

## **Pediatricians Say Ads for Alcohol, Tobacco, and Prescription Drugs Hurt Youth**

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The American Academy of Pediatrics has called for an end to all tobacco ads, limits on alcohol and prescription drug ads, and for the entertainment industry to stop glamorizing smoking and drinking. Join Together reported.

The AAP said that restrictions on advertising could help reduce adolescent substance abuse. In a policy statement, the AAP said companies spend about \$25 billion a year on ads for alcohol, tobacco, and prescription drugs. They cited research indicating that advertising is responsible for up to 30 percent of alcohol and drug use by teens.

Pediatricians said they are concerned because more than 400,000 people die from tobacco-related illnesses every year in the United States, and over 100,000 die because of "excessive alcohol consumption," including about 5,000 younger than 21. Their statement cited 51 research studies showing teens exposed to tobacco marketing are more than twice as likely to smoke. Other research showed a correlation between exposure to alcohol ads and drinking by adolescents and young adults.

The pediatricians also criticized the frequency with which smoking and drinking are shown on television and in the movies where children and teens can see it. They cited studies showing that exposure to smoking and drinking in the movies is a powerful factor in why teens initiate use. Their statement said all of the top 15 teen-oriented shows contain alcohol ads.

The statement concluded with 17 recommendations including: pediatricians should ask about media exposure during children's routine health checkups; schools should educate all students in media literacy; and the entertainment industry should acknowledge and address the health impact of TV shows and movies on teens and children.

The AAP policy statement, "Children, Adolescents, Substance Abuse, and the Media" was published in the October issue of the journal *Pediatrics*.