

NHPI HEALTH DISPARITIES: ELIMINATING DIABETES THROUGH POLICY

A diabetes epidemic is upon us through Sugar-Sweetened Beverage! What you need to know!

THE HEALTH CONCERN

Drinking too many beverages that has high amounts of sugar (Sugar-Sweetened Beverages or SSB) is connected to developing Type 2 diabetes, a disease that can be prevented. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) are among the people who are largely affected by type 2 diabetes. In the last few years, there have been major cities in the United States that passed SSB taxes in order to help prevent the people from drinking too many SSBs as well as to help prevent type 2 diabetes.

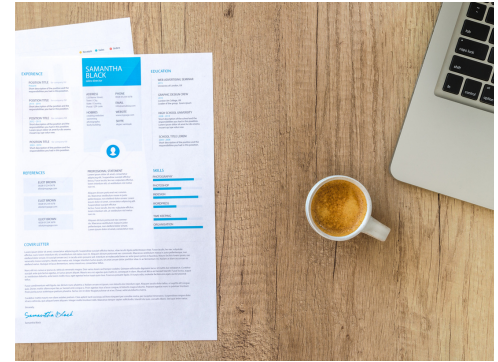
DIABETES & SSB CONSUMPTION

An estimated 43% of added sugar diets in the U.S. come from beverages, 32% of which are SSBs. (1) Daily consumption of SSBs increases the risk of diabetes by 26%. (2) Although there is a limited number of studies on SSB consumption among NHPIs, the existing studies have repeatedly shown that NHPIs, particularly youth, have a very high consumption of SSBs compared to other ethnic groups. (3, 4).



STATISTICS

19.8% of NHPIs have diabetes compared to 8.6% of non-hispanic whites (5). Disaggregated NHPI data suggest that further diabetes disparities exist amongst NHPI sub groups with American Samoans having the highest diabetes prevalence. 1 in 3 American Samoans have diabetes (6) and in 2018 the diabetes death rate in the US - affiliated island of American Samoa was 6.2 higher than the death rate of non-hispanic whites (5). Historically, the SSB industry has targeted children, particularly minorities and lower-income children in marketing their products, therefore these communities consume more SSB compared to other groups (7).



PREVENTION THROUGH POLICY

In the U.S. there is currently no statewide SSB tax in any state, however, there have been successful local efforts that passed SSBs taxes in major U.S. cities including Seattle, WA, Philadelphia, PA, Berkeley, CA, and San Francisco, CA. Studies have shown that increasing taxes on SSBs can help decrease their consumption. For example, a study shows that a year after the Berkeley, CA SSB tax passed, consumption of SSBs decreased by 21% in Berkeley low-income neighborhoods. (8) Similarly, Seattle passed an SSB tax in 2018. A year after it was implemented, a study found that soda consumption decreased by 36% in children and 33% in adults (9). Furthermore, this shift was primarily seen in low-income Seattle residents. In order to further eliminate the diabetes disparities in NHPI populations, the revenue from SSB taxes should be used to fund programs dedicated to Healthy Eating and Active Living, particularly in neighborhoods where there is a large NHPI population of NHPIs. The tax revenue should be dedicated in supporting programs such as community gardens, healthier school meals, food banks, and diabetes prevention and education classes.

HOW CAN YOU HELP!

- If you are a public health professional, have conversations with your community members and/or patients about healthy eating and exercise to prevent diabetes.
- Support existing local SSB tax efforts.
- Advocate for appropriate and adequate representation of disaggregated NHPI data on public health issues such as diabetes, obesity, tobacco use, and cancer in order to show disparities in NHPI communities that are often not addressed by mainstream organizations.

