



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
DIVISION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATE AGENCIES REMIND STUDENTS, PARENTS AND LICENSEES ON THE DANGERS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING DURING PROM AND GRADUATION SEASON

State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) Commissioner Karen M. Carpenter-Palumbo, State Liquor Authority (SLA) Chairman Daniel B. Boyle and Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioner (DMV) David J. Swarts today reminded parents, students and those holding liquor licenses on the importance of preventing underage drinking in New York State.

“It seems like every year at this time, we hear of another needless tragedy due to underage drinking, which is why it’s so important that all communities across the state work together to prevent underage drinking,” said OASAS Commissioner Carpenter-Palumbo. “One mistake made early in life can have lifelong ramifications. This year, tragedies can be avoided and lives can be saved if youth make the right choice by staying safe and choosing not to drink alcohol.”

“With senior proms and graduations upon us, it is vital for everyone to remember the importance of discouraging underage drinking,” said SLA Chairman Boyle. “Holding a liquor license is a privilege and the SLA expects our licensees to follow the law and act responsibly.”

“New York State is a nationally recognized leader in preventing alcohol- and drug-related traffic crashes, especially involving drivers under age 21,” said DMV Commissioner Swarts. “Proms, graduations and the summer driving season ahead can be among the happiest days in a student’s life, unmarred by a tragedy in which someone is injured or killed. We want to keep it that way. It is important that under-age New Yorkers choose to not drink and certainly not to drink and drive.”

Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among adolescents. In 2006, there were nearly 15,000 New Yorkers between the age of 12 and 20 that were admitted to a New York State treatment program for an alcohol-related issue. By their senior year, nearly four out of five students have consumed alcohol. Underage drinking can lead to unplanned and unprotected sexual activity, poor school performance, driving while intoxicated, and even death. In addition, underage drinking can hinder brain, organ, bone and muscle development, along with long term memory and learning skills.

Currently, OASAS is working with parents, schools and law enforcement in more than 50 community mobilization coalitions statewide to provide best evidence-based prevention services, and help change norms, attitudes and behaviors regarding underage drinking. Over the next two years, the agency plans on doubling the capacity of its network of community mobilization coalitions by adding an additional 50 communities.

Those holding liquor licensees are reminded that selling alcohol to a person under the age of 21 is a crime. Before making a sale, employees should check for proof of age. Surveys show that in many sales to minors, proper identification is never requested. In 2006, the State Liquor Authority terminated nearly 500 liquor licenses and imposed fines of over \$5 million, the majority of which involved sales to minors.

Although New York continues to be a national leader in reducing alcohol related fatalities and crashes, including a zero tolerance policy for any driver under 21, motorists continue this often deadly and illegal act. In 2005 alone there were nearly 5,500 drinking drivers that resulted in 294 fatalities and more than 5,000 personal injuries. In fact, in 2005, 429 drinking drivers under the age of 21 were involved in crashes in which there were 23 fatalities and nearly 400 personal injuries.

Acceptable documents for identification include a valid driver's license or non-driver identification card issued by the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles, the federal government, any United States territory, commonwealth or possession, the District of Columbia, a state government within the U.S. or a provincial government of Canada; a valid passport issued by the U.S. or any other country; or an identification card issued by the armed forces of the U.S. Birth certificates, college IDs, and Sheriffs IDs are not acceptable proof of age.

Tips for inspection of valid ID documents include: check for tampered or fake documents; check information and photo on the document and compare with the person presenting the ID; check the lamination for unclear surfaces; check for bumps or uneven surfaces; check for erased ink or alteration marks around the date of birth; check the security laminate for a continuous state seal on NYS licenses; ask for a second form of ID and never accept the old pink style license for anyone 25 or under. Those motorists should present the new blue style license issued statewide throughout the previous year.

Adults should also be aware of New York State's Social Host Liability Law, targeting people who provide alcoholic beverages to a person under-21 years of age. The law imposes liability on the "social host" for any injury or damages caused by the intoxicated youth.

OASAS and the SLA have collaborated on three publications addressing underage drinking targeting parents, retailers and law enforcement. A link to these publications is below:

<http://www.oasas.state.ny.us/ud/documents/AlcoholandYourChild.pdf>
<http://www.oasas.state.ny.us/ud/documents/OASASRetail.pdf>

If you or someone you know needs more information on New York's prevention, treatment and recovery services, please call 1-800-522-5353.

For more information, please visit www.oasas.state.ny.us or www.abc.state.ny.us or www.nysdmv.com.

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