

INCREASING ALCOHOL EXCISE TAXES: POURING POTENTIAL INTO NEW MEXICO COMMUNITIES

Executive Summary

New Mexico has had the highest rate of alcohol-related deaths of all U.S. states since 1997, and has ranked 1st, 2nd, or 3rd since 1981.¹ Harms from alcohol cost our state billions every year, cut lives short, exacerbate health disparities, and drain potential from our communities.^{2–4} One in five deaths among working age adults ages 20-64 in New Mexico is attributable to alcohol.⁵ Increasing the price of alcohol is one of the most impactful public health policies around alcohol, yet alcohol taxes in the state haven’t been raised since 1993.⁶ Raising alcohol excise taxes by just a quarter per drink would generate approximately \$250 million in annual funds to directly help communities statewide and reduce alcohol consumption by 10%.⁷

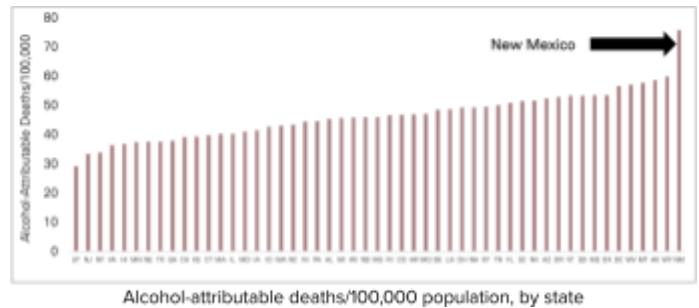

Background

Compared to other states, New Mexico suffers disproportionate harms from alcohol. In 2021, 2,274 New Mexicans died from alcohol-related causes – that’s equivalent to losing one person every four hours, around the clock.¹ These deaths are not just from alcohol use disorder; alcohol is associated with hypertension, cancer, stroke, depression, anxiety, suicide, intimate partner violence, gun violence, and injury including falls, burns, and motor vehicle crashes.^{3,8–12} In fact, six of the ten leading causes of death in New Mexico are associated with alcohol use.⁵

The good news is that New Mexico can move the needle on these harms. By investing in programs to deliver vital prevention and treatment efforts to communities most impacted, we will begin to address the enormous burden of alcohol-related harms.

Raising the Alcohol Excise Tax

Implementing a \$0.25 per drink increase in alcohol taxes holds the potential to generate significant revenue to fund critical public health initiatives while simultaneously reducing alcohol consumption. Increasing the price of alcohol through excise taxes is a powerful, evidence-based and CDC-recommended public health strategy.^{7,13–19} The funding generated from increasing the tax can mitigate health disparities and, importantly, 75% of the tax revenue would be generated by excessive drinkers. Increasing the tax would improve public health by both allocating resources toward vital alcohol treatment and prevention programs and curbing consumption.

An Increase of \$0.25/Drink Could Fund These Initiatives:

- Alcohol prevention, treatment and recovery services
- Culturally relevant prevention and harm reduction initiatives on lands of Native nations, tribes, and pueblos
- Behavioral health treatment for justice-involved populations
- Addressing social determinants of health related to alcohol misuse (e.g., transportation, housing assistance)
- Support for victims of alcohol-related crimes, including domestic violence and sexual assault
- Coordinator to align statewide efforts to prevent and reduce alcohol harms

**We need your support.
It is time to pour potential into New Mexican communities!**

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