

# BRIEFING POINTS

## Highlights of the *Community Alcohol Readiness Study: 2006 Adult Survey Results, February 2008*

### STUDY DESIGN AND PURPOSE

- The Community Alcohol Readiness (CAR) study is designed to examine attitudes and perceptions of adults regarding alcohol use, provide objective data to help explore strategies to combat underage drinking, and help decision makers evaluate strategies that have been implemented. The 2006 survey of Fargo adults is a follow-up to a 2001 baseline study of adults in the Fargo/Moorhead Metropolitan Area. The results of a similar survey of students in grades 7 through 12 in the Fargo Public School District are presented in a separate, companion report, *Community Alcohol Readiness Study: 2006 Student Survey Results*. For detailed results of both studies, see [www.ndsu.edu/sdc/publications.htm](http://www.ndsu.edu/sdc/publications.htm).
- A total of 352 adults participated in the 2006 survey. A simple random sample of households in Fargo, North Dakota, was used for the survey, producing results with an error rate below 5% and a 95% confidence level.
- References to significant differences are included when significance was found for year of survey, age, educational attainment, and parental status. Throughout the briefing points and the report, the term “younger” represents respondents 18-34 years old, “intermediate age” represents respondents 35-54 years old, and “older” represents respondents 55 years and older. The term “high school education” represents respondents who are high school graduates, have their GED, or did not complete high school; “some college education” represents respondents who completed vocational/technical training or some college, but have no degree; and “college degree” represents respondents who have a college, graduate school, or professional degree. The term “with children” represents respondents who are the parent/primary caregiver of children younger than 21 years old and “without children” represents respondents who are not the parent/primary caregiver of children younger than 21 years old.

### KEY FINDINGS OF RESPONDENTS

#### *Alcohol Use as a Problem*

- Respondents were asked their perceptions regarding how problematic teenage and adult alcohol use are in the community.
  - 78% of respondents see *teenage alcohol use* as, at least, a moderate problem. Older respondents see it as more of a serious problem than younger or intermediate age respondents do. Teenage alcohol use is considered a more serious problem now than it was by respondents in 2001.
  - 65% of respondents see *adult alcohol use* as, at least, a moderate problem.
  - Overall, respondents see *teenage alcohol use* as more problematic than *adult alcohol use* in the community.
- Respondents were asked how they think drinking among teenagers and problem drinking among adults in the community has changed in the past five years.
  - 49% of respondents think that *drinking among teenagers* in the community has increased in the past five years. Larger proportions of older respondents than younger or intermediate age respondents, and larger proportions of respondents with less education than those with a college degree, think *drinking among teenagers* has increased in the past five years.
  - 59% of respondents think that *problem drinking among adults* in the community has stayed the same in the past five years. Larger proportions of older respondents than younger or intermediate age respondents think that *problem drinking among adults* has increased in the past five years.
  - Overall, larger proportions of respondents think *drinking among teenagers* has increased as think *problem drinking among adults* has increased.
- Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree that kids who experiment with alcohol almost always grow out of it (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”).
  - On average, respondents disagree that kids who experiment with alcohol almost always grow out of it (mean=1.94). Older and intermediate age respondents disagree more than younger respondents that kids who experiment with alcohol almost always grow out of it. Agreement with this statement has decreased since 2001.
- Respondents were asked how often they see someone drunk in public in their community (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “never” and 5 being “very often”).

- On average, respondents rarely see someone drunk in public in the community (mean=2.45). Younger respondents see someone drunk in public more often than intermediate age and older respondents do.
- Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree that kids who engage in binge drinking, having five or more drinks in a row, typically will have an alcohol problem later in life (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”).
  - On average, respondents agree that kids who engage in binge drinking typically will have an alcohol problem later in life (mean=3.62).
- Respondents were asked the extent to which alcohol use contributes to crashes/injuries (automobile, hunting, boating, snowmobiling) and violent crimes in their community (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “contributes not at all” and 5 being “contributes a great deal”).
  - 59% respondents think that alcohol contributes quite a bit/a great deal to *crashes/injuries*. The perceived level of contribution has increased since 2001.
  - 46% respondents think that alcohol contributes quite a bit/a great deal to *violent crimes*. The perceived level of contribution has increased since 2001.
  - Overall, on average, respondents think alcohol contributes more to *crashes/injuries* than to *violent crimes* in the community (mean=3.71 and mean=3.48, respectively).
- Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree that problems associated with drinking are not as damaging as problems associated with drugs among teenagers (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”).
  - On average, respondents disagree that problems associated with drinking are not as damaging as problems associated with drugs among teenagers (mean=2.44).

#### *Appropriateness of Actions*

- Respondents were asked if they think it is okay for parents to offer their teenagers alcoholic beverages in their home.
  - 60% of respondents think it is never okay for parents to offer their teenagers alcoholic beverages in their home. Larger proportions of intermediate age and older respondents and those with a high school education think it is never okay for parents to offer their teenagers alcoholic beverages in their home compared to younger respondents and those with some college education or a college degree. Acceptance of parents offering their teenager alcoholic beverages in their home has decreased since 2001.
- Respondents were asked to rate two different parents’ actions (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “not at all acceptable” and 5 being “very acceptable”):
  - 65% of respondents think that *parents offering their teenager an alcoholic beverage to drink with them saying they prefer he or she drink with them rather than drink elsewhere* is not at all acceptable. Larger proportions of intermediate age and older respondents than younger respondents, and a larger proportion of respondents with children than those without children, think it is not at all acceptable. Acceptance of this action has decreased since 2001.
  - 80% of respondents think that *parents telling their teenager to use alcohol carefully and not let it interfere with schoolwork after finding out he or she had been drinking alcohol* is not at all acceptable. Larger proportions of intermediate age and older respondents than younger respondents think this action is not at all acceptable. Acceptance of this action has decreased since 2001.
  - While still indicating overall disapproval, on average, respondents are more accepting of *parents offering their teenager alcohol saying they prefer he or she drink with them rather than elsewhere* than of *parents telling their teenager to use alcohol carefully and not let it interfere with schoolwork* (mean=1.55 and mean=1.30, respectively).
- Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree with two statements regarding teenagers’ actions (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”):
  - 96% of respondents disagree that *teenagers should be able to drink as long as they don’t drive afterwards*. Respondents with a high school education and with a college degree disagree more with this statement than respondents with some college education do. Agreement with this statement has decreased since 2001.
  - 94% of respondents disagree that *it is okay for teenagers to drink at parties if they don’t get too drunk*. Intermediate age and older respondents disagree more with this statement than younger respondents do. Agreement with this statement has decreased since 2001.
  - On average, respondents disagree slightly more with the statement that *teenagers should be able to drink as long as they don’t drive afterwards* than with the statement that *it is okay for teenagers to drink at parties if they don’t get too drunk* (mean=1.43 and mean=1.47, respectively).

## Alcohol Use, Access, and Consequences

- Respondents were asked how often over a two week period they think the typical teenager in their community binge drinks (has five or more drinks in a row; a “drink” is defined as a glass of wine, a bottle of beer, or a mixed drink).
  - 55% of respondents think that the typical teenager in the community binge drinks at least twice in a two week period. Larger proportions of younger respondents and respondents without children than intermediate age and older respondents and respondents with children think the typical teenager binge drinks at least twice in a two week period.
- Respondents were asked how they think binge drinking (having five or more drinks in a row) among teenagers in the community has changed in the past five years.
  - 59% of respondents think that binge drinking among teenagers in the community has increased in the past five years. A larger proportion of older respondents than intermediate age and younger respondents think binge drinking has increased.
- Respondents were asked how difficult it is for teenagers in their community to obtain alcohol in the following ways (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “not at all difficult” and 5 being “very difficult”):
  - 65% of respondents think that it is not at all/a little difficult for teenagers in the community to *sneak alcohol from their home or a friend’s home*.
  - 61% of respondents think that it is not at all/a little difficult for teenagers in the community to *get an older person to buy alcohol for them*.
  - 58% of respondents think that it is no more than somewhat difficult for teenagers in the community to *get their parents to give alcohol to them*. Older respondents and respondents without children think it is less difficult for teenagers to *get their parents to give alcohol to them* than intermediate age and younger respondents and respondents with children do. The perceived level of difficulty has decreased since 2001.
  - 42% of respondents think that it is quite/very difficult for teenagers in the community to *buy beer, wine, or hard liquor at a store themselves*. Older respondents think it is less difficult for teenagers to *buy beer, wine, or hard liquor at a store themselves* than intermediate age and younger respondents do. The perceived level of difficulty has decreased since 2001.
  - 61% of respondents think that it is quite/very difficult for teenagers in the community to *order a drink in a bar*.
  - Overall, respondents perceive that it is more difficult for teenagers to obtain alcohol directly (e.g., ordering a drink at a bar) than indirectly (e.g., sneaking alcohol from their home). On average, respondents think that *sneaking alcohol from their home or a friend’s home* is the easiest way to obtain alcohol (mean=1.82), followed by *getting an older person to buy alcohol for them* (mean=2.01), *getting their parents to give them alcohol* (mean=3.09), *buying alcohol at a store* (mean=3.29), and *ordering a drink in a bar* (mean=3.83).
- Respondents were asked if it has become easier, stayed the same, or become harder for teenagers to obtain alcohol in the community over the past five years.
  - 34% of respondents think that obtaining alcohol in the community has become easier for teenagers over the past five years; a similar proportion said there was no change and 20% said it has become more difficult.
- Respondents were asked how strongly they would oppose or favor penalizing liquor stores or businesses caught selling alcohol to teenagers; penalizing adults, 21 or older, who provide alcohol to teenagers; and penalizing teenagers caught using alcohol (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly oppose” and 5 being “strongly favor”).
  - 83% of respondents favor *penalizing liquor stores/businesses caught selling alcohol to teenagers*. Support for this penalty has increased since 2001.
  - 92% of respondents favor *penalizing adults, 21 or older, who provide alcohol to teenagers*. Support for this penalty has increased since 2001.
  - 87% of respondents favor *penalizing teenagers caught using alcohol*. Support for this penalty has increased since 2001.
  - On average, respondents are most in favor of *penalizing adults who provide alcohol to teenagers* (mean=4.59) followed by *penalizing liquor stores/businesses caught selling alcohol to teenagers* (mean=4.36) and *penalizing teenagers caught using alcohol* (mean=4.34).

## Community Readiness

- Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree that the community is not interested in changing no matter what the issue is (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”).
  - On average, respondents disagree that the community is not interested in changing no matter what the issue is (mean=2.35).

- Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree that there is no sense of commitment in the community (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”).
  - On average, respondents disagree that there is no sense of commitment in the community (mean=2.22). Respondents with a high school education do not disagree as much as those with some college education or a college degree.
- Respondents were asked how strongly they would oppose or favor having law enforcement spend more time enforcing the minimum drinking age (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly oppose” and 5 being “strongly favor”).
  - On average, respondents somewhat favor having law enforcement spend more time enforcing the minimum drinking age (mean=3.92). Intermediate age and older respondents are more in favor of it than younger respondents are, and respondents in 2006 are more in favor of it than respondents in 2001 were.
- Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree that schools need to be more active in dealing with alcohol problems (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”).
  - On average, respondents agree that schools need to be more active in dealing with alcohol problems (mean=4.07). Respondents without children agree more strongly than those with children do, and respondents in 2006 agree more strongly than respondents in 2001 did.
- Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree that public service announcements are a good way to change attitudes about alcohol use (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”).
  - On average, respondents agree that public service announcements are a good way to change attitudes about alcohol use (mean=3.60). Older respondents and those with a high school education agree the most that public service announcements are a good way to change attitudes about alcohol use, followed by intermediate age respondents and those with some college education and younger respondents and those with a college degree.
- Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree with three statements about alcohol use prevention (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”):
  - 88% of respondents agree that *alcohol prevention programs are a good investment because they save lives and money*.
  - 85% of respondents agree that *it is possible to reduce alcohol problems through prevention*.
  - 78% of respondents agree that *the community has a responsibility to set up alcohol prevention programs*.
  - On average, respondents agree the most that *alcohol prevention programs are a good idea because they save lives and money* (mean=4.13), followed by *it is possible to reduce alcohol problems through prevention* (mean=4.10) and *the community has the responsibility to set up alcohol prevention programs* (mean=3.92).
- Respondents were asked whether alcohol prevention and awareness programs made a positive difference in the community over the past five years (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “a great deal”).
  - On average, respondents think that alcohol prevention and awareness programs made somewhat of a positive difference in the community over the past five years (mean=2.99).
- Respondents were asked how much information in the media they have seen, heard, or read regarding underage drinking during the past year (e.g., television, newspaper, radio).
  - 55% of respondents indicated they saw, heard, or read a lot of information in the media regarding underage drinking during the past year.
- Respondents were asked how willing they would be to help pay for substance abuse prevention services (on a 5-point scale with 1 being “not at all willing” and 5 being “very willing”).
  - On average, respondents indicated that they are somewhat willing to help pay for substance abuse prevention services (mean=2.75). Respondents with a college degree are more willing to help pay than respondents who had a high school education or who had some college education are.

### Demographics

- 45% of respondents are 35 to 54 years old.
- 67% of respondents are female.
- 80% of respondents have some form of higher education.
- 36% of respondents are a parent or primary caregiver of a child or children under the age of 21. 38% of respondents have at least one child age 13 to 17 and 27% of respondents have at least one child age 18 to 20.