.....	59
FIGURE 6.2: FAVOR TAXATION TO LOWER OTHER TAXES	60
FIGURE 6.3: FAVOR TAXATION TO PAY FOR ANY GOVERNMENT PURPOSE	61
FIGURE 6.4: TAX DRINKERS TO PAY FOR TREATMENT PROGRAMS.....	62

FIGURE 7.0: RESTRICT ALCOHOL IN LOCATIONS.....	63
FIGURE 7.1: RESTRICT ALCOHOL AT PARKS.....	64
FIGURE 7.2: RESTRICT ALCOHOL AT PUBLIC BEACHES.....	65
FIGURE 7.3: RESTRICT ALCOHOL AT CONCERTS.....	66
FIGURE 7.4: RESTRICT ALCOHOL AT SPORTS STADIUMS AND ARENAS.....	67
FIGURE 7.5: RESTRICT ALCOHOL ON CITY STREETS.....	68
FIGURE 7.6: RESTRICT ALCOHOL AT STREET FESTIVALS AND FAIRS.....	69
FIGURE 7.7: RESTRICT ALCOHOL ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES.....	70
FIGURE 8.0: ALCOHOL ENFORCEMENT.....	71
FIGURE 8.1: PUNISHMENT DETERS YOUTH FROM DRINKING.....	72
FIGURE 8.2: POLICIES SHOULD BE LENIENT ON YOUTH.....	73
FIGURE 8.3: TARGET PROVIDERS OVER YOUTH.....	74
FIGURE 8.4: FAVOR COMPLIANCE CHECKS (STING PURCHASES).....	75
FIGURE 8.5: FAVOR PENALIZING ADULT PROVIDERS.....	76
FIGURE 8.6: FAVOR USING TEENS TO PUNISH ADULT PROVIDERS.....	77
FIGURE 8.7: FAVOR SOCIAL HOST LIABILITY LAWS.....	78
FIGURE 8.8: FAVOR A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR YOUTH.....	79
FIGURE 8.9: MOST APPROPRIATE PUNISHMENT FOR YOUTH OFFENDERS.....	80
FIGURE 8.10: FAVOR USING TIP LINES.....	81
FIGURE 9.0: ALCOHOL ADVERTISING.....	82
FIGURE 9.1: RESTRICT ADS TO REDUCE APPEAL TO KIDS.....	83
FIGURE 9.2: FAVOR A BAN ON BILLBOARD ALCOHOL ADS.....	84
FIGURE 9.3: FAVOR A BAN ON YOUTH PACKAGING.....	85
FIGURE 9.4: FAVOR A BAN ON SPORTS ADS AND PROMOTIONS.....	86
FIGURE 9.5: FAVOR BANNING HARD LIQUOR ADS ON TV.....	87
FIGURE 9.6: FAVOR BANNING BEER AND WINE ADS ON TV.....	88
FIGURE 9.7: FAVOR RECOMMENDATION TO REFUSE ALCOHOL SPONSORSHIP OF COMMUNITY EVENTS.....	89

2001 YOUTH ACCESS TO ALCOHOL SURVEY: SUMMARY REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), the 2001 Youth Access to Alcohol Public Opinion follow-up survey (1997 baseline) was designed to measure public attitudes and opinions of adults on a broad range of alcohol policies and issues related to youth under the U.S. legal drinking age of 21. The follow-up survey, conducted in 2001, will aid in assessing changes in public knowledge of, attitudes toward, and levels of support for a variety of alcohol-related problems, policies, and prevention efforts affecting youth. Additionally, results will serve as the outcome measure of public attitudes for use in evaluating the effectiveness of twelve RWJF-funded coalitions in their efforts to decrease underage drinking and reduce alcohol-related problems among young people. Similar to the baseline survey, the follow-up survey covers several key areas of interest to those working to reduce underage drinking, including the following topics:

- public concern and awareness of alcohol-related problems affecting youth;
- public knowledge and beliefs related to alcohol access and use;
- public support for youth/alcohol-targeted policy proposals (e.g., access restrictions, regulation of seller/server behavior, enforcement and penalties, restrictions on alcohol advertising, and server liability); and
- alcohol consumption behaviors and demographic information on survey respondents potentially associated with attitudes and opinions.

Analyses of public opinions about alcohol policies serve several important purposes. First, it advances the small, but growing body of information about trends in public support for alcohol policies. In turn, this information and knowledge provides important insights regarding the appropriate direction of efforts of public health professionals, community activists, and educators.

RWJF, the research staff of the University of Minnesota's Alcohol Epidemiology Program (AEP), and the survey research staff of Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR) collaborated on the design of the follow-up survey instrument. The University of Minnesota's AEP staff guided the overall project design for the survey. MPR staff collected the data via telephone interviews, prepared the final data set for analyses, and furnished each of the twelve RWJF-funded sites of the Reducing Underage Drinking Through Coalitions Program with summaries of participant responses from their particular state or jurisdiction. Under the direction of Alexander C. Wagenaar, the AEP research team is currently conducting analyses of the follow-up survey data, including changes over time from 1997 to 2001. This report summarizes initial analyses of the 2001 follow-up survey alone, including:

- research design and data collection methods;
- tables, charts and figures summarizing participant responses to each individual survey question;
- highlights, in narrative form, of some of the more interesting results and response patterns uncovered in the initial analysis; and
- conclusions based on initial analyses.

Data collection and analytical methods are briefly described below, followed by Section 2.0, which reviews characteristics of the participating respondents, including a description of their personal experiences with alcohol. Section 3.0 summarizes responses to survey items classified as public concerns and knowledge about the social environment around alcohol. Addressed in Section 4.0 are public attitudes and opinions about youth access to alcohol. Respondents were asked several questions that dealt with controls on alcohol sales as a means to reduce youth access, including both the manner and location of sales, and regulations on sellers. Responses to alcohol taxation questions are also discussed in this section.

Section 5.0 covers public opinion on enforcement and punishment policies, and includes questions that are aimed at understanding public views on drinking and punishment. Survey participants were also asked to react to various questions about the regulation, restriction and effects of alcohol marketing tactics. A discussion of the responses to these questions can be found in Section 6.0. Conclusions based on the results of the analyses to date are included in the final section, Section 7.0. More definitive conclusions are reserved for the results of future, in-depth analyses to examine:

- Changes in support for alcohol control policies between 1997 and 2001; and
- Changes in levels of support for states with statewide RWJF-Reducing Underage Drinking coalitions compared to the remaining states in the U.S.

Analyses will continue beyond this report and all results will be reported via scientific papers published in peer-reviewed professional journals.

Section 8.0 contains all of the figures and tables of survey attitude and opinion results. Copies of both the technical report describing data collection and sampling methods and the entire survey instrument are included in Appendices A and B, respectively.

1.1 Survey Design

The intent of the follow-up survey was to assess, for a second time, public opinions on a broad range of alcohol policies and issues related to youth under the U.S. legal drinking age of 21. In this section we describe the design of the instrument used to gather this information. Since the follow-up survey will be used to assess changes in public opinions of alcohol policies and issues, the majority of the items used in the follow-up survey were identical to those used in the baseline survey conducted in 1997. Eight new questions were added to the follow-up survey (N1, N3, N4, N9, N10, N11, N12, and N13), which asked respondents about support for more recent alcohol policies and strategies to reduce underage drinking such as banning internet sales, the use of tip lines, and restricting access to alcohol at street festivals and fairs. In order to minimize the length of the survey, eight baseline survey questions that focused on the impact of alcohol advertisements (K2, K4a, and K7a) and server liability (BV1-BV5) were omitted from the 2001 follow-up survey.

Procedures used to administer the 2001 follow-up survey were nearly identical to those used for the baseline survey in 1997. To orient participants to its intent, the survey was introduced as a poll seeking individual “views about efforts to reduce teenage drinking.” Depending on the state in which the participant was contacted, the agency sponsoring the survey was identified as “health organizations across the country and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation,” or, alternatively, the

state-specific agency sponsoring the RWJF alcohol coalition — in Missouri, for example, The Missouri Department of Mental Health. This established the authenticity and credibility of the survey and improved chances of individual agreement to participate.

Survey question items were of the following four types: general knowledge, opinion/attitude, behavioral, and demographic, and were grouped by topic areas or by option type, for example, favor/oppose, agree/disagree (Frey, 1989). Generally, response options were of the Likert-scale type measuring intensity of feeling. These provided participants with either a “1 to 4” scale with “strongly” agree/disagree (or favor/oppose) and “somewhat” agree/disagree (or favor/oppose) options, or a “1 to 3” scale with “very,” “somewhat,” or “not at all” concerned options. Participants were also presented with questions of a simple “yes/no” response format. A small number of survey items were of the categorical type, in which participants were offered a list of options in no particular order of importance (demographic questions, for example). Survey designs using forced-choice response categories are typical of general population surveys, since they provide consistent and interpretable response patterns across respondents (Converse & Presser, 1986).

To eliminate response biases related to question ordering (also known as “context effects” [Frey, 1989]), several sets of questions were designed to be randomly rotated during the interview procedure. In addition, question stems with multiple endings were also designed so that the endings were rotated. With a few exceptions all respondents were asked the same set of questions, regardless of the order in which they were asked. The exceptions are:

- for the Spanish-speaking respondents in Puerto Rico and the mainland, the interview was conducted in Spanish, which potentially altered the item meaning in translation;
- in four questions, split-ballots were used to present two similar question variations for the sake of brevity (server/owner training, restrictions on alcohol consumption at park/beaches, concerts/sporting events, and city streets/street festivals and fairs).
- in two questions, two question variants were used (also in split-ballot form) to test for bias in particular wordings (state ownership of outlets, youth-oriented packaging).

1.2 Sample Selection

To assess opinions of the nation as a whole, a cross-sectional probability sample was randomly drawn from household telephone exchanges across the 48 contiguous U.S. states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. RWJF Reducing Underage Drinking coalition project sites were over-sampled to ensure adequate samples for baseline measures of attitudes and opinions of the public in those localities. Approximately 500 interviewed respondents were sought from each of the following: Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and Texas. List-assisted random digit dialing (RDD) methods were used to generate a sample of telephone numbers of residential households in each coalition site, and a sample representing the “balance of the nation” in all other states.

Further randomization was used to select one adult from each household to improve representation of all adults in each geographic area. Respondents were asked how many adults were members of the household, how many telephone numbers the household could receive calls on, and

whether there had been any discontinuity in telephone service in the past year. This information was used to compute sampling weights that adjusted for each adult's true probability of selection in the sample. The adjustment for telephone discontinuity is one means for adjusting for incomplete telephone coverage of U.S. households, much of which is transient.

The final sample was also adjusted to match as closely as possible the actual demographic distributions of sex, age, race, education, and household income in each coalition site and in the balance-of-nation sample (called post-stratification). This technique compensates for typical demographic biases observed in telephone surveys, and for the over-sampling of coalition sites. The final weights used in all analyses thus allow our sample results to generalize accurately to the entire adult population of each coalition site and of the U.S. as a whole.

Where there was no answer or the eligible adult was not at home, each household telephone number was called up to an average of 20 times to reduce potential bias from households not contacted (see Appendix A). The final survey average response rate of eligible households was 44%, resulting in a total sample size of 6,253. Respondents from the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (a total of 514) are not included in this report of U.S. results for the contiguous 48 states. As noted above, respondents in Puerto Rico were interviewed in Spanish at their request. The Puerto Rican population also differs substantially from the U.S. mainland population by demographic characteristics, types of alcohol problems and social responses to them. Excluding the separate Puerto Rican sample produced a study sample of 5,739. Three additional respondents were omitted from the analysis because their year of birth indicated they were less than 18 years of age. This produced a final sample of 5,736 reported here.

1.3 Data Collection Methods

Telephone interviews were conducted between April and October 2001 by trained MPR interviewers who completed each interview in an average of 25 minutes. Using a CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system, interviewers administered the survey instrument and directly entered each question response choice into the computer. Collected data were checked, edited, and cleaned after data collection in preparation for analyses.

1.4 Analytical Methods

The University of Minnesota AEP research team used simple SAS descriptive statistic procedures — univariate and bivariate frequency distributions — to generate the statistical results on the national sample contained in this report. Descriptive statistics for demographic variables were calculated on unweighted and weighted responses to these types of question items (Table 1), while only the weighted responses to attitude and opinion questions were used to estimate national public opinions and attitudes (see Appendix A for technical descriptions of weighting methods).

Relative frequency distributions for each survey question were calculated based on the number of valid responses to the question. In other words, when a respondent could not or would not answer a question, it was counted as missing and the individual case was not included in the total number of respondents who answered that question. Therefore, the total number of valid responses on which the relative frequency was calculated (the denominator) for each question may be slightly less than the

total sample size of 5,736. The rate of non-response to individual questions was typically between 2% and 5%, and had little effect on the aggregate survey results reported here.

For each attitude and opinion question in the survey, weighted relative frequency distributions are reported as percents of valid responses for the following groups of respondents:

- all participants,
- women compared to men,
- “younger” (ages 18-24) compared to “older” respondents (ages 25+),
- self-described liberals compared to conservatives, and
- self-identified Democrats compared to Republicans.

In each case, percentages represent weighted distributions of responses (see Appendix A) and are associated with a margin of error which reflects the sample size, the sample relative frequency, the design of the sample, and weighting. The 95% confidence intervals for un-subsetted national estimates of proportions have the following widths:

- $\pm 1.5\%$ when the proportion of responses to a particular question option is near 10% or near 90%;
- $\pm 2.0\%$ when the proportion is near 20% or near 80%;
- $\pm 2.3\%$ when the proportion is near 30% or near 70%; and, finally,
- $\pm 2.5\%$ when the proportion is near 50%.

In other words, we can be 95% certain that the response frequencies obtained from the survey sample differ by no more than the amount above from what we might expect to obtain from the entire U.S. adult population.¹

Tables and graphs that summarize results of the attitude and opinion question items are found in Section 8.0, providing two types of information:

- Figures 1.0 through 9.0 are summary charts grouping related questions from the survey. The bars reflect weighted percents of respondents who support or agree with a question that is briefly described in a label on the left side of the chart. In most cases, the percent was calculated based on the combination of options modified by the words “strongly” and “somewhat” in the direction of agreement or favorable opinions. Exceptions are noted in chart labels or footnotes.
- Following each of the summary charts are detailed tables and charts for EACH question included in the larger chart — one question per page. These figures (labeled Figures 1.1–1.5, Figures 2.1–2.6, etc. to correspond to the summary figures) provide exact question and response option wording at the top of the page, followed by a pie chart graphically displaying the relative distribution of responses of ALL survey participants. Following this on the same page are a table and a bar chart showing the response distributions for various sub-groups of

respondents: all respondents, males versus females, those age 18 to 24 versus 25 and older, liberals versus conservatives, and Democrats versus Republicans.

We now turn to a description of the socio-demographic characteristics sample.

2.0 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

2.1 Demographic Characteristics

The association of individual characteristics with tendencies toward one opinion or attitude direction or another is clearly of interest to those studying public opinions of any sort. This is particularly true when the opinions and attitudes polled concern public policy. Unweighted and weighted demographic characteristics of the 5,736 adults who participated in the survey are summarized in Table 1. We focus here on weighted demographics of the sample since they are the measure of how well, in the end, the population is represented. The sample consists of slightly more females than males (51% female). The majority of the study sample is white (77%) and married (59%), which adequately reflects the demographics of the U.S. adult population as well as those of the baseline survey. At the time of the survey, the average age of those who participated was 48 years and nearly three-quarters (70%) were age 35 or older.² Three-quarters (75% of the total sample) reported that they were parents of natural, adopted, or step-children, whether living with the respondent or not. In addition, approximately one-fifth (21%) of the total sample said they were parents of teens.³ Over half (55%) of the sample participants reported having had at least some college coursework. Sixty-one percent (61%) were employed at the time of the survey, and over forty percent (41%) of those who were employed or “unemployed and looking for work” categorized their jobs as “professional, administrative, or executive” in nature. Over forty percent (42%) of respondents reported annual household incomes for 2000 of less than \$40,000; while 51% put their household income in ranges above \$50,000 a year.⁴

Of interest to policy analysts and alcohol policy researchers is the association of political ideology and/or party affiliation with individual attitudes and opinions on alcohol policies. Forty percent (40%) identified themselves as Democrats, 32% as Republicans, and 26% as Independents.⁵ When asked to state their ideological leanings on most political issues, 38% thought of themselves as moderate, 41% as conservative, and 21% liberal.

As might be expected, a cursory examination of the overlap of ideology and party identification shows liberal, moderate and conservative thinkers in both major parties and among independents (Table 2). Nearly forty percent (39%) of the Democrats thought of themselves as moderate, with the

¹ See Appendix A for technical descriptions of the calculations and interpretations of both the margin of error and design effects and for a summary table of these statistics.

² Individual respondents were asked to state the year in which they were born. To calculate their approximate age at the time of the interview, that year was subtracted from 2001. Phrasing the question like this avoids asking respondents to give their age in years, information that many individuals are often reluctant to reveal, or report less accurately than year of birth.

³ This represents the proportion of all survey respondents, not just those with children, which would be a larger percentage.

⁴ As is often the case with questions about personal or household income, a large proportion of the sample (755 or 13%) refused to answer this question. The proportions reported here are for those remaining 4,981 participants.

⁵ Libertarian was also a response option; however, less than one percent (.4%) selected this category.

remaining 60% split between liberals (34%) and conservatives (27%). Republicans predominately thought of themselves as conservative (64%), with slightly more than one-quarter (29%) identifying as moderates, the remaining 7% as liberal. Nearly one-half (47%) of the Independent-identified respondents saw themselves as moderates, about one-third as conservative (32%), and nearly one-quarter as liberal (21%). Analyses of possible interaction effects (combinations of party identification with political ideology) on individual attitudes and opinions is the subject of continuing analyses, and will be reported in future manuscripts.

2.2 Behavioral and Experiential Characteristics

Finally, one's own experience with alcohol potentially affects one's opinions and attitudes about alcohol policies. To take such factors into account, respondents were asked a series of questions about alcohol-related experiences and personal drinking behaviors.

When asked about their personal experiences with problem drinking, over half (54%) of the respondents said that someone close (including themselves and/or family) had a "drinking problem" currently or in the past. Furthermore, one-quarter (25%) reported knowing someone close to them who had been seriously injured by a drunk driver, whether it was themselves, family or friends. Respondents were not asked to identify the relationship or the circumstances, just "yes" or "no" to both questions.

Respondents were also asked to state how often they drank alcoholic beverages and how much they drank on average when they did drink. Answers to this set of questions were used to describe the individual's drinking behavior in one of four categories:

- **Non-drinker** – assigned to those who reported "never" drinking alcohol or not having drunk alcohol "over the past 12 months." Thirty-two percent (32%) of all respondents fit the "non-drinker" category.
- **Infrequent drinker** – assigned when the respondent mentioned that he or she drank at least once a month but not more than three times a month (less than once a week). Of the total 5,736 respondents, 38% fit this category.
- **Regular drinker** – assigned when the respondent reported drinking at least once a week or more on average (four or more times a month) but less than four times a month did they drink "five or more drinks in a day." One-quarter (25%) of the respondents are classified as "regular drinkers."
- **Heavy drinker** – assigned when the respondent reported "binge drinking" behavior four or more times a month on average. Binge drinking is defined here as "five or more drinks in a day," a common measure of this concept of problem drinking behavior. Five percent (5%) of the respondents fit this category.

All demographic, behavioral, and experiential characteristics compare favorably with characteristics of baseline survey respondents (see Harwood, Wagenaar, & Zander, 1998). We now turn to summaries of responses to the attitudes and opinions survey questions.

Table 1: Survey Sample Characteristics

UNWEIGHTED AND WEIGHTED PERCENTS FOR ALL SURVEY RESPONDENTS
(N = 5,736; U.S. Mainland Participants)¹

Characteristic	% of Sample ²		Characteristic	% of Sample ²	
	Unwgt	Wgt'd		Unwgt	Wgt'd
Female	41%	51%	Employed Job Category		
			Professional/Executive	42%	41%
Age ³ 18-24	9%	12%	Trade/Service/Labor	33%	35%
25-34	16%	17%	Clerical/Technical	24%	25%
35-54	41%	42%			
55+	34%	28%			
Average age: 48 years			Household Income Range		
			<\$10k	8%	5%
Race White	76%	77%	\$10k - \$19,999	13%	12%
African Amer/Black	13%	11%	\$20k - 29,999	15%	15%
Native Amer/Alaskan	2%	1%	\$30k - \$39,999	14%	10%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	2%	\$40k - \$49,999	12%	7%
Other	7%	8%	\$50k - \$99,999	27%	36%
Considers self Hispanic	8%	11%	\$100k +	12%	15%
Marital Status			Political Party Identification		
Married	54%	59%	Democrat	40%	40%
Live with partner	5%	6%	Republican	31%	32%
Widowed	10%	7%	Independent	27%	26%
Divorced/Annulled	11%	9%	Other	3%	2%
Separated	2%	2%			
Never married	18%	18%			
With Children ⁴	75%	75%	Political Ideology		
Ages 12-15	20%	22%	Liberal	22%	21%
Ages 16-18	14%	16%	Moderate	37%	38%
% with teens	20%	21%	Conservative	41%	41%
Educational Attainment			Drinking Habits ⁵		
Less than high school	10%	18%	Non-drinker	32%	32%
High school grad/GED	30%	27%	Infrequent drinker	35%	38%
Some college/AS degree	30%	31%	Regular drinker	28%	25%
Bachelors degree	18%	15%	Heavy drinker	5%	5%
Master's degree	8%	6%			
Law degree	1%	1%	Experience w/problem drinking		
Doctorate/M.D.	3%	2%	Friend/family injured	24%	25%
			Friend/family drinking problem	53%	54%
Employment Status					
Employed	61%	61%			
Retired	23%	19%			
Homemaker	6%	8%			
Student	6%	7%			
Unemployed	4%	5%			

1. Excludes Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.

2. All percentages are calculated on valid responses only, excluding missing cases. See Appendix A for explanation of unweighted (Unwgt) and weighted (Wgt'd) percents.

3. Age is an approximate age at the time of interview calculated on the reported year of birth subtracted from 2001.

4. Proportions of respondents with children of certain ages are calculated on the entire sample, including those who do not have children.

5. Drinking behavior is classified on a calculation of the amount and frequency of alcohol intake reported by the respondent.

Table 2: Respondents' Party Affiliation by Political Ideology

	% Democrat	% Republican	% Independent	% of Total
% Liberal	34	7	21	21
% Moderate	39	29	47	38
% Conservative	27	64	32	41
% of Total	39	34	26	100

¹ Due to increased missing data when two variables are compared, the percents in this table may not perfectly match those reported in Table 1 and in the text for the univariate statistics (one question item at a time).

3.0 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT: PUBLIC CONCERNS AND KNOWLEDGE

We begin with a summary of the results of survey questions that addressed concerns and awareness of various social-environmental issues related to youth and alcohol. All individuals interviewed for this study were told during the interview introduction that the survey was about “efforts to reduce teenage drinking” (see Appendix B). Therefore, respondents were conditioned to receive questions aimed at alcohol and youth.

3.1 Public Concerns

As with the baseline survey, the 2001 survey began with a set of “warm-up” questions and with a statement that these questions would concern “problems that affect teenagers.” Results of the responses to the eleven items that made up this group of questions are presented in two summary charts (Figures 1.0 and 2.0).

Figure 1.0 also graphs the proportion of respondents⁶ who said they were either “very concerned” or “somewhat concerned” about the four social issues presented to them. Figure 2.0 summarizes items that ask whether they had heard about six other social issues (“Yes, I have heard or read about this issue”).

Ninety percent or more of the respondents reported at least some concern for all of the four social problems that affect teenagers that were presented to them: drunk driving (Figure 1.1), 98%; teen drinking (Figure 1.2), 96%; teen smoking (Figure 1.3), 91%; and teen sex and pregnancy (Figure 1.4), 95%. While all these response rates are very high, it is notable that respondents were least concerned about teen smoking. Extremely high rates of concern may indicate that participants were inclined to give socially desirable responses of being at least somewhat concerned, rather than admit to being not at all concerned. In this case “very concerned” response choices may be more important to examine. About drunk driving, 85% of all respondents were very concerned, 66% about teen drinking, 66% were very concerned about teen sex and pregnancy, and 55% about teen smoking.

For the most part, high rates hold for the eight sub-groups, especially for the “concern about drunk driving” question (see Figures 1.1–1.4). It is young adults age 18-24 and men, however, who were noticeably less concerned with these issues compared to other groups, and is most evident with the question regarding teen smoking. Combining “very” and “somewhat” concerned options, all

⁶ For the large summary charts, the percents are for valid responses from ALL participants. Responses for sub-groups of respondents, by sex, age, and political ideology, are reported in a set of tables and graphs following each summary figure.

groups were at, near or above the 90% mark, except for 18- to 24-year-olds. Less than eighty percent (78%) of the young adult respondents said they were at least somewhat concerned about teen smoking as a social issue.

A new question was added to the 2001 follow-up survey to gain insight on perceptions of drinking in the U.S. Respondents were asked to indicate the proportion of adults they believe drink alcohol on a regular basis (Figure 1.5). Nearly ninety percent (88%) of all respondents believed that half or more than half of all American adults drink alcohol on a regular basis. Responses were similar across groups. Women (91%) were most likely to believe that half or more Americans drink alcohol on a regular basis, while men and 18-24 year olds (both 86%) were least likely to believe this. These responses are in stark contrast to the proportion of the survey sample who report actually drinking on a regular basis or more (30%, see Table 1).

3.2 Public Knowledge

There is more variation in response distributions when participants were asked about their knowledge or awareness of a particular set of social issues concerning young people and alcohol. Survey respondents were asked to state whether they had heard or read about (“yes” or “no”) six social-environmental issues. The six issues are: alcohol and violence; proposed increases in taxes on alcoholic beverages; traffic deaths involving young drivers; how easy it is for teenagers to buy alcohol; alcohol and teenage sex; and alcohol products designed for sales to youth and minorities (Figures 2.1–2.6). A summary of positive responses to these six items is presented in Figure 2.0. Overall, respondents were most aware of alcohol and traffic deaths among youth (96% said “yes” they had heard or read about this issue). They were least aware of proposed increases in alcohol taxes (48% said “yes”), and only slightly more were aware of alcohol marketing strategies that target youth and minorities (50%).

For nearly every question regarding awareness of social-environmental issues, women were often among those most aware, although the differences were sometimes modest. For alcohol and violence, 90% of women were aware of the issue (Figure 2.1), compared to 85% of men. Ninety-six percent of women had heard about the relationship of alcohol and teen traffic deaths (Figure 2.3), which differed little from other groups’ awareness on this issue. When asked whether they had heard about how easy it is for teens to buy alcohol, women were most aware (81% [Figure 2.4]), compared to men at 72%. Women and democrats were most aware of alcohol and teenage sex (79%), while men reported the least awareness of this issue (72%).

Compared to other social issues presented to them, respondents were least aware of proposals to increase taxes on alcoholic beverages (48% overall, Figure 2.2). Affirmative responses to the tax awareness item ranged from a low of 31% (18- to 24-year-olds) to a high of 52% (Democrats). There was also a lower level of awareness about alcohol marketing issues (50% overall, Figure 2.6). Liberals were most aware of alcohol marketing issues (58%), while Republicans reported the least awareness of this issue (48%).

We now turn to the core items on public opinions regarding a range of alcohol policy options.

4.0 ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS ON POLICIES AFFECTING YOUTH ACCESS TO ALCOHOL

Many variables in the survey assessed respondents' attitudes and opinions toward youth access to alcohol. The first set of questions we present here focused on respondent attitudes toward drinking age limits. Next, we present the level of public support for beer keg registration policies and local control of alcohol sales via specific bans or restrictions. The third set of items presented addressed retail regulations, while the fourth set assessed participants' attitudes toward taxation of alcohol. Finally, opinions regarding restrictions of alcohol sales at a variety of public locations were also measured. Summary results of these five sections are presented in Figures 3.0, 4.0, 5.0, 6.0, and 7.0, respectively.

4.1 Attitudes on Youth Drinking

Respondents were asked if they favored or opposed lowering the legal drinking age to 19. Results are presented in Figure 3.1. Overall, only 20% of all respondents favored lowering the minimum drinking age, with 68% strongly opposing it. Responses were similar across groups. While 18- to 24-year-olds voiced the least opposition, it is especially noteworthy that over sixty percent (62%) opposed lowering the legal age.

Respondents were also asked to voice their opinions on how old a person should be before he or she may drink or get drunk. These results are found in Figures 3.2 and 3.3. With regard to both variables, participants were first asked whether it was ever okay to drink or get drunk at ages 17, then 19, and finally age 25. Counting only the youngest ages stated by all respondents, 27% believed it acceptable for a 17-year-old, 17% for a 19-year-old, and 44% for a 25-year-old to *drink*. Additionally, by inference, 12% felt that there is essentially no acceptable age for consumption of alcohol.⁷ For the youngest age at which it is acceptable to *get drunk*, 4% believed it is acceptable at age 17, 7% at age 19, and 23% at age 25. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents indicated there is no age at which it is acceptable to get drunk.

Responses varied across groups for both questions (by roughly 20%). Respondents ages 18 to 24 favored age 17 as the "youngest age okay to drink" (40%). This reflects considerable tolerance for drinking alcohol, per se, especially since approximately one-quarter of the respondents in each group also expressed approval of drinking at age 17. While drinking alcohol appears to be tolerated by the U.S. public, getting drunk is not. For age at which it is acceptable to get drunk, the option of "no age" received the highest percentage of support, by default, from all groups. With the exception of 18- to 24-year-olds and men, at least sixty percent of all other groups chose none of the age options. In fact, nearly three-quarters of women (74%) and conservatives (73%) were in this "no age" category, effectively disapproving of getting drunk at any age. Younger respondents under age 25

⁷ Respondents were not given the "no age" option. Instead, the option was inferred when the respondent said no to all other choices: 17, 19, or 25.

and men were least inclined to express disapproval of getting drunk (44% and 59%, respectively, for the “no age” category).

4.2 Alcohol Regulation

Survey respondents were asked whether they favored a variety of regulations on the sale and distribution of alcohol that would “make it harder for teenagers to get alcoholic beverages” (Figures 4.0, 4.1–4.8). The first of these items addressed beer keg registration — a proposal “to require every beer keg to have a registration number that allows it to be traced to the person who bought it.” Additionally, they were told that “some groups argue that this would be inconvenient and unreliable” (Figure 4.1). Even with this suggestion of inconvenience, over sixty percent (62%) of the respondents favored such a policy.

When asked about attitudes on banning sales of beer kegs to “individuals for homes or parties” (Figure 4.2), prohibiting home delivery of alcoholic beverages (Figure 4.3), prohibiting Internet sales (Figure 4.4), eliminating “happy hours that offer drink specials” (Figure 4.5), prohibiting teens from entering bars (Figure 4.6), and checking everyone’s identification before selling alcohol (Figure 4.7) opinions varied. Over one-half of all respondents favored banning home delivery (64%), prohibiting Internet sales (72%), prohibiting teens from entering bars at any time (64%), and checking everyone’s identification before selling alcohol (80%). Less support was reported for banning happy hours (38%), and even fewer favored banning the sale of beer kegs for individual use (31%).

Banning home delivery received similar responses from all groups, with the largest approval coming from women (68%) and the least from males (60%). Banning happy hours was most favored among women, democrats, and conservatives (approximately 40% each), and least by liberals (33%). Banning the sale of beer kegs to individuals received more support from women and democrats (37% and 35%, respectively), and the least from men (25%). Prohibiting Internet sales of alcohol was most favored by Republicans and women (76% and 75%, respectively) and least from liberals and democrats (67% and 68%, respectively). Prohibiting teens from entering bars at any time received more support from women and conservatives (68% for both), and the least from 18-24 year olds (45%). Checking everyone’s identification before selling alcohol received most support from 18-24 year olds and women (both 85%), and the least support from men (75%).

Respondents were asked about overall local control of alcohol sales, specifically whether the respondent supported “the right of the local communities to pass their own laws controlling the sale and consumption of alcohol, even if those laws are stricter than state and federal laws” (Figure 4.8). Over one-half of all participants responded in favor of local control (63%). Responses across groups varied somewhat, with conservatives voicing greatest approval (67%) and 18- to 24-year-olds showing slightly less support than the average (60%).

4.3 Alcohol Retail Regulations

Several questions addressed issues concerning the sellers of alcohol. These included attitudes on: state monopolies on the ownership of liquor stores (Figure 5.1); whether respondents felt that liquor stores are careful about selling alcohol to underage patrons (Figure 5.2); a minimum age requirement for servers (Figure 5.3); and training for owners of bars and restaurants and servers (Figures 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6). Results of these six items are summarized in Figure 5.0.

When participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the suggestion that “liquor may only be purchased to take home from state-owned stores...regardless of how liquor is currently sold in your state,” over half (53%) of all respondents opposed it. However, it is interesting to note that 18- to 24-year-olds were most likely to favor state monopolies on liquor sales (55%). Respondents 25 and above and women, on the other hand, were least likely to favor a state monopoly (about 46% each). Responses to this question are likely to differ by state since some respondents may have no experience with state-owned stores. Therefore, caution should be exercised when interpreting these results.

When asked whether “stores and bars are too lax in preventing teenagers from buying alcohol,” nearly eighty percent (79%) of all respondents agreed (Figure 5.2). Responses varied across groups, with the largest differences occurring between men and women. While 73% of men agreed, 84% of women felt outlets were not careful enough. Responses reflect an overall opinion that retailers of alcohol have to do more to win public confidence that they are doing a good job of keeping alcohol out of the hands of youth.

Respondents were also asked whether they favored setting a minimum age requirement to at least 21 years for servers of alcohol (Figures 5.3). Over three-quarters of survey respondents favored a minimum age requirement for servers (78%). It is perhaps understandable that 18- to 24-year-olds voiced the smallest percentage of support (61%) since they are the group most affected, in employment terms, by a requirement of this type. However, even among younger respondents, a large majority favor this policy.

Three questions regarding training of bar owners and alcohol servers were presented to participants of the survey. Half of the sample was asked whether they favored training for “owners of bars and restaurants” to develop “better ways to deal with drunken customers and teenage drinkers” (Figures 5.4). The other half was asked the same question about “employees who serve alcoholic beverages in bars and restaurants” (Figures 5.5). Approximately 90% of all respondents favored training for both owners (89%) and servers (90%). Responses were similar between all groups for both items. For those who were asked about server training, an additional question was asked to determine their support of training even if it “might harm small businesses that hire younger workers and frequently change employees” (Figure 5.6). Slightly less support was expressed in this case; however, the overwhelming majority still favored server training (85%).

4.4 Alcohol Taxes

Increasing “efforts to reduce teenage drinking will cost money,” and survey participants were reminded of this as an introduction to a set of questions about taxes. To determine whether support

for increasing taxes would vary depending on the use of tax dollars, respondents were asked if they favored raising alcohol taxes by “5 cents per drink” if the money was for three selected uses. Figure 6.0 summarizes overall responses to these three and one other tax-related question.

Eighty-one percent of respondents supported alcohol taxes if the taxes were used “to pay for programs to prevent minors from drinking and to increase alcohol treatment programs” (Figure 6.1). Over two-thirds (69%) supported this type of alcohol tax increase if it were used “to lower other taxes, such as income taxes” (Figure 6.2). And, slightly more than a third (34%) supported an increase if it was used “for any government purpose, not just tax relief or alcohol treatment programs” (Figure 6.3).

The biggest supporters of using alcohol taxes for alcohol prevention were women and liberals (87% and 84%, respectively), with men being least supportive (75%). Younger respondents under age 25 were most supportive compared to others of using alcohol tax dollars for any government purpose (41%), with the next closest supportive groups being Democrats (39%) and women (36%). Least supportive of using alcohol taxes for any purpose were Republicans (30%) and men (31%).

Additionally, respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the suggestion that “people who drink should pay higher taxes to help pay for programs to reduce the problems that drinking causes” (Figure 6.4). Nearly sixty percent (59%) of participants agreed that drinkers should pay higher taxes on alcohol. Among the sub-groups of respondents, women voiced the most agreement (64%) and men the least (55%).

4.5 Restrict Alcohol in Locations

To restrict drinking in a variety of locations is sometimes seen as an effective way to reduce youth access to alcohol. Respondents were asked whether they felt that “the drinking of alcoholic beverages should be banned altogether, should be allowed only by special permit, or should NOT be restricted at all” in or at a variety of locations. A summary of responses representing public support of some type of restriction (ban altogether or allow drinking by special permit) at each of seven locations is presented in Figure 7.0. Respondents were asked if drinking should be restricted at “public parks,” at “public beaches and campgrounds,” at “concerts and other cultural events,” in “sports stadiums and arenas,” on “city streets,” at “street festivals and fairs,” and on “college campuses.” The first six of these items, in three sets, were asked of only half of the participants using the split-ballot method. Parks and beaches were one split-ballot question set, concerts and stadiums were another set, and city streets and street fairs and festivals were the last set. Opinions from all participants were obtained for college campuses.

Nearly three-quarters of all participants who were asked responded in favor of some restriction on the consumption of alcoholic beverages at all seven locations. Restrictions on city streets received the most support (93%), while restrictions in sports stadiums and arenas received the least (74%). Responses across groups were varied (Figures 7.1–7.7). In general, women voiced the strongest support for restrictions on drinking alcoholic beverages in public locations. Men, liberals, and respondents who were 18- to 24-years-old were least likely to favor restrictions in these locations. Nevertheless, for all groups a majority support restricting alcohol in some way at all of these

locations. It is interesting to note that respondents appear to have made clear distinctions between type of restriction — banning or requiring permits. Further analyses of these responses are under way to determine their significance.

5.0 ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS ON ENFORCEMENT AND PUNISHMENT

Another way to prevent youth from drinking alcoholic beverages, some believe, is to structure severe penalties and consequences into the legal system. Six survey items addressed public opinion and attitudes on these issues. This set of questions is summarized in Figure 8.0. An additional related question asked respondents to choose an appropriate punishment for youth caught drinking alcohol illegally; because of the format of the question, it is not included in the summary figure and instead is presented in Figure 8.9.

5.1 Perceptions of Punishment Effectiveness

The first set of questions focused on public views on the effectiveness of punishment. Respondents were asked whether they agreed that punishment for those “who are caught drinking” discourages teens from attempting to get alcohol (Figure 8.1). They were also asked to agree or disagree that “punishments for teenage drinking shouldn’t be too severe” because “kids make mistakes” (Figure 8.2). And, in a slightly different direction, they were asked if they thought that punishment should “be concerned more with people who give or sell alcohol to teenagers and less with the teenagers who drink” (Figure 8.3).

Over two-thirds (70%) of all respondents agreed that punishment deters youth from drinking, while a little more than one-half (52%) agreed that society should be lenient on youth. Furthermore, more than half (55%) of all respondents felt that penalties should target providers over youth. For the most part, groups of respondents were in agreement on these issues.

5.2 Policies Affecting Alcohol Providers and Sellers

Respondents were asked whether they favored more specific punishment policies. These punishment-related items dealt with compliance checks of alcohol sellers (Figure 8.4), penalties for adult providers of alcohol to youth (Figure 8.5), using trained teens to cite adults who purchase alcohol for youth (Figure 8.6), and making it easier to sue adults who give alcohol to a teenager and someone gets hurt (Figure 8.7). Well over half of respondents supported all survey items concerning policies that affect providers and sellers of alcoholic beverages. Among these four items, penalties for adult providers received most overall support (87%) compared to about two-thirds (65%) of all respondents who supported using trained teens to cite adults who purchase alcohol for youth.

Overall, sub-groups responded similarly to these four items. One exception is that young respondents ages 18 to 24 differed from other groups in their level of support for penalties for adult providers (69% compared to the overall average of 87% supporting this measure). This might be expected, given that young adults age 18-24 are frequently providers of alcohol to teenagers (Wagenaar et al., 1996).

5.3 Policies Affecting Youth Who Drink

Respondents were asked whether they favored or opposed a law that would punish “teenagers who tested positive for any amount of alcohol in their blood” (Figure 8.8). Nearly three-quarters (72%) of all respondents favored this zero-tolerance policy for young drivers. Women were most supportive (76%) and respondents who were 18- to 24-years old were least supportive (61%).

Participants were asked to indicate their preferences from a list of four possible punishments for underage youth caught drinking alcohol (Figure 8.9). Options were: a \$500 fine, one-year suspension of their driver’s license, twenty hours of community service, or ineligibility for college financial aid. Respondents slightly preferred the punishment being ineligibility for college financial aid (29%) and least supported a one-year license suspension (22%). There were minor differences in preferences among groups of respondents. Young respondents ages 18 to 24 differed most in their level of support for the appropriate punishment for teenagers caught drinking. They were more likely to support the punishment of making offenders ineligible for college financial aid (34%) and 20 hours of community service (25%), and less likely to support a \$500 fine (20%) and a one-year license suspension (21%).

Respondents were also asked whether they favored or opposed having a special phone number to report teen drinking or businesses that sell alcohol to teens (Figure 8.10). Nearly 90% (88%) of respondents supported the use of these special alcohol tip lines. Overall, responses were similar across groups. Although younger respondents ages 18 to 24 were least likely to support the use of these tip lines, the majority (78%) of respondents in this age group favored this policy.

6.0 ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS ON ALCOHOL ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

Finally, we address respondents’ attitudes about alcohol advertising and promotion. A summary of results is found in Figure 9.0. First, respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that “advertisements for alcoholic beverages should be restricted to making drinking less appealing to kids.” Nearly eighty percent (79%) of all respondents agreed that advertisements for alcohol should be restricted. Although younger respondents ages 18 to 24 were least likely to agree with this statement, nearly two thirds (64%) agreed.

6.1 Policies that Restrict Advertising and Promotion

Respondents were asked a set of six questions about strategies to restrict “the advertising of alcoholic beverages” ranging from bans on TV and billboard ads to restrictions on alcohol promotions for sporting events. When asked whether they favored a ban on “all advertisement of alcoholic beverages on billboards anywhere in your community,” over sixty percent of all respondents supported it (61%). This is also true for the other four questions suggesting bans on particular marketing techniques. Over two-thirds of all respondents favored a ban both on “the use of cartoons and youth-oriented music materials on alcoholic beverage bottles, cans, and packages” (70%) and on “all advertisement of hard liquor on TV” (67%). Nearly two-thirds (62%) favored banning “the use of sports teams and athletes as symbols in advertising and promotions of alcoholic beverages.” And

about sixty percent (59%) favored a ban on “all advertisement of beer and wine on TV” (Figures 9.2 through 9.6). Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of respondents (63%) supported a recommendation to community planners that they refuse sponsorship by alcohol companies for events attended by teens (Figure 9.7).

The most prominent group differences on these advertisement items were between men and women. Women were noticeably more supportive of banning youth-oriented packaging of alcoholic beverages (71%) compared to other groups, especially compared to men, who were least supportive (52%; Figure 9.3). Support for a ban on the use of athletes in marketing alcohol found women again more strongly supportive (70%) and men less supportive (54%; Figure 9.4). For a ban on TV advertisements of both liquor and beer/wine, women were most likely to be in favor (75% and 67%, respectively) compared to other groups. Men and young respondents were least likely to favor bans on beer and wine ads on TV (nevertheless over half of each group, 51% each). And men, more than other groups were least likely to favor bans on liquor ads on TV (59%). Women were most likely to favor a ban on billboard advertisements of liquor (71%), but men and young adults 18 to 24 years old were tied for least likely to support such a ban (52%; Figure 9.2). Support for recommending to community planners that they refuse sponsorship by alcohol companies for events attended by teens found women most strongly supportive (70%) and men and 18 to 24 year olds least supportive (56%; Figure 9.7).

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Evidence from the 2001 follow-up survey of public opinions and attitudes suggest that the American public has a high degree of concern for youth consumption of alcohol as a social issue or problem. In fact, very few polled participants expressed little or no concern for the issues presented to them in the survey (10% or less “somewhat” or “not at all” concerned). Furthermore, a majority of the public also appeared to be aware and/or knowledgeable of a number of social problems that involve youth and alcoholic beverages. This might suggest that past education efforts on these issues has been quite successful. Attention may now be paid to understanding how the American public feels about policy issues so that efforts to reduce underage drinking might be focused in appropriate directions. Results from this public opinion survey on alcohol policies can help direct those activities.

7.1 Political Philosophy and Opinions on Alcohol Policies

Several interesting patterns were observed in opinions on alcohol policies. First, results show little distinction among those identified as Democrat versus Republican or liberal versus conservative in their support for tighter controls on alcohol sales and promotion. If, as it is often assumed, Republicans and conservatives are more likely to resist policies that restrict free enterprise and the rights of business persons to determine their own business behavior, then we might expect to see less support for alcohol regulations among Republicans and conservatives. However, this is not the case. Overall, Republicans were as likely to agree with statements suggesting more social controls on alcohol sales and youth access as were Democrats, and conservatives were as supportive of stronger regulation as liberals.

In a few cases, respondents who viewed themselves as liberal appeared somewhat more likely to oppose tighter controls compared to other groups. A few examples of this are findings that show conservatives among the most supportive of bans on the sale of beer kegs to individuals (33%) and liberals among the least supportive (27%). Those who identified themselves as Republican were most likely to support banning Internet sales of alcohol (76%), with liberals (67%) and Democrats (68%) being among the least supportive groups. Those who identified themselves as conservative and Republican were also most likely, compared to other groups, to support compliance checks (both 72%), with Democrats being among the least likely (69%), but even in such cases, the differences are modest.

7.2 Gender and Age and Opinions on Alcohol Policies

Striking in these findings is the high degree of awareness and concern among women respondents about youth and alcohol issues (Figures 1.2–1.5 and 2.1–2.6). Furthermore, over half of the time women were likely to be most supportive, compared to the other groups, of stricter controls on alcohol sales and promotion. Out of 33 items that dealt directly with alcohol policies and controls on behavior, women ranked highest in support of 25 (76%). This is especially noticeable for questions that addressed restrictions on the drinking of alcoholic beverages in public locations (Figures 7.1–7.7), on the advertisement and promotion of alcohol (Figures 9.1–9.7), and zero tolerance policies for young drivers' consumption of alcohol (Figure 8.8).

In contrast to women, men were less aware and concerned about youth and alcohol and often least supportive of controls on youth access to alcoholic beverages. For twelve (36%) of the items that dealt with specific alcohol policies, men were found to be least in favor of the policies compared to other groups examined here. Only respondents 18 to 24 years old were as likely to indicate low levels of support for restrictive alcohol policies. In fifteen out of 33 items (45%), younger participants were least supportive compared to others, often tying with men of any age for this distinction. In no instance were men most supportive of a particular policy. Survey participants 18- to 24-years-old were most favorable compared to others in responses to five items: checking everyone's identification (Figure 4.7), state control of liquor sales (Figure 5.1), requiring bar owner training (Figure 5.4), tax for tax relief (Figure 6.2), and tax for any purpose (Figure 6.3). Table 3 below illustrates the clear gender divergence and age relationship in opinions on alcohol policies.

7.3 Rank Order of Policy Opinions

As noted above, 33 items in the survey were directly related to opinions on alcohol policies. In these items, respondents were asked whether they favored or opposed particular policies. Table 3 rank orders these items from most supported to least supported among all respondents. This table lists sub-groups found to be most and least supportive, compared to other groups examined, on each policy item. It is important to emphasize that the table indicates that an overwhelming majority of the U.S. public, as represented in this survey sample, supports a variety of public policies that can be effective in reducing underage drinking.

Top on the rank-ordered list are those policy statements that dealt with restrictions on drinking alcoholic beverages in various public locations. Restrictions on city streets and at parks were the

most widely supported policies (over 90% of all respondents favored these restrictions). Restrictions on drinking on college campuses, at concerts, and street fairs were also high on the list (all three had over 80% approval, but less than 90%), and restrictions at beaches and sports stadiums nearer the middle (79% and 74% approval, respectively). Policies requiring training for bar owners and servers of alcoholic beverages also received high degrees of support (89% and 90%, respectively).

Table 3: Rank Order of Public Support for Alcohol Policies in 2001 with Most and Least Supportive Groups.

% of Overall Support	Policy Type	Supportive Group:		
		Most	Least	Range ¹
93%	Restrict drinking on city streets	Women	18-24	9
91%	Restrict drinking at parks	Democrats & Women	18-24	6
90%	Require server training	Liberals & Women	Republicans	5
89%	Require bar owner training	18-24 & Women	Men	5
88%	Restrict drinking on college campuses	Women	18-24	14
88%	Tip lines to report illegal sales/use	Women & Conservatives	18-24	12
87%	Punish adult providers	25+	18-24	21
84%	Restrict drinking at concerts	Women	Republicans	14
84%	Restrict drinking at street festivals/fairs	Women	18-24	18
81%	Tax increase for prevention purposes	Women	Men	12
80%	Checking everyone's ID	18-24 & Women	Men	11
79%	Restrict drinking at beaches	Women	18-24	17
78%	Require legal age for alcohol servers	Democrats & Women	18-24	22
74%	Restrict drinking at sports stadiums	Women	18-24	22
72%	Ban Internet sales	Republicans & Women	Liberals & Democrats	9
72%	Zero tolerance for youth (BAC 0.00)	Women	18-24	14
70%	Ban youth-oriented packaging	Women	Men	14
70%	Compliance checks at liquor stores	Conservatives & Republicans	18-24 & Liberals	5
69%	Tax increase for tax relief	18-24	Men	11
67%	Ban liquor ads on TV	Women	Men	16
64%	Ban home delivery of alcohol	Women	Men	8
64%	Ban teens in bars	Women & Conservatives	18-24	23
63%	Allow local controls on alcohol	Conservatives	18-24	8
62%	Ban alcohol marketing with athletes	Women	Men	16
62%	Require beer keg registration	Women	Men	10
61%	Ban alcohol billboard ads	Women	Men & 18-24	19
59%	Ban beer/wine ads on TV	Women	Men & 18-24	16
55%	Target providers vs. youth	Liberals	Women	6
52%	Be lenient on youth offenders	Liberals & 18-24	Conservatives	11
48%	State control of liquor sales	18-24	Republicans	10
38%	Ban happy hours	Women & Democrats	Liberals	9
34%	Tax increase for any government purpose	18-24	Republicans	12
31%	Ban beer keg sales to individuals	Women	Men	12

¹ Range is calculated by subtracting the lowest from the highest percent to indicate the spread or distance between most and least supportive groups. Smaller numbers suggest close agreement among groups, larger numbers more diverse.

At the bottom of the list, with support from less than 40% of respondents are policies banning happy hours (38%), tax increase for any government purpose (34%), and beer keg sales to individuals (31%). Additionally, nearly 50% state control of liquor sales (48%).

The relationships between demographic characteristics and response patterns as presented here provide a limited understanding of the opinions of the U.S. public on alcohol policies. However, it is clearly evident that the public in general is very supportive of most policies aimed at reducing access to alcohol by youth under the legal age of 21 (well over 50% overall support for all but four of thirty policies included in the opinion poll).

7.4 Comparing 2001 to 1997 Results

Preliminary comparisons of public opinions and attitudes over time show predictably stable support for a variety of alcohol policies (Table 4). However, responses to more than half (54%) of the 28 questions repeated in 2001 and listed in Table 4 changed significantly. While there were as many questions receiving increased support as decreased support, increases were more substantial than decreases. For instance, there was 33% more support in 2001 compared to 1997 for being lenient on youth caught drinking. This many reflect recent emphases and RUD coalition efforts to shift the focus of responsibility for underage drinking to adult providers. In fact, 2001 respondents were more likely (by 5%) to approve of penalizing adults who provide alcohol to youth than they were in 1997.

A further indication of shifts in public awareness and support for environmental approaches is the 18% increase in support for state control of liquor sales. More comprehensive analyses of these time trend data are underway and will provide a deeper understanding of the explanations of change over time.

8.0 REFERENCES

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Table 4: Public Support for Alcohol Policies: Changes from 1997 to 2001.

Policy Type	1997 % Support	2001 % Support	Percent Change ¹
Restrict drinking on city streets	92	93	+1
Restrict drinking at parks	90	91	+1
Require server training	89	90	+1
Require bar owner training	88	89	+1
Restrict drinking on college campuses	89	88	-1
Favor use of alcohol tip lines	Not Asked	88	--
Punish adult providers	83	87	+5*
Restrict drinking at concerts	85	84	-1
Restrict drinking at street festivals/fairs	Not Asked	84	--
Tax increase for prevention purposes	82	81	-1
Checking everyone's ID	Not Asked	80	--
Restrict drinking at beaches	82	79	-4*
Require legal age for alcohol servers	80	78	-3*
Restrict drinking at sports stadiums	77	74	-4*
Ban Internet sales	Not Asked	72	--
Zero tolerance for youth (BAC 0.00)	73	72	-1
Ban youth-oriented packaging	67	70	+4*
Compliance checks at liquor stores	66	70	+6*
Tax increase for tax relief	70	69	-1
Ban liquor ads on TV	67	67	0
Ban home delivery of alcohol	59	64	+8*
Ban teens in bars	Not Asked	64	--
Allow local controls on alcohol	66	63	-5*
Ban alcohol marketing with athletes	59	62	+5*
Require beer keg registration	61	62	+2
Ban alcohol billboard ads	63	61	-3*
Ban beer/wine ads on TV	61	59	-3*
Target providers vs. youth	54	55	+2
Be lenient on youth	39	52	+33*
State control of liquor sales	40	47	+18*
Ban happy hours	40	38	-5*
Tax increase for any government purpose	37	34	-8*
Ban beer keg sales to individuals	31	31	0

* = p<.05

¹ Percent change is calculated by subtracting the percent support in 1997 from the percent support in 2001 and dividing by the percent support in 1997. Smaller absolute changes indicate close agreement between support in 1997 and 2001, with larger absolute changes indicating greater change.

9.0 CHARTS AND FIGURES OF SURVEY RESULTS