

A community-wide Responsible Beverage Service program in three communities: early findings

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Abstract

Evidence accumulating over the past 10 years or so suggests that commercial servers of alcoholic beverages will intervene to reduce levels of impairment among their patrons and will refuse service to intoxicated customers. While some Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) programs have had significant effects on server and patron behavior, others have not. This leads us to consider issues of implementation and program effectiveness. In the current paper, a community-wide RBS program is described in some detail. The program was comprised by a larger comprehensive community intervention project in three sites across California and South Carolina. Process evaluation data, to track program implementation and proximal effects, provide early findings. Expressed support for RBS principles was high for both the public and the hospitality industry in all sites. A telephone survey of managers also suggests that prevention policies at bars and restaurants are beginning to show up, but a direct measure of server intervention with heavy drinkers does not yet demonstrate a program effect.

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