

Wisconsin has some of the lowest alcohol taxation in the U.S., just .36% of the annual state tax revenue comes from alcohol tax.

Alcohol taxation does affect consumption and negative health outcomes.

How LHDs can address alcohol abuse is less researched in entirety.

How LHDs can address alcohol abuse should be studied further, but known solutions for the problems of impaired driving and underage drinking exist.

There should be continued research into Wisconsin's alcohol abuse and ways to affect change.

## Assessing Wisconsin's Alcohol Abuse and How to Influence Change: A literature review of two WPHRN Priority Research Questions on alcohol abuse and how LHDs can address it

Alcohol abuse in Wisconsin is widespread. Binge drinking, underage drinking, alcohol-related injuries, and impaired driving are some of the most challenging and concerning problems. The Wisconsin Public Health Research Network (WPHRN) has identified two priority research questions (PRQs) related to alcohol abuse. A literature review on these two PRQs was conducted between August and December 2016 using PubMed and Google Scholar. For taxation of alcohol, 61 articles were reviewed and 15 were included, while LHDs addressing alcohol resulted in the review of 37 articles with four of them included. This brief report summarizes the existing literature on how alcohol abuse can be effectively addressed by Local Health Departments (LHDs) and what effect alcohol taxation could have on consumption.

### Background

- The **beer tax** rate in Wisconsin is the **48th lowest** in the country.
- Wisconsin's **wine tax** rate per gallon is **just 25 cents**, compared to Minnesota's, Illinois', and Michigan's wine tax of \$1.18, \$1.29, and 51 cents, respectively.
- Wisconsin's **spirit tax is \$3.25/gallon**, while it's \$8.71 in Minnesota, \$11.91 in Illinois and \$8.55 in Michigan.
- **24.3%** of Wisconsin adults have binged on alcohol in the past month compared to national average of 18.3%.
- **9.8%** of Wisconsin adults are heavy drinkers; the national average is 6.6%.
- **1,732 deaths** (3% of all deaths), **3,511 injuries**, and **67,345 arrests** were caused by alcohol in 2010.
- In 2015 alcohol-related car crashes **killed 190 people** and **injured 2,900**.
- Alcohol-related hospitalizations per year in Wisconsin average **2.0/1000 people**.
- There were **24,000** drunk driving convictions in 2015.
- The number of alcohol outlets per capita in Wisconsin is **twice the national average**.
- LHDs have limited financing and account for **only .4%** of Wisconsin's health costs.



## Q1: Do Local Health Departments effectively address Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse issues in both rural and urban communities?

No literature was found that answered this question in entirety. Of the 37 articles reviewed, four were included as proxies. Two studies looked at reducing impaired driving. They found that partnerships with community-based organizations, using the media to communicate messages, and working with law enforcement to conduct sobriety checkpoints, saturation patrols, and enforcement of open container laws were effective in reducing impaired driving. One literature review of underage drinking found that using community coalitions for effective preventive interventions and the inclusion of a school-based prevention program were associated with reduced underage drinking. SAMSHA conducted a substance abuse prevention cost-benefit analysis and found 35 effective prevention programs for schools that cost on average \$220 per pupil, but would show a return on investment over a lifetime of \$18 per \$1 spent.

## Q2: What impact could alcohol/beer tax have on consumption?

Studies in the U.S. and in other developed countries have found the same results: increasing alcohol excise tax or price of alcohol decreases alcohol consumption. Many studies in the U.S. and other developed countries also found a decrease in negative health outcomes like rates of sexually transmitted infections, fatal motor vehicle crashes, alcohol-related mortality, alcohol-related hospitalizations, and interpersonal violence. One international study showed the reverse to be true, too—that a decrease in alcohol price/taxation results in rising mortality.

## Conclusion & Recommendations

- ◇ A comprehensive or nearly comprehensive study on LHDs addressing alcohol abuse could not be found.
- ◇ Additional research is needed on how LHDs can effectively address Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse issues.
- ◇ Evidence-based strategies for how to reduce impaired driving and underage drinking can be implemented by LHDs
- ◇ Increasing alcohol taxation is a scientifically-supported intervention for reducing alcohol consumption.
- ◇ A reduction in alcohol-related negative health outcomes is also found when alcohol taxation increases.
- ◇ LHDs should collaboratively advocate for the state of Wisconsin to increase its taxation of alcohol as a means to reduce alcohol consumption and its associated negative health outcomes.

## Resources for AODA Prevention Programs

- <http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/assessresources.pdf>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aoda/phlsasindex.htm>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/stats/aoda.htm>
- <http://doseofrealitywi.gov/>

- ◇ For more information on the Wisconsin Public Health Research Network, please visit [www.wphrn.org](http://www.wphrn.org)
- ◇ The WPHRN Priority Research Questions can be found [here](http://www.wphrn.org/uploads/1/2/7/8/12783470/wphrn_prq_list_final.pdf): [http://www.wphrn.org/uploads/1/2/7/8/12783470/wphrn\\_prq\\_list\\_final.pdf](http://www.wphrn.org/uploads/1/2/7/8/12783470/wphrn_prq_list_final.pdf)
- ◇ The complete literature review with citations can be accessed upon request (email: [wphrn@son.wisc.edu](mailto:wphrn@son.wisc.edu))