

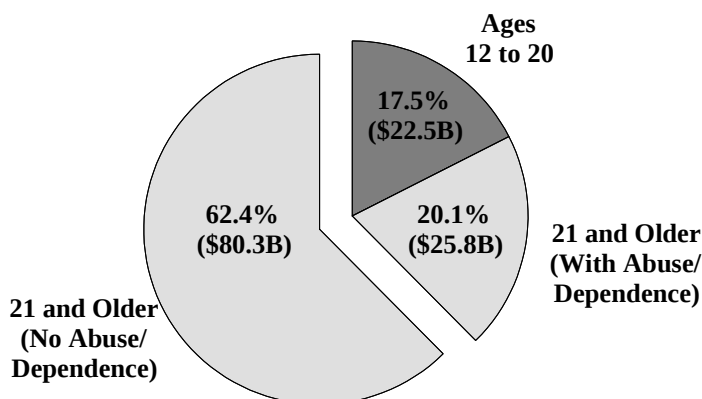
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Alcohol Expenditure Study Concludes That Alcohol Industry Has Compelling Financial Interest in Underage Drinking

“Early initiation of alcohol use provides substantial financial value to the alcohol industry, “ according to an analysis of the quantity and cash value of drinking in the United States. Of the estimated \$128.6 billion spent on alcohol in 2001, \$22.5 billion (17.5%) was attributable to underage drinking. In addition, because underage drinkers are more likely to become adult drinkers with alcohol abuse and dependence (almost all—96.8%—of the adult drinkers with alcohol abuse and dependence began drinking prior to the age of 21 years), early initiation also results in a long-term cash value to the alcohol industry. Slightly more than \$25 billion was linked to alcohol consumed by adult drinkers with alcohol abuse or dependence. The authors conclude that “with at least 37.5% of sales linked to underage drinking and adult abusive and dependent drinking, the alcohol industry has a compelling financial motive to attempt to maintain or increase rates of underage drinking” (p. 477).

U.S. Expenditures on Alcohol Attributable to Drinking by Underage Persons (Ages 12 to 20) and Adults, 2001



NOTE: Abuse and dependence are based on DSM-IV criteria.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Foster, S.E., Vaughan, R.D., Foster, W.H., and Califano, J., Jr. “Estimate of the Commercial Value of Underage Drinking and Adult Abusive and Dependent Drinking to the Alcohol Industry,” *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 160(5):473-478, 2006. For more information, contact Susan Foster at sfoster@casacolumbia.org.

•• 301-405-9770 (voice) •• 301-403-8342 (fax) •• CESAR@cesar.umd.edu •• www.cesar.umd.edu ••
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