



Volume 4, Issue 15

Email Alert

November 17, 2009



Updating you about current events in the battle against addictions

FDA Investigating Legality of Alcoholic Energy Drinks

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced on November 13, 2009 that it has notified manufacturers of alcoholic energy drinks that it intends to investigate the safety and legality of their products. According to Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, principal deputy commissioner of food and drugs, "...the increasing popularity of consumption of caffeinated alcoholic beverages by college students and reports of potential health and safety issues necessitates that we look seriously at the scientific evidence as soon as possible..."

According to the United States Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, any substance which is intentionally added to food is considered unsafe unless 1) that use is specifically approved by the FDA, 2) the use is subject to a prior sanction or 3) the substance is Generally Regarded as Safe (GRAS). In this case, the FDA has only approved the inclusion of caffeine in soft drinks not alcoholic beverages. In a letter to the manufacturers, FDA officials indicate that they are unaware of the basis upon which the manufacturers have concluded that caffeine meets any of the above standards and gives manufacturers 30 days to provide evidence of their rationale. The letter goes on to say that if the FDA determines that the addition of caffeine to alcoholic beverages does not meet one of the standards, it will take action to have the products removed from the marketplace.

According to a Marin Institute report, non-alcoholic energy drinks first appeared in the US market in 1997 with the introduction of Red Bull. The market grew rapidly and by 2006 more than 500 energy drink products had been introduced worldwide. In light of the fact that the core consumers of energy drinks include teens and young adults, the emergence of alcoholic energy drinks, which have packaging that is remarkably similar to the non-alcoholic drinks, has been met with concern.

Source:

<http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm190427.htm>

http://www.marininstitute.org/alcopops/energy_drink_report.htm

Email Alert is a bi-weekly newsletter distributed by
Southeastern Regional Action Council
Visit us on the web at www.sectrac.org