

Alcohol & Advertising in New York City

The Cost of Alcohol to New York City

- Alcohol is responsible for approximately 1,500 deaths and 25,000 hospitalizations each year in New York City.¹
- About \$213 million is spent annually on these alcohol-related emergency department and hospital costs.² The total cost to New York City is far greater, as hospital expenditures represent only about 4% of the total cost of alcohol problems to society.³

Alcohol Advertising on New York Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)

- About 71% of surveyed MTA subway stations have alcohol advertisements.⁴
- Nearly one-third of all MTA subway advertisements surveyed were for alcohol.⁴
- MTA is one of only two transit systems surveyed that have advertising policies that claim to protect children, and yet still allows alcohol advertising.⁵
- Advertising income represent only 0.9% (\$90.5 million) of MTA's total annual revenue (\$10.4 billion), dispelling the notion that the agency relies heavily on ad dollars.⁶ Of course, alcohol ad revenues are only a fraction of the total.

Who is Exposed to Alcohol Advertising?

- The MTA averages more than 7 million passengers each weekday, making it the largest transit system in the US.⁷
- In 2006, annual subway ridership hit a record high of 1.5 billion.⁸
- An enormous number of young people are repeatedly exposed, with 1,400,000 student subway passes given to K-12 children each year.⁹
- Predominantly Black neighborhoods face high exposure to outdoor alcohol advertising, including around sites at which youth congregate.¹⁰

¹ Source: NYC Vital Signs: Alcohol Use In New York City, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, January 2005.

² Source: Alcohol Dependence Patterns and Their Impact on New York City, Stephen E. To, Medscape General Medicine, February 2007.

³ Source: The Economic Costs of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the United States 1992. Report prepared for the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services. NIH Publication National Institutes of Health, 1998. <http://www.nida.nih.gov/EconomicCosts/Index.html>

⁴ Source: Alcohol Advertisements Flood New York City, A report of the Corporations and Health Watch Project, Hunter College – City University of New York, October 2007.

⁵ Source: The End of the Line for Alcohol Ads on Public Transit, A Marin Institute Report, November 2007.

⁶ Source: MTA 2007 Progress Report to Investors, New York Metropolitan Transit Authority, May 2007.

⁷ Source: MTA Public Transport for the New York Region: <http://www.mta.info/mta/network.htm#statsnyc>

⁸ Source: MTA NYC website Facts and Figures: <http://www.mta.nyc.ny.us/nycf/ffsubway.htm>

⁹ Based on telephone conversation with New York Department of Education - Office of Pupil Transportation.

¹⁰ Sources: Prevalence, proximity and predictors of alcohol ads in Central Harlem, Naa Oyo A. Kwate*, Meghan Jernigan and Tammy Lee, Alcohol and Alcoholism, July 2007; Take one down, pass it around, 98 alcohol ads on the wall: outdoor advertising in New York City's Black neighbourhoods, Naa Oyo A Kwate* and Columbia University, International Journal of Epidemiology, June 2007.