

Evaluating the impact of getting to outcomes-underage drinking on prevention capacity and alcohol merchant attitudes and selling behaviors.

Author(s)

Chinman M, Ebener P, Burkhart Q et al.

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Abstract

Underage drinking is a significant problem facing US communities. Several environmental alcohol prevention (EAP) strategies (laws, regulations, responsible beverage service training and practices) successfully address underage drinking. Communities, however, face challenges carrying out these EAP strategies effectively. This small-scale, 3-year, randomized controlled trial assessed whether providing prevention coalitions with Getting To Outcomes-Underage Drinking (GTO-UD), a tool kit and implementation support intervention, helped improve implementation of two common EAP strategies, responsible beverage service training (RBS) and compliance checks. Three coalitions in South Carolina and their RBS and compliance check programs received the 16-month GTO-UD intervention, including the GTO-UD manual, training, and onsite technical assistance, while another three in South Carolina maintained routine operations. The measures, collected at baseline and after the intervention, were a structured interview assessing how well coalitions carried out their work and a survey of merchant attitudes and practices in the six counties served by the participating coalitions. Over time, the quality of some RBS and compliance check activities improved more in GTO-UD coalitions than in the control sites. No changes in merchant practices or attitudes significantly differed between the GTO-UD and control groups, although merchants in the GTO-UD counties did significantly improve on refusing sales to minors while control merchants did not.

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