



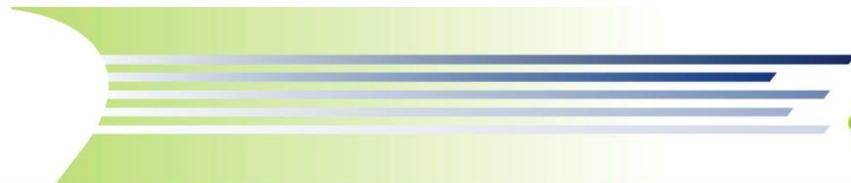
**Vital  
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# **Alcohol Policy & Advocacy: It's Not Personal**

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**As required by the Alcohol Policy 18 Conference,  
I/we have signed a disclosure statement and note  
the following conflict(s) of interest:**

None



WEDNESDAY - FRIDAY  
APRIL 11-13, 2018

RENAISSANCE ARLINGTON CAPITAL VIEW HOTEL  
WASHINGTON, DC NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA - USA

# Background

- Alcohol consumption is a behavior strongly influenced by the social context and profit-driven corporate strategy
- As such, public health policy response resembles that for tobacco, fast food, or sugary beverages:
  1. Price increases via taxation
  2. Marketing restrictions, especially to children
  3. Reasonable controls on availability

# Key Issues

- In contrast to other drivers of NCDs, alcohol consumption is not framed as unhealthy behavior or socially undesirable in control efforts or policies
- Alcohol use is enjoyed, expected, and encouraged - its place in society may feel inescapable
- **Personal habits, as well as societal and cultural norms about alcohol, get in the way of robust policy**

# Personal Habits & Preferences

- What we like
- How often
- When and where



# Embedded in Language & Environment

- “Let’s grab a drink”
- Happy Hours – with friends, colleagues
- “Open bar” events
- Pre gaming /sporting events
- Boozy brunch
- Celebrate with champagne



# Alcohol Policy

- Is not neo-prohibitionist though that is what industry and opponents may have people believe
- Can co-exist with acceptance/tolerance/support for alcohol consumption

# Alcohol Policy: It's Not Personal

Alcohol harm is a population-level problem that requires population-level messaging and policy solutions

**This...**



**Not that**





# Moving From Personal to Public Health

- Focus on the facts
- Develop the discourse
- Engage advocates
- Promote evidence-based policy

# Focus on the Facts

- Alcohol is a toxic, carcinogenic and addictive substance
- Alcohol is a leading cause of death and disability worldwide
- Alcohol is a major obstacle to sustainable social development, adversely affecting more than half the UN global goals

**The death, disability, injury and burden caused by alcohol are entirely preventable**

# Develop the Discourse

- Adjust the language and message & identify the audience
- Alcohol control terminology - how do we talk about alcohol use?
- Industry terminology – how do they promote alcohol use?
  - Breast cancer research funding or **pink washing**?
  - ‘Drink responsibly’ or **alcohol promotion**?
  - CSR or **marketing**?

# Develop the Discourse

- Public health focus on reducing “excessive drinking” and “harmful drinking” is NOT synonymous with industry framing about “responsible drinking” or “moderation”
- Industry uses individual-level framing about personal decision-making
- Public health model is about changing the social, legal, and physical context through public policy

# Engage Advocates

- **Civil society:** International, national and local NGOs
- **Government and elected officials**
- **Health professionals:** Physicians, public and mental health practitioners, substance use counselors
- **Public safety:** Police, justice, road safety, fire officials and emergency responders
- **Educators**
- **Community partners:** Women's, parent's and religious groups
- **Economic Development:** Tax, trade and employment officials

# Promote Policy

We know what works to tackle harmful use of alcohol:

- 1. Increase excise taxes on alcoholic beverages**
- 2. Enact and enforce restrictions on the physical availability of retailed alcohol**
- 3. Comprehensively restrict exposure to alcohol advertising**

# Summary

- Alcohol use and control are framed differently than other drivers of NCDs
- Aiming to impact public health and policy, not individual-level/personal decisions
- Need to promote population-level messaging and policy solutions
- Removing hypocrisy and personal decision-making frames from the alcohol control narrative is key to framing, designing, advocating, and implementing successful alcohol policy

**Full report will be available in the  
coming months on  
[VitalStrategies.org](https://VitalStrategies.org)**



# Questions?

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# Thank you.

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