

# Lawmakers back anti-drinking measures

By CRAIG McGUIRE  
Gazette staff writer

Lawmakers have voiced support for gubernatorial proposals designed to reduce alcohol and substance abuse by young people.

Assemblyman John Brian Murtaugh, D-Manhattan, chairman of the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Committee, said he will have to review the proposals, but he said he was encouraged.

Republican Sen. Thomas Libous of Binghamton, could not be reached for comment but he has introduced the legislation at the request of the governor.

"By better enforcing the alcohol purchase age, and ending promotions and advertising geared towards young people, we can improve the safety and health of our youth," Governor Cuomo said.

Highlights of the governor's proposals include:

- mandatory alcohol awareness education programs for minors caught buying alcohol;
- revocation of liquor licenses for repeat sales

blems at home, in school, or in the criminal justice system.

Mrs. Cuomo said there's no more appropriate time to begin new efforts to save some of the most vulnerable children than March, which is Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Month. "The governor and I are proud of this new collaborative effort."

Lt. Gov. Lundine, chairman of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council, said New York will have to look to the federal government for assistance. "This agreement re-affirms New York's commitment to bolster prevention and treatment services to our most precious resource: our children."

Through increased service for at-risk youths, Saunders and Dunston say that future difficulties can be prevented.

Proposals that would ban advertising campaigns geared to appeal to minors have met with the approval of lawmakers, although some industry people are uncomfortable with

language

Murtaugh called advertisements aimed at the young and minority groups reprehensible.

A realistic approach would be limited restrictions or counter advertisements, said Murtaugh. The

alcohol-producing industry would foot the bill for these ads.

Earlier this month, representatives of the Beer Institute, the National Beer Wholesalers Association and the National Association of Broadcasters,

launched a joint public service announcement campaign against underage drinking.

Beer Institute President Raymond J. McGrath, a former assemblyman, said the industry does not want underage business.

"Period."

Ron Sarasin, president of the National Beer Wholesalers Association, said that as wholesalers and as parents they are especially concerned about the problem of illegal underage drinking.



First Lady Matilda Cuomo signs a memorandum of agreement between the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (OASAS) and the New York State Division For Youth (DFY) last week. The agreement will help to increase drug prevention and treatment services for high-risk youths. Leonard G. Dunston, left, director of DFY, Lt. Gov. Stan Lundine and Marguerite T. Saunders, commissioner for OASAS, look on.

Gazette photo by Matthew Gillis