

Preventing Excessive Alcohol Use: Maintaining Limits on Days of Sale

Task Force Finding

Intervention Definition

Limiting the days when alcohol can be sold is intended to prevent excessive alcohol consumption and related harms by regulating access to alcohol. Most policies limiting days of sale target weekend days (usually Sundays). They may apply to alcohol outlets in which alcohol may be legally sold for the buyer to drink at the place of purchase (on-premises outlets, such as bars or restaurants) or elsewhere (off-premises outlets, such as liquor stores). In the United States, policies may be made at the state level and, where not prohibited by state pre-emption laws, at local levels.

Task Force Finding (June 2008)*

On the basis of strong evidence of effectiveness, the Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends maintaining existing limits on the days on which alcoholic beverages are sold as one strategy for the prevention of excessive alcohol consumption and related harms.

Evidence for this recommendation is based on studies assessing the effects of repealing limits on sales of alcoholic beverages on weekend days in “off-premises” settings (i.e., for consumption off premises, such as grocery, convenience, or liquor stores) and in “on-premises” settings (i.e., for consumption on premises, such as restaurants, bars, or ballparks). Removal of limits on days of sale in off-premises settings resulted in small increases both in consumption of alcohol and in motor vehicle fatalities. Removing limits on days of sale in on-premises settings found small increases in levels of consumption and substantial increases in motor vehicle–related harm.

Too few studies evaluated imposing new limits on days of sale; the Task Force therefore had insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of this intervention on excessive alcohol consumption and related harms.

*From the following publication:

Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Recommendations on maintaining limits on days and hours of sale of alcoholic beverages to prevent excessive alcohol consumption and related harms. *Am J Prev Med* 2010;39(6):605-6.

Publications

Middleton JC, Hahn RA, Kuzara JL, Elder R, Brewer R, Chattopadhyay S, Fielding J, Naimi TS, Toomey T, Lawrence B, Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Effectiveness of policies maintaining or restricting days of alcohol sales on excessive alcohol consumption and related harms. *Am J Prev Med* 2010;39(6):575-89.

Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Recommendations on maintaining limits on days and hours of sale of alcoholic beverages to prevent excessive alcohol consumption and related harms. *Am J Prev Med* 2010;39(6):605-6.

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provide information and options for decision makers and stakeholders to consider when determining which programs, services, and policies best meet the needs, preferences, available resources, and constraints of their constituents.

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