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Dane County Coalition to Reduce Alcohol Abuse: Position on Alcohol License Density Ordinance

The Dane County Coalition to Reduce Alcohol Abuse (DCCRAA) has recently reorganized and increased its capabilities by joining forces with Health First Wisconsin - home of SmokeFree Wisconsin. Going forward, the Coalition's position on the Alcohol License Density Ordinance (ALDO) and proposed changes to the ordinance is as follows:

ALDO was adopted in an attempt to curb the increasing rates of violence and crime downtown, and since ALDO was implemented in 2007, preliminary crime statistics are promising. Furthermore, evidence-based studies done worldwide show that if you reduce the number of alcohol-outlets in an alcohol-outlet dense area, crime and violence rates will decrease. Therefore, DCCRAA strongly supports ALDO and supports making the ordinance permanent.

As for proposed changes to this ordinance, DCCRAA feels these changes have the potential to weaken the ordinance and the Coalition does not support weakening ALDO.

The Coalition does not support the entertainment venue exemption. We are in favor of attracting new businesses that offer other forms of entertainment than simply vertical drinking, but, as drafted, we do not support the proposed entertainment venue exemption. The DCCRAA believes any entity with more than 50 percent of its revenue coming from alcohol sales will, in fact, make a significant contribution to the alcohol problems in the ALDO area. With this in mind, DCCRAA does not support increasing the allowable percentage of revenue from alcohol in the exceptional circumstance clause from 25 percent to 50 percent, as has been proposed.

DCCRAA stands behind the original 365-day window to allow a new bar or tavern to open in place of an establishment that has closed. Doubling this window to 730 days, as has been proposed, does not reduce the number of bars downtown overtime, as ALDO was adopted to do. ALDO does not restrict other viable businesses from opening in the district after the 365-day window passes. If an establishment closes and new tenants are not found within 365 days, our leaders should seize that opportunity to reduce the number of liquor outlets in our community.

Thank you for your time.