



Family Service Madison

Celebrating and Growing With Families and Our Community Since 1910

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To: Alcohol License Review Commission Members

As the Alcohol License Review Commission considers outlet requests by the Walgreens Corporation, I would like to share a unique perspective on this matter.

My name is Doug McLain; I am the Program Coordinator for PICADA, a program of Family Service Madison. PICADA stands for Prevention-Intervention-Centers-Alcohol-Drug-Abuse. PICADA has been a part of the Madison community since 1978.

Walgreens promotes itself as *America's Corner Store*. It is the second largest in pharmaceutical sales in the country. In a December 16th, 2002 newspaper article, Dave Bermauer who was then the Chairman of Walgreens was quoted as saying, "A key to successful chain drug expansion in the 21st century is putting stores where the baby boomers are." Baby boomers are those individuals born between 1946 and 1964. He went on to say, "baby boomers will fuel the tremendous increase in demand for prescription drugs." In Dane County, between the years of 2000 and 2030, those sixty-five and older are predicted to increase by 158%. (Dane County Self-Directed Supports Final Report, 2006)

Let's look at prescription drug abuse in Wisconsin. Both nationally and in Wisconsin, the misuse of prescription drugs for non-medical purposes has emerged as a problem, especially among young and older adults. In Wisconsin, prescription drug abuse rose from 0.7% in 1992 to 3.5% in 2008 according to the WI. Epidemiological Profile on Alcohol and Other Drug Use (2008).

Many older adults rely on 5 or 6 different kinds of prescription drugs. There are at least 150 drugs commonly prescribed for seniors that have a significant negative interaction with alcohol. These include anti-diabetic agents, nitro-glycerin, and psychoactive agents. Even small amounts of alcohol combined with therapeutic doses of anti-anxiety drugs, tranquilizers, or anti-depressants enhance the depressant effect of the alcohol. It is important to recognize even relatively small amounts of alcohol taken by an older person may have extensive effects. In part, this is because older people metabolize alcohol more slowly than younger adults. Why do older adults tend to abuse alcohol? One is force of habit—simply continuing the level of alcohol consumption they had when they were younger. Another is stress, and still another is an abundance of free time and boredom.

To sum up, let me tell you about Uncle Joe. Uncle Joe is widowed, lives alone, children grown and moved away. Uncle Joe has minor bouts of depression as well as moments of confused thoughts. Uncle Joe buys gas at the local corner gas station, on his way out he buys a six-pack of beer. Uncle Joe buys his groceries at the local corner supermarket, he buys bread, milk, cans of soup, and on his way out he buys a six pack of beer. Uncle Joe buys his prescriptions at the America's local corner pharmacy; he buys his blood pressure medication and his anti-depressants. On his way out he does not buy beer because the Alcohol License Review Commission had turned down America's Corner store's request. A final question, how many alcohol retail outlets is enough? Who will say enough is enough, if not us, then who? If not now, then when?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Doug McLain
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A program of Family Service Madison