

# **The Cook County Sweetened Beverage Tax Facts and Talking Points**

June, 2017



## **Key Messages about the Cook County Sweetened Beverage Tax:**

- The revenue from a penny per ounce tax on sweetened drinks in Cook County will help to close a \$174.3 million gap in the FY17 Budget, and assist in balancing the budget over the next two years.
  - The budget supports improvements to county services, including maintaining nurses, doctors, public defenders and prosecutors to deliver critical services to County residents.
  - The budget also supports initiatives such as diabetes awareness education and new lifestyle centers (focused on nutrition and physical activity) within the Cook County Health and Hospitals System.
  - Approximately \$250,000 from the expected revenue in the first year has been dedicated to community health and prevention initiatives in suburban Cook County, with additional funding expected in later years.
- Too many kids and families in Cook County are suffering from preventable chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancer and tooth decay. The County budget required additional revenue or significant cuts to balance. A sweetened drink tax will improve the financial health of our County and the physical health of our children and families.
- Sugary drinks are the single largest source of added sugar in the American diet. There is a direct link between overconsumption of sugar and chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, tooth decay and some cancers.
- The County Board was faced with either making significant cuts to the County budget, requiring job loss and service cuts, or raising revenue to help balance the budget. Rather than raising a property tax, the Board voted to approve a sweetened beverage tax, which provides County residents a choice on whether or not to pay the tax while providing a healthy source of revenue for the County.

## **A Penny-Per-Ounce Sweetened Beverage Tax Could Improve Health and Improve Communities:**

- Economists predict that a penny-per-ounce excise tax on all sweetened beverages in Illinois would reduce consumption of sugary drinks by 29%.<sup>1</sup>
- The Cook County Health & Hospitals System spends more than \$200 million a year on obesity-related health care costs.
- Sugary drinks are the #1 Source of added sugar<sup>2</sup> in our diet and are strongly linked to chronic disease and obesity
  - Obesity has many causes, but there is strong scientific evidence that sugary drink consumption is linked to obesity.<sup>3</sup>
  - One study found that just one sugary drink per day increases a child's odds of becoming obese by 60%.<sup>4</sup>
  - Adults who drink 1-2 servings/day are 26% more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than those who drink 0-1 per month.<sup>5</sup>
- When employees and their family members are faced with a chronic disease, it often means time away from work to manage the disease. There is a real cost to lost productivity. A healthy workforce is important to business and to the Cook County economy.

## **The Cook County Public Supports a Sweetened Beverage Tax**

- An October 2016 poll found that 58% of Cook County residents support a 1 cent/ounce tax on sweetened beverages.

## ***Organizations that have publicly expressed support for the Cook County Sweetened Beverage Tax:***

- Access to Care
- AFSCME Council 31
- American Heart Association
- Blue Island Community Health Coalition
- Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
- Chicago Hispanic Health Coalition
- Citizen Action
- Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children
- Health & Medicine Policy Research Group
- Hel's Kitchen Catering
- IBEW 134
- Illinois Academy of Family Physicians
- Illinois Action for Children
- Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity\*
- Illinois Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (IAHPERD)
- Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
- Illinois Public Health Institute
- Proviso Partners for Health
- Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
- SEIU Local 73
- Seven Generations Ahead
- Southland Ministerial Health Network
- Teamsters Local 700
- The Civic Federation
- YMCA of Metro Chicago

*\*The Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity (IAPO) is a statewide coalition comprised of stakeholders working for a state-level response to the obesity epidemic. IAPO works to shape and advance solutions to reverse dangerous obesity trends. IAPO supporters believe that Illinois must respond to the obesity epidemic by developing coordinated systems, policy improvements and investment on the scale of the problem. This initiative was launched and is coordinated by the Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI). To learn more about IAPO, visit [www.preventobesityil.org](http://www.preventobesityil.org)*

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<sup>1</sup> Chaloupka, Frank J., Wang, Y. Claire, Powell, Lisa M., Andreyeva, Tatiana, Chiqui, Jamie F., Rinkus, Leah M. (2011). Estimating the potential impact of sugar-sweetened and other beverage excise taxes in Illinois. Retrieved 11/6/13 from [http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/files/pdf/Chaloupka\\_Report\\_PRF.pdf](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/files/pdf/Chaloupka_Report_PRF.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Agriculture (2010). Dietary guidelines for Americans, Chapter 3. Retrieved September 25, 2013 from <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/publications/dietaryguidelines/2010/policydoc/chapter3.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Harvard School of Public Health (2014). Sugary drinks and obesity factsheet. Retrieved July 18, 2014 from <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/sugary%20drinks-fact-sheet/>.

<sup>4</sup> Ludwig DS, Peterson KE, Gortmaker SL. Relation between consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks and childhood obesity: a prospective, observational analysis. *Lancet*. 2001;357:505-8.

<sup>5</sup> Harvard School of Public Health (2014). Sugary drinks and obesity factsheet. Retrieved July 18, 2014 from <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/sugary%20drinks-fact-sheet/>.