I write to you with urge concerns on a subject of cultural consequences.

I write to about subject that can, will and does effect the quality of life of all who live in the Great Country of Scotland.

I write to you regarding the use and mis-use of Alcohol - distilled beverages, i.e. liquor, or spirit, a drinkable liquid containing ethanol (beer, Ales, wine, cider, spirits).

I write with an appeal that our elected officials will serve us well, your Constituencies, by implementing sounded legislative measures, based on well-founded proven qualitative data, that will lead to dramatic reductions of Alcohol intake in Scottish Society.

There is an overwhelming amount of statical Medical Data identify the adverse effects of the use and mis-use of Alcohol in Scotland. Health organisations, professionals and experts all agree about the alarming increase of alcohol related personal health problems.

Professor Ian Gilmore, a distinguished Liver Specialist, has described Alcohol use, in Scotland, as “A Plague of Epidemic Proportions.” For more than a decade, Professor Gilmore has published articles identifying the devastating effects on public health of Alcohol ill-respective of intake levels.

The most notable of many was the article entitled: “Alcohol - Can The NHS Afford It.”

The NHS has ignited a number of media campaigns approaches alerting the general public on the health effect Alcohol use. These approaches have included community based seminars, health awareness presentations in public schools, countless numbers of leaflets, the web, adverts on TV and Radio.

The Scottish Health Action On Alcohol Problems (SHAAP) has also worked tirelessly to raise the public’s awareness of the health risks of Alcohol use and mis-use.

If there is any single medical static that would insight alarm in our MSP’s and all elected officials alike to the magnitude of the Alcohol situation in Scotland, it should be the “Life Expectance of those Living in Glasgow - age 54.”

Fact - 80% of deaths in the UK are Alcohol related!
Fact - Alcohol kills Brain Cells!

The Medical Cost for maintaining a healthy Scottish society, that continues to make Alcohol an attribute to daily living, has historically been a part of the Medical Establishment’s argument that legislative policies must be implemented to assist with raising health maintenance cost. The Research results are in. The Public Health Sector has done it’s job. Medical experts and well established Public Health Institutes (both public and private) have spoken and have repeatedly offered recommendation including:

1. Minimum Pricing of Alcohol (*policy currently employed in EU and Canada*)
   - that alcohol has become much more affordable, particularly with the increased availability of cheap alcohol sold in supermarkets;
   - that many more people are choosing to drink at home because it is cheaper, or to ‘pre-load’ with cheap supermarket alcohol before going out for an evening. The consequence of these practices is an increase in overall alcohol consumption and an increase in burden of harm due to alcohol use;
   - that setting a minimum price for alcohol will reduce the price gap between the off-licence and on-licence trade and have the effect of lowering overall consumption with significant health benefits for the Scottish population.

2. Raising the Legal Drinking Age to 21 (*policy currently employed in USA*)

The Law Enforcement Agencies of Scotland have also voiced their concerns about Alcohol use and mis-use as well.

They have successfully created Alcohol interventions, indicated their position on the use of Alcohol and continues to make public health warnings on damaging effects of Alcohol Use and Abuse the plays on our quality of life.

Law Enforcement has systematic identified it's concerns regarding Alcohol Use and Abuse from a Public Safety point of view by categorically creating viewable statistical data related to crime.

Fact - In Scotland, 93% of men and 87% of women aged 16-74 drink alcohol

Fact - 26% of all women & 44% of all men drank more than twice the recommended daily benchmarks

Fact - Scotland's destructive relationship with alcohol is estimated to cost the country £2.25bn a year in health, social and criminal justice costs.
Fact - Seven out of 10 of those accused of murder in Scotland had been drunk or on drugs at the time

As Elected Members of the Scottish Parliament, I am sure you have this information and more at your finger tips. I truly hope and pray that MSP politicians will set aside political differences on this important health issue and work together to implement an evidence-based Alcohol Policy that puts the health and well-being of the Scottish population first.

At this time, I would like to extend to you and your families, the very best wishes the Festive Seasons brings and that the New Year is filled Love, Peace, Joy, Happiness and Prosperity for each and everyone of us.

David J Harrell
14 December 2009