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Contact: Heidi M. Gordon  
Director of Communications  
hgordon@ohioafp.org

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### FAMILY PHYSICIANS ENCOURAGE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUNG ADULTS ABOUT DRINKING

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—With prom season just around the corner, it is more important than ever to talk to young adults about alcohol consumption.

According to an annual survey conducted by the research firm Roper Starch Worldwide the majority of teenagers age 13-17 say that their parents have the greatest influence on the decisions they make about drinking.

Children start talking about drinking between the ages 9 and 11, according to *The Family Talk* program offered by Anheuser-Busch, Inc.

#### **Tips on alcohol education include:**

- **Be a good role model.** Your drinking behavior and attitudes are being communicated to your children. Being a responsible adult is the most effective way to influence your child's decisions.
- **Be factual.** Discussions should be straightforward.
- **Have clearly stated rules.** Share your opinions and beliefs about drinking, then clearly explain the rules and consequences.
- **Practice good parenting.** Build self-esteem, communicate openly about all subjects, be an active family together and teach responsible decision-making skills.
- **Know your children's friends.** Help them cope with social pressures and take an interest in your children's group of friends.
- **Get help if you need it.** Watch for sudden, dramatic changes in your child's behavior that may be related to drinking. Seek advice from your family physician if you see warning signs.

*The Ohio Academy of Family Physicians is a statewide professional association with more than 4,400 members, including practicing physicians, family medicine residents and medical students. The scope of family medicine encompasses all ages, both sexes and every disease entity. Family physicians provide comprehensive, continuing care to all members of the family.*



## FACT SHEET

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- First use of alcohol typically begins around the age of 13.
- Thirty-five percent of children in the fourth grade report that they have been pressured by their classmates to drink. By the time they reach sixth grade, 49 percent have been pressured.
- Junior and senior high school students drink approximately 35 percent of all wine coolers and about 1.1 billion cans of beer every year.
- Eighty-seven percent of high school seniors have used alcohol.
- Approximately two-thirds of teenagers who drink report that they can buy their own alcoholic beverages. Eighty-eight percent of 10<sup>th</sup> graders and 75 percent of eighth graders report that it is very easy or fairly easy to get alcohol.
- In 1998, 32 percent of the nation's 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported that they had consumed five or more drinks of alcohol on at least one occasion in the last two weeks.
- Of the estimated 5.4 million junior and high school students who have ever consumed five or more drinks in a row, 39 percent say they drink alone, 58 percent drink when they are upset, 30 percent drink when they are bored and 37 percent drink to feel high.
- The use of alcohol and other drugs is a leading cause of death and injury (e.g., motor vehicle crashes, homicides and suicides) among teenagers and young adults.

*Sources: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention; The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence; Office of Inspector General; Monitoring the Future Study; and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.*