

# The New York Times

September 20, 2007

## College Drinking

To the Editor:

Re “Calling the Folks About Campus Drinking” (On Education column, Sept. 12):

Samuel G. Freedman notes that since the start of the University of Wisconsin’s parent notification program, student detox admissions have increased by 65 percent. Why? Because more than half of our 28,000 undergraduates engage in dangerous drinking at least once every two weeks, and they constitute a reservoir that continues to feed the pipeline to detox.

A concerning ripple effect is that many students return to their communities and reinforce a culture that generates disturbing statistics: Wisconsin leads the nation in binge and heavy drinking, which, along with the far less common use of illicit drugs, are the fourth most common cause of death and hospitalization in this state.

We need a much broader prevention effort. It is time for university, local and state officials to buck the prevailing culture and implement evidence-based prevention strategies. These include universal screening and intervention, restrictions on the density of alcohol outlets, higher taxes on alcohol, and many other approaches. Beneficiaries would not just be students and their families. Nearby residents and businesses and taxpayers everywhere bear the consequences of dangerous drinking.

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Madison, Wis., Sept. 13, 2007

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