



DANE COUNTY YOUTH COMMISSION



KATHLEEN FALK
Dane County Executive

Deborah Hobbins
Chair, Dane County Youth Commission

LYNN GREEN,
Director, Department of Human Services

CONNIE BETTIN
Prevention Services Manager

July 13, 2010

To: David Hart, Chair
Alcohol License Review Commission

As the Alcohol License Review Commission considers outlet requests by Walgreens Corporation, the Dane County Youth Commission would like to share its concerns and some data on underage alcohol use.

The Youth Commission periodically conducts a self-report survey of Dane County student's grades 7-12 on a number of health and social issues, including alcohol consumption. In 2009, the Youth Assessment data indicated that 50% of high school youth reported using alcohol in the past 12 months. Twenty-six percent reported using alcohol 1 -3 times a month; 7% reported using alcohol 1-3 times per week; and 2% reported daily alcohol use.

A study of three California cities showed that communities with high outlet density have significantly higher levels of underage drinking as well as gang-related behavior. The national Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration indicates that youth who begin using alcohol prior to age 14 are four times more likely to become problem drinkers as adults. This research clearly indicates that underage drinking occurs in our community and that it increases the risk of alcohol problems later in life. We feel this data and the potential impact of alcohol density decisions on Dane County youth are important for public officials to consider in their deliberations regarding alcohol policy.

For the protection of our youth, the members of the Dane County Youth Commission *strongly encourage* the ALRC to review the available research and consider how youth are affected by alcohol density issues as a part its decision making to grant outlet licenses to Walgreens. The Youth Commission further recommends that the ALRC insure that licensed liquor outlets ask for proper identification from customers to avoid serving those under the age of 21.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. If you would like additional data or information, please phone or email us. We will be very interested in the outcome of your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Melissa Sargent, Member
Dane County Youth Commission
Dane County Board of Supervisors

Matt Veldran, Member
Dane County Youth Commission
Dane County Board of Supervisors