

Monthly Volunteer Call

March 25, 2020



Agenda:

- Welcome and role call
- Updates:
 - Ambassador Action Center
 - Lights of Hope
 - Federal
 - State
- Sugary Drink Tax Hot Topic
- Book Club?
- Upcoming Opportunities



Updates:

- Ambassador Action Center
- Lights of Hope
 - www.fightcancer.org/lightsofhope
- Federal
- State



Ambassador Action Center Update: Since our January meeting we've seen an additional 74 actions added and 829 points added to the AAC. Thank you to everyone who logged this past month! Reminder of things to log:

- Email alerts
- Phone calls
- Memberships obtained
- Letters to the editor – when you submit
- Op-Eds
- Random encounters with lawmakers or staff
- Social media

Federal Update:

Lights of Hope: The website is up for Lights of Hope. It only takes about 10 minutes to set up your page so check out www.fightcancer.org/lightsofhope.

Federal update:

Late last night the Senate passed a stimulus package. Thank you to all of you that took action last week, and over the weekend! We didn't get everything we wanted, but there are provisions that will provide some relief to non-profits, and we will be able to continue to work with the Administration and the hill as they start work on package #4. The House is expected to pass the legislation tomorrow (Friday), and can either pass by unanimous consent, or Members will need to travel back to DC

before the end of the week to vote.

Additionally, Gary Reedy was invited to and participated in a White House call yesterday afternoon with other non-profit CEOs to discuss their concerns, and need for relief. The Administration is committed to supporting non-profits and is very appreciative of the work we all are doing.

State update:

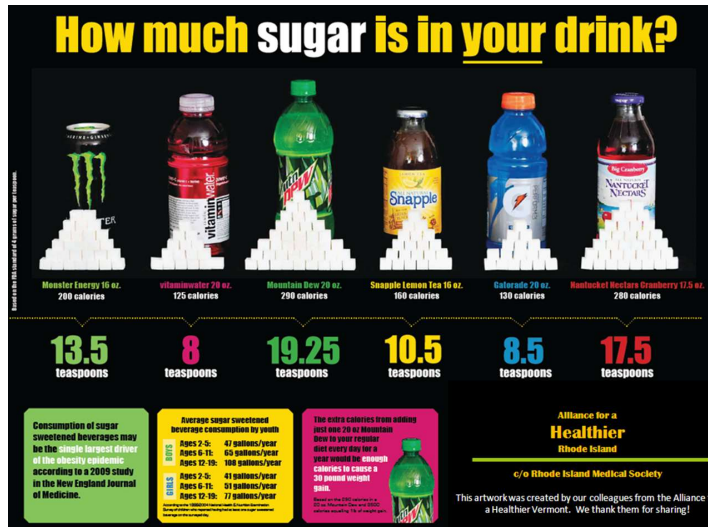
While the legislature is still working and moving things through, the Speaker of the House and the Senate President have both stated that their sole focus is on COVID19 related issues. We are continuing to monitor our priority legislation, and working to put ourselves in a good place for when their focus shifts to other legislation.

With that in mind, I wanted to take the opportunity tonight to share with your information on one of our newest priority issues, the Sugary Drink Tax.

Hot Topic: Sugary Drink Tax



The Problem



The Problem:

- Sugary Drinks are
 - The leading source of added sugar in American diets
 - One of the leading sources of added calories in American diet

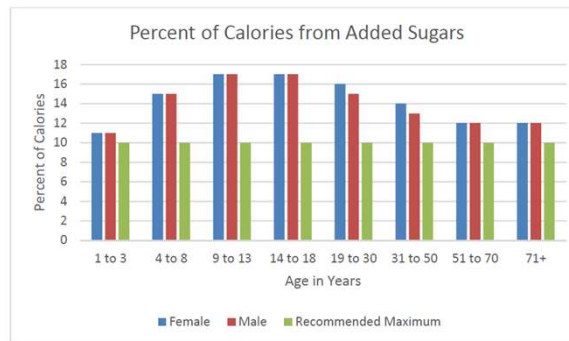
Nearly half of all added sugars American's consume come from sugary drinks.

Check out the graph

The American Heart Association recommends that children over the age of 2 have no more than one 8-ounce sugary drink a week. Yet children today are consuming as much as ten times that amount, while children in low-income families consume two-and-a-half times more than their peers in higher-income families.

Consumption of Sugary Drinks

- What types of drinks are we talking about
- Rate of consumption
- Rate of consumption recommendations



When we talk about Sugary Drinks, we're talking about drinks with added sugar. This does not include diet sodas or other diet drinks, water, seltzer, etc.

Approximately 50 percent of the American population consumes sugary drinks on any given day, with about 10 percent of youth consuming three drinks or more. Adolescents drink more sugary drinks than other age groups. Males consume more calories from sugary drinks than females of the same age; consumption increases with age in childhood and decreases with age in adulthood.

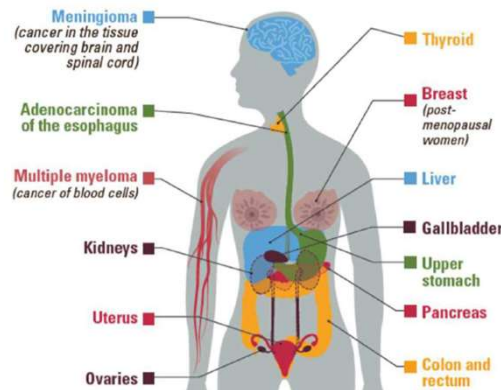
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The 2015-2020 U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the World Health Organization recommend limiting added sugar consumption to no more than 10 percent of daily calories. The American Cancer Society's nutrition and physical activity guidelines for cancer prevention recommend reducing consumption of added sugars and, in particular, sugary drinks. Currently, US Adults consume 18 tsp per day which is 40% more than the recommended levels, and US kids consume 19 tsp per day which is 70% more than the recommended levels.

Why are these the recommendations? What are the health risks associated with consumption of sugary drinks?

Health Risks of Sugary Drink Consumption

13 cancers are associated with overweight and obesity



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Sugary drinks are related to cancer risk in their association with excess body weight. There is increasing evidence that exposure to excess body fat over the course of a lifetime, beginning in childhood, has adverse health consequences.

Approximately 18 percent of all cancers are caused by the combination of poor diet, physical inactivity, excess body weight and excess alcohol consumption.¹⁷ Excess body weight is clearly associated with an increased risk of developing at least 13 cancers, namely cancers of the breast (postmenopausal), colon and rectum, uterus, kidney, pancreas, ovary, liver, gastric cardia, gallbladder, thyroid, esophagus, meningioma, and multiple myeloma.

Obesity rates have doubled among adults and tripled among children in the U.S. in recent decades. While rates appear to have stabilized in the last few years, currently 35% of youth, ages 2-19 and 71% of adults are overweight or obese. Overweight and obesity can negatively impact children both physically and psychologically, and overweight and obese children are less likely to reach a healthy weight in adulthood. A review of 32 studies found that an increase of one daily serving of sugary drinks was associated with weight gain over a one-year period in both children and adults. When children reduced their consumption of sugary drinks, weight gain was reduced, particularly for overweight children. Additionally, consumption of sugary drinks is associated with reduced consumption of calcium

and overall poor diet quality, including higher intakes of refined grains and lower intake of fruits and vegetables. Sugary drinks increase total caloric intake without providing any nutrients to improve health or to reduce the risk of disease. In addition, when calories are consumed as beverages, people do not feel as full and are more likely to consume excess calories.

What does the tax look like?

- Distributor level excise tax
- Tiered tax based on sugar content
- Increased revenue



This is an excise tax levied at the distributor level. Consumers will see the price difference of each drink on the shelf, where they make the decision on what to purchase.

Enacts a new chapter 640 into the General Laws, which would impose a tax on sugary drinks, using a tiered system in which the amount of the tax would depend on the amount of sugar in the drink.

Beverages with less than 7.5 grams of sugar per 12 fluid ounces would not be taxed; those with between 7.5 and 30 grams would be taxed at a rate of \$0.01 per ounce; and those with 30 or more grams would be taxed at a rate of \$0.02 per ounce.

For perspective 4 grams is equal to one teaspoon.

Syrups and powders would also be taxable using the same tiered system.

In 2016, the Urban Institute estimated that a tax based on sugar content could reduce overall sugar consumption by 25 percent. **Industry Changes:** The beverage industry will have incentive to make healthier drinks, which could result in healthier options on the store shelf. Consumers will have more choices at different price points. They can choose drinks with less added sugar at a lower price. Additionally, if a tax on sugary drinks is

large enough (causing a 10 percent increase in the price of sugary drinks), research shows people are less likely to purchase them.

The revenue from a sugary drink tiered excise tax would raise at least \$280 million in Massachusetts. Those funds could be used to provide access to care in the community, access to clean, safe drinking water in our communities, and access to fresh fruits and vegetables to help children and families most in need.

What is our ask?

- Stand alone bills
- Larger health care bill



While there are two stand alone bills in the Joint Committee on Revenue, and have been extended to April 7th, we are asking that the language of the legislation be included in the Healthcare Reform legislation that the House is working on.

The specific bill numbers and wording of our ask is below.

The bill sponsors are Senator Lewis and Representatives Khan and Santiago

Overall Ask: *Please support inclusion of the language of SB1709/HB2529: An Act to Promote Healthy Alternatives to Sugary Drinks in the Healthcare Reform bill, with money from the excise tax allocated to access to community health and key programing to provide water and fresh fruits and vegetables in low income communities.*

Oppositional Arguments

- taxes are “regressive” (low-income people will pay more)
- people will compensate by purchasing in nearby cities
- taxes will cost jobs



Taxes are Regressive:

Big Soda spends millions each year marketing sugary drinks targeted to communities of color. In fact, African-American children and teens see more than twice as many television ads for sugary drinks than their white peers. Lower-income African-American and Latino neighborhoods had more outdoor ads for sugary drinks than lower-income and higher-income white neighborhoods.⁹

What is regressive is that in these same neighborhoods, we see disproportionately higher rates of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases that are brought on, in part, by consuming sugary drinks; therefore, everything we can do to discourage consumption should be done. The revenue from a tiered excise tax on sugary drinks will raise funding to provide access to clean safe drinking water in our communities and other programs helping children and families most in need. If trends continue, public health experts predict that taxes have the potential to be one of the most effective policy strategies to achieve health equity.

Boarder Sales:

The beverage industry ought to give its customers more credit. Why would anyone drive extra miles, use expensive gas and take precious time out of their day, just to save 20 cents on a 20-ounce soda? The tobacco industry made the same claim about cigarette purchases, but smoke-free advocates found that most smokers

would purchase their cigarettes one or two packs at a time, *from the closest store*.¹² Or if they did go across the state line, they quickly tired of the drive and returned to the convenience of the stores in their own state.¹³

Lost jobs:

Our evidence to date indicates that taxes will not affect employment. A 2014 study examining the potential for job gain or loss with a sugary drinks excise tax looked at the impact of taxes on employment in California and Illinois. It found that, as with tobacco taxes, sugary drinks taxes could result in modest job *gains* in those states.⁷

The tobacco industry made the same claim when it fought tobacco taxes. But tobacco industry-sponsored studies that claimed taxes would harm the economy were refuted by rigorous independent analyses concluding that the impact was overstated, and there would actually be a national net job *gain* from the taxes.⁸

A study examining the first-year impact on beverage volume sales in Mexico after tax implementation shows that a tax of 1 peso (≈\$0.052 USD) per liter decreased the volume of sugary drinks purchased by a significant amount (6 percent monthly average increasing to 12 percent in December 2014), while also increasing the volume of healthier drinks purchased (4 percent monthly average), specifically bottled water.

In Mexico, a 1 peso per liter sugary drink tax was implemented in 2014. A 2017 study examining the changes in purchase of taxed and untaxed beverages over the first two years of the tax found a 5.5 percent decline in sugary drink purchases in 2014 and a 9.7 percent decline in 2015, yielding an average reduction of 7.6 percent over the two-year period. The study also found that households at the lowest income level had the largest decreases in purchases of taxed beverages in both years. Purchases of untaxed drinks such as bottled water increased 2.1 percent during the study period.

Similarly, in Berkeley, a study showed that consumers are drinking 21 percent less of these sugary beverages, but at the same time, consumption of water in the city increased by 63 percent. The beverage industry will adjust production to meet the increased demand for healthier drinks, and employees will still be needed to manufacture, bottle, and truck the products to stores, and to sell them!

What can you do?

1. Video
2. Share your story
3. Engage your networks
4. Draft email of support
5. Draft letter to the editor or op-ed



Video:

You can record a 15 to 30 second video talking about the importance of passing this tax. Once complete, you can email the video to Melissa at melissa.stacy@cancer.org or text it to her at 508-834-4017. The video should include at minimum your name, the town you live in, why passing the excise tax is important to you or a fact about the health risks of sugary drinks, and end with the ask. The videos shouldn't be directed at any one lawmaker. See a 30 second example below:

My name is Melissa and I live in Holliston. Studies have shown that when kids reduce their consumption of sugary drinks, weight gain was reduced, particularly for overweight children. Excess body weight is clearly associated with an increased risk of at least 13 types of cancers. I'm asking you help protect our kids by including the language *An Act to Promote Healthy Alternatives to Sugary Drinks* in the Healthcare Reform bill, with money from the excise tax allocated to access community health and key programing to provide water and fresh fruits and vegetables in low income communities.

Share your story:

Go to the ACS CAN story collection page at <https://www.fightcancer.org/share-your-story> and share how cancer has impacted your life. It can be in how it relates to SDT or any one of our many campaigns.

Talk to your networks:

When you talk with your friends, your family, or others share with them about the SDT campaign, and ask them if they would be interested in making a video or sharing their story. Many people have extra time on their hands, and this is one way that they can do something fun while having an impact!

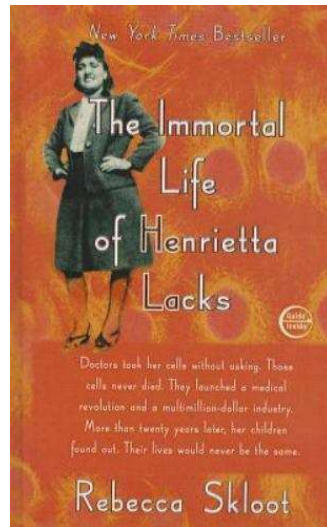
Draft an email of support:

Use our fact sheets to draft an email of support to your state lawmakers. Don't know who they are? Visit www.wheredolvoteMA.com to find out. Their state page, with their email address, is linked from there for easy access. Note: please don't send the email! We don't want to bombard our lawmakers with non-relevant issues right now. I'll let you know when it's good to start things back up.

Draft a letter to the editor:

Same as with the email, you can draft a letter to the editor so that it's ready to go when things go back to normal. Use our fact sheets and our handy letter writing tip sheet on our legislative ambassador home page found at <https://www.fightcancer.org/massachusetts-legislative-ambassador-homepage> in the media section of the Legislative Ambassador Guidebook. Again, don't submit it, but send it to Melissa for review so that it's ready to go when the legislators focus shifts back.

ACS CAN Book Club?



1. Download or order the book
2. Begin reading
3. Benchmark for April 22nd call is to be through Chapter 21.



Join us in reading the *Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. Download or order the book today. We'll discuss the book through Chapter 21 on our next call, which is a April 22nd.

Why this book? One of our new national ACS CAN priorities is *S.946/HR.1966: The Henrietta Lacks Enhancing Cancer Research Act*, focused on removing barriers that prevent underrepresented groups from enrolling in cancer clinical trials.

The bill is named in honor of Henrietta Lacks, an African American woman who died of cervical cancer in 1951. To this day, cells cultivated during Mrs. Lacks' treatment have been used by medical researchers for some of modern medicine's most important breakthroughs, including the development of the polio vaccine and treatments for cancer, HIV/AIDS and Parkinson's disease.

Our April call will focus deep dive into this legislation.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

1. June 13th – Boston Pride Parade
2. June 12th – RFL of Franklin County
3. June 13th – RFL of Gardner
4. July 25th & 26th – Lowell Folk Festival



While dates are subject to change depending on things continue to develop, we wanted to get these dates on your radar. If you're interested and available to help out, please let Melissa know by emailing melissa.stacy@cancer.org.



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