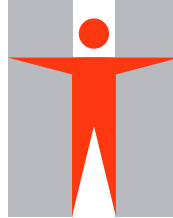


香港特別行政區政府
衛生署
香港灣仔皇后大道東 213 號
胡忠大廈 17 樓及 21 樓



THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HONG KONG
SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
WU CHUNG HOUSE, 17TH & 21ST FLOORS,
213 QUEEN'S ROAD EAST,
WANCHAI, HONG KONG

本署檔號 Our Ref.: (36) in DH SEB NCD/7/76/3/4/7

30 December 2013

Dear Vice-Chancellor/President,

Alcohol Kills : Stop Alcohol Marketing in Campus

I wish to draw your attention to an unprecedented surge in alcohol marketing in campus and call for your watchfulness and united efforts to protect tomorrow's leaders from alcohol-related harm.

The TRUTH about alcohol is that it is a Group 1 carcinogen (cancer-causing substance), belonging to the highest risk category as tobacco smoke. Alcohol causes cancers of the mouth, throat, voice box, food passage, liver, bowel and the breasts. The more you drink, the higher your cancer risk. Alcohol is bad for adolescents and youth given its harmful effects on the still developing brain. Moreover, alcohol is a strong agent of disinhibition, putting young people at risk of accidents, violence and unsafe sex. Early initiation of drinking is shown to be a powerful predictor of alcohol dependence and abuse in later life.

What is NOT TRUE about alcohol is that it protects your heart, as medical evidence is only equivocal at best. Think again if you consider social drinking acceptable because most drinkers do not realize the amount of alcohol taken is already harming their health. What's more, instead of helping to relieve stress, undue influence of alcohol puts young people in distressing, embarrassing and even harmful situations which they may regret for life.

Put simply, there is no place for alcohol in young people's lives and health. There must be no misunderstanding about this: society's only responsible way to deal with alcohol is to help people defer initiation of drinking for as long as possible.

It has come to our attention that akin to Big Tobacco's marketing tactics, alcohol giants are now making their way into the youth market under the guise of 'responsible

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drinking'. They deploy online and off-line tactics such as sponsorships and outreach activities, and give out biased, misleading and incorrect information about alcohol use. Sadly, some tertiary institutions are already responding to these dangerous invitations which only serve to reinforce young people's intention to drink than to refrain from it.

The World Health Organization's Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol denounces all forms of alcohol marketing. Now, it's time we join forces to raise our guard and expose such devious forms of promotion. Please identify academic departments (e.g. marketing, business, hospitality, etc.), offices (e.g. student affairs, community services, residences, etc.) and student unions which are likely targets of alcohol marketing to actively communicate with them the content of this letter.

For more information about alcohol and health, you may visit our website on <http://www.change4health.gov.hk/>.

Thank you for your support in protecting young people from harmful alcohol use.

Yours sincerely,



(Dr. Regina CHING)
for Director of Health

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