



THE Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) yesterday reminded the media, advertisers and the public that, in accordance with the FDA's Guidelines for the Advertisement of Foods (Section 3.2.6), radio and television advertisement on alcohol should not be aired between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m., effective January 1, 2018.

It also directed that all advertisements on alcohol should include a phrase to the effect that the advertisement had been approved by the FDA.

The *Daily Graphic* welcomes the reminder and states that this has come at an opportune time.

The effects of advertisement on people's behaviour are so far-reaching that in many jurisdictions, advertisements on alcohol and cigarettes are totally banned. In many countries where such advertisements are allowed, they are expected to include a warning on the harmful effects of alcohol.

According to the World Health Organisation, the harmful use of alcohol is one of the world's leading health risks, a causal factor in more than 60 major types of diseases and injuries and results in approximately 2.5 million deaths each year. The

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Help enforce ban on daytime ads on alcohol

world body says alcohol deaths are more than deaths caused by HIV and AIDS or tuberculosis. Thus four per cent of all deaths worldwide are attributable to alcohol.

The harmful use of alcohol is especially fatal for younger age groups and alcohol is the world's leading risk factor for death among males aged between 15 and 59. This is why any step by state institutions to minimise the use of alcohol must be supported by all.

We take cognisance of the fact that many manufacturers and radio/television owners who benefit from the manufacture of alcohol will not take the directive lying down. Surely, a curtailment of advertisement on alcohol during the day means a cut in revenue for media houses and, in the long run, manufacturers. But they should bear in mind the effects of alcohol use on individuals and the

country as a whole.

Alcohol abuse and addiction produces negative effects on the health of the people and, by extension, the nation, as alcohol disrupts normal brain development to the detriment of the nation's development. But we appear not to take note of this, with alcohol advertising featuring prominently in our media.

Currently, in many major towns in the country, alcohol advertising has been carried to another level, with fierce competition for attention by some of the alcoholic beverage manufacturers as they seek innovative methods to position their products and penetrate defined segments of the market.

As a result of the ever-increasing competition across the markets, leading manufacturers have been compelled to improve their existing business models. The promotion of

products is well positioned at points where manufacturers could maximise sales.

For some time now, the strong brands have been sponsoring the playing of daily live bands at some of the major drinking joints in the metropolises and municipalities.

At such joints, where old and current songs are played, the brand presence of the sponsors is heavily felt.

This kind of competition tends to create the impression, especially in the minds of the youth, that the consumption of alcoholic beverages is normal, leading to excessive intake and subsequent adverse effects on the lifestyle of the people.

Many a time, such directives from state institutions, like the one from the FDA, are disregarded with impunity and the perpetrators are let off the hook. We join the FDA in its appeal to the public to help enforce this directive in the interest of public health and safety.

The *Daily Graphic* is convinced that a curtailment of daytime advertisement of alcoholic beverages is a step in the right direction to curb excessive consumption of alcohol.