

# **Educating Lawmakers**

**about Alcohol Policy to Support Public Health**

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# Marin Institute

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- Frames the issues from a public health perspective
- Monitors and exposes the alcohol industry's harmful products, practices, and promotion
- Researches and promotes public policy solutions that reduce alcohol-related harm
- Supports communities in advocating for alcohol policies that reduce alcohol-related harm



# Alcohol-Related Harm

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## **Alcohol causes more harm than any other drug in the U.S.**

- 85,000 deaths in 2000
- 5,000 deaths under age 21 annually
- 1.6 million hospitalizations and 4 million ER visits in 2005
- Injuries from motor vehicle crashes, fires, falls, drownings
- Illnesses such as hypertension and various cancers
- Homicide, suicide, domestic violence, other crimes

# Costs from Alcohol-Related Harm

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Annual economic costs from alcohol in the U.S. were estimated at \$220 billion in 2005.



The annual cost to California is \$38 billion:

- \$1000 per resident for alcohol-related illness, injury, crime, and traffic collisions.

Harwood H. A Sound Investment: Identifying and Treating Alcohol Problems, Ensuring Solutions to Alcohol Problems. The George Washington University Medical Center, 2003.

Rosen S, Miller T, Simon M. The cost of alcohol to California. Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, 2008.





**World Health  
Organization**

# Recommendations

## **Alcohol Availability**

- Regulate the number of retail alcohol outlets
- Eliminate sales in certain areas

## **Marketing of Alcoholic Beverages**

- Limit the content and volume of alcohol advertising
- Regulate sponsorship activities involving alcoholic beverages
- Regulate new media/social network advertising

## **Pricing Policies for Alcoholic Beverages**

- Raise taxes on alcohol
- Eliminate promotional pricing
- Establish minimum prices

# Recommendations

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**"Increasing the price of alcoholic beverages is one of the most effective interventions to reduce harmful use of alcohol."**



**"Raise state excise taxes on alcohol, indexed to inflation, particularly on beer, to decrease youth consumption and raise revenue for the effort."**



**"Increase excise taxes for alcohol in order to reduce consumption and provide funds."**

WHO Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol, 2010

Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility, NAS, 2003

AMA Educational Forum on Adolescent Health: Youth Drinking Patterns and Alcohol Advertising, 2003



# Recommendations

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**“Of all the policy options, alcohol taxes is rated as one of the strongest...This may surprise policymakers, but the research is extensive and the findings are convincing.”**

**The most effective policies include:**

- Alcohol taxes
- Minimum legal purchase age
- Government monopoly of retail sales
- Restrictions on outlet density
- Lowered BAC limits
- Legal restrictions on alcohol advertising exposure

# Legislative Opportunities

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## **Fact Sheets, Position Papers, Expert Testimony**

### **Charge for Harm (Mitigation Fees and Taxes):**

California, Maine, Washington, North Carolina, Pennsylvania,  
New Mexico, Florida, Montana

### **Eliminate caffeinated alcoholic beverages:**

California, New York, Washington

### **Protecting State Regulation/Control:**

Washington, North Carolina, New York





# Educational Challenges

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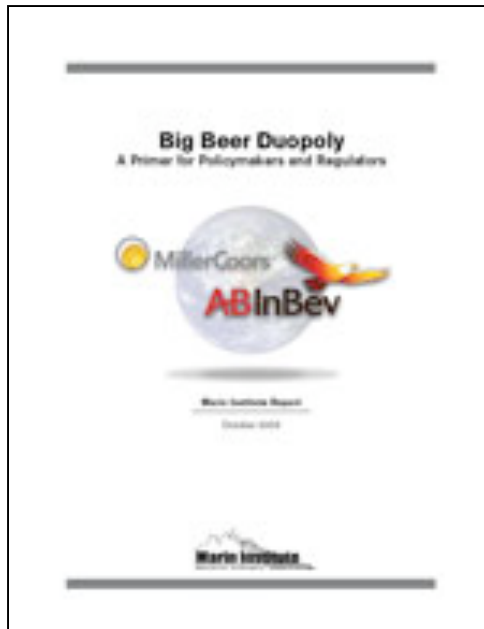
In 2009:

- **Campaign Contributions** to Legislators: \$887,449
- Contributions to Governor's **Budget Reform Now PAC**: \$671,000
- **Lobbying State Lawmakers and Agencies**: \$1.58 million

**California's "No More Hidden Taxes" Initiative in 2010**

# Other Opportunities to Educate

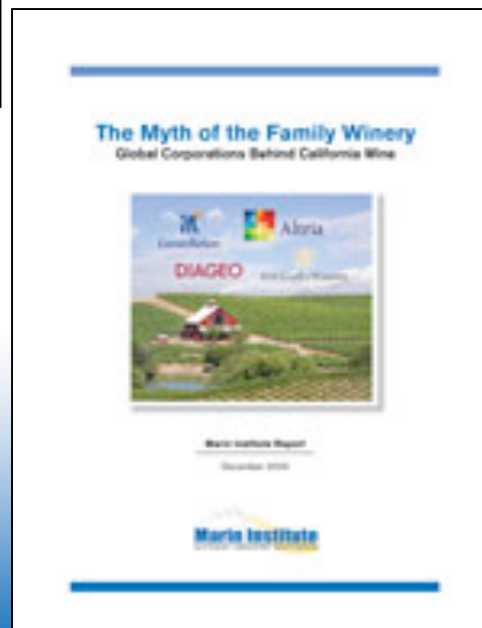
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**Reports**  
**Articles**  
**Policy**  
**Analysis**



Alcohol Promotion on Facebook (2009)  
[www.GlobalDrugPolicy.org](http://www.GlobalDrugPolicy.org)



# Partner with Public Health

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- Look, and ask, for evidence
  - Scientific consensus
  - Peer-reviewed research
  - Transparent methodology
- Work with public health advocates and agencies
- Support critical public health policies
- Promote and use evidence-based strategies

# Partner with Public Health

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