How Are DC Youth Exposed to Alcohol?1

- There are twice as many alcohol retailers per resident in DC than in Maryland and 36 times more alcohol retailers per square mile in the District. A recent study concluded that “alcohol outlet density may play a significant role in initiation of underage drinking during early teenage years, especially when youths have limited mobility.”

- In addition to alcohol retailers, DC youth are exposed to alcohol through the use of their peers (see District Youth in Brief, Vol. 2, Issue 1) as well as that of their parents and other adults. In 2006 & 2007, 63% of DC adults aged 18 and older drank in the past month and 30% reported binge drinking.3

Alcohol Advertising

- A recent review of research concluded that “alcohol advertising and promotion increases the likelihood that adolescents will start to use alcohol, and to drink more if they are already using alcohol.”4 Celebrity endorsement of alcoholic products, such as that of Ciroc vodka by the popular rapper Sean “Diddy” Combs, only serve to make these alcohol ads more appealing to youth.

- While alcohol advertisements are banned on Metro trains and buses, there are no restrictions on the placement of alcohol ads on billboards.5

- Approximately one-half of national radio alcohol advertising in 2004 occurred during programs which have disproportionately large youth audiences.6

- Between 2001 and 2007, U.S. youth were 22 times more likely to see an alcohol product advertisement on television than a “responsibility” message funded by the alcohol industry.7

- Nearly 45% of magazine alcohol advertisements in 2001 to 2005 were placed in magazines with a disproportionately large youth readership.8