



Press Release

Alexandria and Arlington’s “Sticker Shock” Highlights Risks and Consequences of Giving Alcohol to Minors Youth and adults affix warning stickers to alcohol products

For release
October 19, 2013

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Alexandria, Va.— On October 19, teams of youth and adults from the City of Alexandria and Arlington County will “shock” purchasers of alcohol by placing bright red warning stickers on multi-packs of beer, wine coolers and other alcohol products in Alexandria and Arlington stores. Sticker Shock is a youth-led initiative designed to educate adults who might be tempted to purchase alcohol legally and provide it to minors.

The stickers contain warnings about the serious 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.¹ In a recent Alexandria survey, almost 40 percent of high school seniors said they drank alcohol in the past 30 days, with 25 percent reporting binge drinking of more than five drinks in a row.²

The Sticker Shock campaign will kick off with a press conference at the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services, 720 North St. Asaph Street, Alexandria, at 10 am on Saturday, October 19. Speakers include Deputy Police Chief Cleveland Spruill; Cassie Cowart, a TC Williams High School Senior whose family member died after being hit by a drunk driver and representatives from Arlington County. Following the press conference, teams of youth and adults will travel throughout the city to visit over 100 participating retailers in Alexandria and Arlington and affix the warning stickers to alcohol products. Sticker Shock is sponsored by the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA); Arlington READY Coalition, Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services; Alexandria

¹ www.jointogether.org/news/headlines/inthenews/2009/alcoholism-among-pre-teens.html

² 2013 Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behavior Survey, Alexandria, Va.; Qualitative Assessment of Alexandria Youth Substance Use, September 30, 2008.

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; Alexandria Police Department; Alexandria Sheriff's Office; and Virginia ABC. Local retailers who are participating in the campaign include Giant Food, Safeway, 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 (www.healthieralexandria.org). 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.

The Arlington READY Coalition provides an on-going community-wide forum that identifies strategies to keep teens drug- and alcohol-free. The Coalition is a project of the Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth and Families. Information about the READY Coalition is available at www.readycoalition.org.

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