

### **Sugary Drinks are Harmful to Patients**

- The United States per capita intake of sugary beverages is 45 gallons per year.<sup>1</sup>
- Americans have nearly tripled the calories they consume from sugary beverages between 1977 and 2001.<sup>2</sup>
- For children, each extra serving of sugar-sweetened beverage consumed per day over the course of time, increases their chance of becoming obese by 60%.<sup>3</sup>
- In randomized controlled trials, a reduction of sugary beverage consumption results in a decrease in weight.<sup>4-6</sup>
- Women who regularly consume sugar-sweetened beverages have a higher risk of coronary heart disease.<sup>7</sup>
- Systematic reviews of evidence conclude that greater consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages is associated with increased calorie intake, weight gain, diabetes, and obesity. Studies not showing this effect are generally funded by the beverage or sugar industries.<sup>8</sup>

### **Small Taxes on Sugary Drinks Could Fund Obesity Prevention**

- Obesity has serious economic consequences. Conditions caused by overweight and obesity account for as much as 16.5% of total US medical expenditures.<sup>9</sup> Medicare and Medicaid pay nearly half of these costs at taxpayers' expense.<sup>10</sup>
- The entire budget for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program is less than 1% of what the food industry spends on marketing sugary beverages alone.<sup>11</sup>
- A penny per ounce tax on sugary beverages could generate \$13.3 billion dollars in the United States annually.<sup>1</sup>
- Revenue generated from a sugary beverage tax could be used to fund healthy food advertising, physical education, healthier school lunches, park and recreation programs, and many other programs that could help prevent obesity. These preventive policies are likely to have a great impact than the reduction in consumption.<sup>12</sup>

### **Taxes on Sugary Drinks will likely Decrease Consumption**

- Current research estimates that a 10% increase in the price of sugary drinks will result in about a 8% decrease in consumption.<sup>13</sup>
- The Economic Research Service of the USDA estimates that a 20% increase in the price of sugary drinks could lead to enough of a reduction in consumption to result in roughly 4 pounds of weight loss in a year.<sup>14</sup>
- A tax on sugary beverages could send a powerful message about the appropriateness of regular sugary beverage consumption, resulting in an even greater decrease in consumption.
- Sugary beverages have no nutritional value and are not an essential food item. Water is an inexpensive alternative.

## Taxing beverages per fluid ounce is likely the ideal form of a tax

- Excise taxes that levy the tax per ounce have many advantages:<sup>15</sup>
  - consumers see the price before they purchase the drink,
  - they are easy to implement,
  - they do not change if the industry changes prices,
  - they can include syrup in fountain drinks,
  - they avoid the problem of encouraging consumers to purchase large quantities, as the tax per ounce does not decrease as one buys more.

## The National Physicians Alliance supports taxes on sugary beverages at the federal, state, and local levels as a means to prevent obesity.

- Taxes on sugary beverages should be excise taxes, based on volume, and ideally of sufficient size to discourage consumption.
- Taxes on sugary beverages can be implemented at the local, state or federal level. Federal or state laws should not preempt local laws.
- Revenue generated from taxes on sugary beverages should be used for obesity prevention and public health.

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**United across medical specialties, the National Physicians Alliance was founded in 2005 to restore physicians' primary emphasis on the core values of the profession: service, integrity, and advocacy. The NPA works to improve health and well-being, and to ensure equitable, affordable, high quality health care for all people. The NPA strictly refuses financial entanglements with the pharmaceutical and biomedical industries.**