



## Press Release

# First Regional Northern Virginia “Sticker Shock” Campaign Highlights Risks and Consequences of Giving Alcohol to Minors *Youth and adults to affix warning stickers on alcohol products*

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**Alexandria, Va.**— Teams of youth and adults from Arlington, Fairfax, Prince William and Fauquier counties and the City of Alexandria will join forces on October 10 to launch the first Northern Virginia regional Sticker Shock campaign, a youth-led initiative to educate adults who might be tempted to purchase alcohol legally and provide it to minors.

During the campaign, teams of youth and adults will visit more than 100 Northern Virginia stores to place “warning” stickers on multi-packs of beer, wine coolers and other alcohol products, highlighting the penalties for furnishing alcohol to minors. In Virginia, providing alcohol to a minor is a Class 1 misdemeanor, with a punishment of up to \$2,500 and up to 12 months in jail, or both. In addition, to these penalties, a person found guilty of this offense shall have his or her license to operate a motor vehicle suspended for a period of not more than one year.

Research data show that it is easy for youth to obtain alcohol. National polls report that youth ages 13 and older say it is easy to get alcohol from adults—sometimes from their own parents who themselves may have drinking problems.<sup>1</sup> In an Arlington survey, 52 percent of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students and 61 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students reported that alcohol is easy to get.<sup>2</sup> In a similar Alexandria survey, 17 percent of high school students who drank alcohol in the past month said that someone gave alcohol to them, and during focus groups in 2008, students said that alcohol is easy to get.<sup>3</sup>

The Sticker Shock campaign will kick off with a press conference at the Giant at Bailey’s Crossroads at 10 am on Saturday, October 10. Speakers will include Earl Cook, City of Alexandria’s Police Chief; Barbara A. Favola, Chair of the Arlington County Board; Debbie Sausville, whose teenage step-daughter was killed in a collision while driving drunk, after an adult illegally gave her alcohol; and two TC William High School Students: Charlotte Clinger and Eric Watkins, who is co-president of the Alexandria Youth Council. Following the press conference, teams of youth and adults will disperse throughout the region to visit participating retailers, where they will affix the warning stickers to alcohol products.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.jointogether.org/news/headlines/inthenews/2009/alcoholism-among-pre-teens.html](http://www.jointogether.org/news/headlines/inthenews/2009/alcoholism-among-pre-teens.html)

<sup>2</sup> 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Arlington, Va.

<sup>3</sup> 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Alexandria, Va.; Qualitative Assessment of Alexandria Youth Substance Use, September 30, 2008.

The Sticker Shock campaign is sponsored by the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA), Arlington's READY Coalition (a project of the Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth and Families), MADD Northern Virginia, Alexandria Youth Council, Virginia ABC, and area law enforcement. More than 100 local retailers have agreed to participate in the campaign, including Giant Food, 7-11, CVS and a host of small grocery and convenience stores.

"Sticker Shock sends a message to parents and other adults that it's simply not okay to provide beer, wine and alcohol products to anyone under 21," said Allen Lomax, chair of the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria. "While the legal consequences to parents and other adult enablers are significant, the real damage is to our youth who far too often drink too much, drive while intoxicated and engage in risky behaviors. Long-term, consuming large quantities of alcohol, especially when combined with poor nutrition, can lead to permanent damage to vital organs such as the brain and liver."

SAPCA is an alliance of more than 80 members representing parents, youth, schools, City of Alexandria health and recreation agencies, media, nonprofits, businesses, faith communities, policymakers and law enforcement whose mission is to engage the entire community in reducing youth substance use and abuse in Alexandria. SAPCA was created in 2007 as part of the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria (<http://www.alexhealth.org/partnership>). Alexandria Mayor William D. Euille is SAPCA's honorary chair. SAPCA is a member of the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA). Information about SAPCA, including membership, is available at [www.preventitalexandria.org](http://www.preventitalexandria.org).

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