

# *Strategies to Reduce Alcohol-Related Harm*

## Executive Statement:

North Dakota faces significant challenges related to alcohol use and misuse. For the 68th Legislative Assembly, the North Dakota legislature can enact common sense laws and regulations to curb and prevent the excessive harm alcohol has caused and will continue to cause the state if left unaddressed. The North Dakota Public Health Association (NDPHA) appreciates what the ND legislature has accomplished so far in HB 1003, and the subsequent measures to help expand access to Substance Use Disorder (SUD) services and support. But there is more that can be done to reduce alcohol-related harm as well as through practical laws and regulations.

## Background:

Excessive alcohol consumption can significantly harm individuals, communities, businesses, and families. According to Recovery Reinvented, "Drug and alcohol use is the number 1 social issue in North Dakota." And this while relatively speaking, alcohol is getting more available and at a lower price.

Alcohol consumption has no beneficial impact on health. In fact, alcohol, like tobacco, has been shown to contribute to cardiovascular disease, several cancers, gastrointestinal disease, liver cirrhosis, injuries, and alcohol use disorder. Yet alcohol is regulated less than tobacco.

Increasing excise taxes on alcohol has shown to be an effective evidence-based approach to curtail excessive alcohol use and harms, according to the CDC Community Preventative Services Task Force Guidelines.

## Quick facts:

North Dakota is the **leading state** in terms of the number of drinks consumed, at **5.9 drinks in one sitting**.

North Dakota is the **3rd leading binge-drinking state** among adults at **22.7%**.

North Dakota is the **4th leading state** for most alcohol deaths, with **17.2 deaths per 100,000**. This has increased by **58%** between **2005 to 2018**. This is almost **twice** the national average of **9.9**.

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## Recommendations:

**The NDPHA recommends introducing a bill into the ND legislature including, but not limited the following adjustments:**

- In addition to all federal excise taxes, increase the excise tax on:
  - Beer in bottles and cans from \$0.16/gallon to \$0.26/gallon
  - Wine from \$0.50/gallon to \$0.87/gallon
  - Liquor from \$2.50/gallon to \$14.27/gallon
- Tax revenue generated would be used to fund public education about alcohol misuse and alcohol use disorder treatment programs to make these services more accessible and more affordable.
- Conduct a study to determine a cost recovery approach to cover the costs of alcohol harm to society.
- Decrease the density of alcohol sales outlets and reduce the hours and the days alcohol sales is allowed.
- Forbid direct-to-consumer advertising of alcohol products.
- Increase the visibility of the “alcohol can cause serious harm” messaging on alcohol product packaging.
- Require Responsible Beverage Service (RBS) training as a condition of on-sale alcohol sale licensure.
- Fund alcohol compliance checks to reduce youth access to alcohol.

## Key Points:

- It is a shared desire that North Dakota reclaim it's 1999 ranking as the "healthiest state in the nation." To do so will require attention to North Dakota's number 1 social problem -- drug and alcohol misuse.
- North Dakota has a high incidence of alcohol-related deaths and harm compared to other states. The North Dakota legislature has the authority to decrease this through multiple strategies to prevent alcohol-related harm.
- There are many state level strategies proven to prevent alcohol-related harm, including an increase on excise taxes on alcohol products, reduction in hours of alcohol sales, and prohibiting direct-to-consumer advertising of alcohol products.
- Every 10% increase in price for alcohol has been shown to decrease alcohol consumption by 7.7% (CDC Community Preventative Services Task Force Guidelines).

