

Alcohol Excise Tax Talking Points for Advocacy

The Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and Alaska Mental Health Board support the implementation of meaningful alcohol excise taxes seeking to reduce the impact of alcohol abuse and to increase resources available for substance abuse prevention and health promotion. The Boards also support the development of a long-range fiscal plan for the State of Alaska that includes a diverse array of revenues for the State General Fund, including but not limited to excise taxes.

HB 248 and SB 131 increases the existing alcohol excise tax, generating much-needed revenue while also supporting long-standing public health and safety objectives:

- Alaskans need public services like Alaska State Trooper stations and village public safety officers, domestic violence shelters, early childhood learning, education, adult and child protection, substance abuse and mental health treatment and prevention, public transportation, supportive housing, and a host of other services that rely on General Funds to operate effectively.
- The cost of alcohol abuse to Alaskans in lost productivity, health care costs, traffic crash costs, criminal justice and protective services, and public assistance and social services was over \$1.2 billion in 2010.¹
- Increases to state excise taxes on alcohol have been recommended by the Institutes of Medicine, the American Medical Association, and the Community Prevention Services Task Force because research indicates that increased alcohol excise taxes are directly related to decreased alcohol-related deaths, traffic crashes, violence, and crime.
- 2015 Youth Risk Behavioral Survey data show that 22% of traditional high school students and 41.8% of alternative high school students had consumed alcohol in the previous 30 days.
- 2013 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data show that 23% of adult men and 14% of adult women had engaged in binge drinking in the previous 30 days.
- Alcohol plays a significant role in the leading causes of death in Alaska, including unintentional injuries (motor vehicle crashes, hypothermia, etc.) suicide, liver disease and cirrhosis (three of the top ten leading causes of death in 2013).

An alcohol excise tax will help bridge Alaska's fiscal gap while supporting healthier individuals, communities, and families.

¹ *The Economic Costs of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse in Alaska, 2012 Update*, McDowell Group, August 2012.