

## Study: Some parents proliferate teen drinking

By Jim Ritter  
CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

There's a long-standing belief among many parents that it's OK to let teenagers drink at home, because they're bound to drink anyway.

And although health officials discourage the practice, it remains widespread. A new survey has found that 24 percent of teens say their parents have given them alcohol. Twenty-one percent say they've been to a party where kids drank alcohol supplied by parents.

The survey of 701 teens ages 13 to 18 was conducted for the American Medical Association by Northbrook-based Teenage Research Unlimited.

AMA President J. Edward Hill called the results disturbing. Parents should not allow teens to drink, even with supervision, he said.

"Drinking is not a rite of passage," Hill said. "Fatal car accidents, injuries and assaults and irreversible damage to the brain are not rites of passage for any child. "

Among other findings in the survey:

- Eighty percent of the teens say it's easy to get alcohol at parties, and two-thirds say it's easy to get alcohol from their home or from older siblings or other relatives. But only 9 percent of older teens say they have gotten alcohol from stores.
- Forty-four percent of girls ages 16 to 18 say they have drunk alcohol at a party.
- Fifty percent of teen girls say they have obtained alcohol one way or the other, compared with 45 percent of boys.

Underage drinking is a leading cause of death in teens, including car accidents and injuries, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Teen drinking also increases the risks of sexual assaults, date rapes and sexually transmitted diseases.

Parents aren't the only ones to blame. Hill said the alcohol industry "should be ashamed of itself" for promoting drinking at sporting events, festivals and concerts attended by youths.

The AMA also commissioned a poll of 2,283 adults by Harris Interactive. Results were similar to the teen poll: 25 percent of parents and guardians of children ages 12 to 20 say they have allowed their teens to drink alcohol with their supervision in the past six months.

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# Bolingbrook cracking down on teen drinking

By Louise Brass  
STAFF WRITER

The Bolingbrook Village Board is cracking down on party hosts who allow minors to drink alcohol, whether the hosts are at home or away.

The board Tuesday night unanimously passed an ordinance that will result in fines for those found guilty of enabling minors to drink on their property.

The fine — \$200 to \$500 per minor invitee — is intended to keep minors from being in situations where they may binge-drink or later go out and drive while intoxicated, Mayor Roger Claar said.

While it is not yet a big problem in Bolingbrook, social gatherings in which parents do not purchase or provide the alcohol to minors but allow minors to drink on their premises are becoming more common, Claar said.

However, nothing in the ordinance would prohibit the giving of an alcoholic beverage to a minor in the performance of a religious ceremony or service, he said.

According to Lt. Tom Ross of the Office of Professional Standards at the Bolingbrook Police Department, the department hopes the ordinance will be a deterrent to underage drinking.

"It hasn't been a huge problem," he said. "It is a problem we run into at prom. We see it every year — at homecoming, high school dances, graduation parties, things of that nature."

"The biggest problem isn't necessarily parents hosting parties as much as parents turning a blind eye and maybe leaving for the weekend," he said.

Their children may have a party while they are gone, and even if no alcohol is provided, another person may bring alcohol, he said. Either way, the homeowner will be called into court on the matter.

Sometimes officers are called to a house party and kids will run away or hide in the house, Ross said.

"There's lots of different situations. This ordinance now allows us to cite the parents," he said.

"In the rare instances that happens, this ordinance gives us another tool to hold responsible adults accountable for their actions or the actions of their children," Ross said.

Police officers have a duty to care for children, he said, and each child allowed to drink will be considered a separate count when fines are issued.

"We are trying to give parents tools to have a conversation with their children to not have these parties," Ross said.

Contact staff writer Louise Brass at [lbrass@scn1.com](mailto:lbrass@scn1.com) or (815) 439-7557.

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