

# Soda Strategies: Reducing the Surplus of Empty Calories

Efforts elsewhere; Options Here

Kasandra Griffin  
Policy Manager, Food & School Health

Upstream Public Health

# Upstream Public Health

## Our Mission:

To create the social and environmental conditions where all Oregonians can thrive



# What Does That Mean?

- The Sierra Club works to protect the environment.
- They advocate for tighter environmental *policies* about logging, mining, polluting rivers and air, etc.
- Upstream Public Health works to protect public health.
- We advocate for *policies* that make it easier for people to make healthy choices and lead healthy, full lives.
- We are funded almost entirely by foundations such as the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Northwest Health Foundation, and Save the Children.
- Other funding comes from individual donors and contract projects.



# Our Approach to Improving Health

- Focus on the Leading Causes of Death and Disease
- Research and Choose Most Effective Policy Solutions
- Work with Partners
- Collaborate to Move Forward on a Roadmap to Success

# Our Policy Wins

- Got the Worst Junk Foods out of all Oregon Schools (2007)
- Required nutrition information is available in chain restaurants (2009)
- Created a Pilot Program for Schools to Purchase Local Foods and Create Teaching Gardens (2011)
- Ensured Attendance is one Measure of School Performance (2012)
- Water Fluoridation for Bull Run (2012)

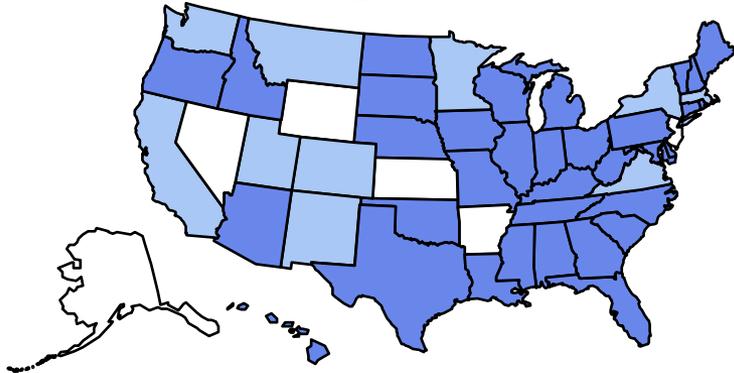


# Upcoming Policy Priorities

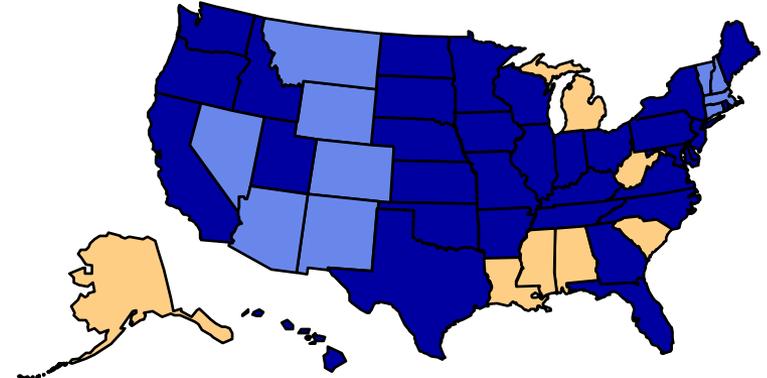
- Allocate Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) funds to tobacco prevention and obesity prevention (2013)
- Expand Farm to School state funding (2013)
- Enact fluoridation in Portland & other jurisdictions (2013 and beyond)
- Expand the connections between health reform and education reform, so that all students will be healthy and ready to learn, and all adults will be healthy and well-educated (ongoing)
- Promote healthy transportation options (on-going)

# Recognizing the Problem(s): Obesity

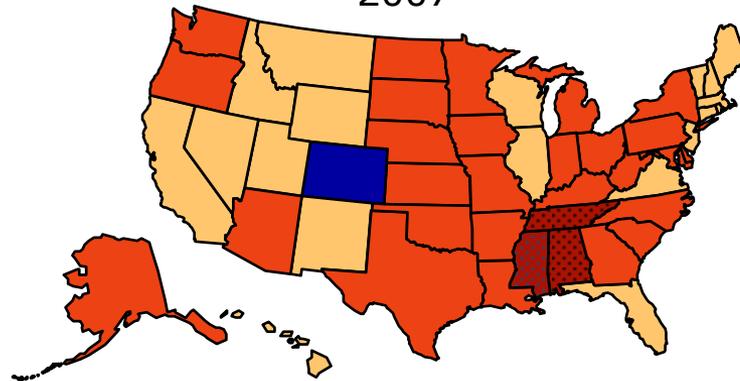
1990



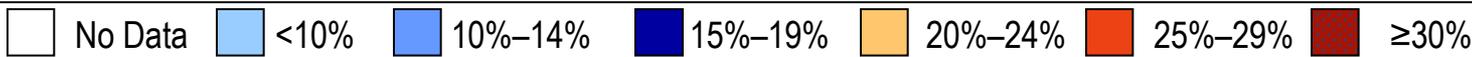
1998



2007



\*BMI  $\geq 30$ , or  
about 30 lbs.  
overweight for  
5'4" person  
(BRFSS)



# Identifying the Root(s) of the Problem:

- Urban design discourages activity
- Constant marketing of food and food-like substances
- Easy access to cheap, unhealthy calories
- Larger portions
- Ubiquitous snacking
- Increase in beverage calories

# What Does Soda Have to Do with It?



“... Roughly the size of a two-year-old child, if the child were liquefied.”

# Is 7% of Your Diet a Lot?

## Los Angeles Times

Editorial

### Kids, put down those sodas

*New research makes it clear that getting sugary drinks out of children's diets isn't just a theoretical good.*

**September 28, 2012**

Was the American Beverage Assn. trying to defend sugary sodas when it said last week that they amounted to just 7% of the typical American's caloric intake? The association may have thought that sounded like very little, but it's actually a lot. For a person eating 2,000 calories a day — the level the federal government assumes in calculating nutritional requirements — consuming 7% fewer soda calories would theoretically lead to a loss of 14 pounds a year, with little if any loss of nutrients.

# Soda Tax?

**Increasingly popular idea (Mark Bittman, Richard Jackson, etc, but/and...**

**“Public support for taxing sugar drinks largely depends on how the tax revenue will be used, and is strongest when the revenue generated from these initiatives is used to fund obesity prevention or other public health initiatives.”**

**-Public Health Law Center**

**-*TAXING SUGAR DRINKS: A POLICY OVERVIEW***



# Do they Exist Anywhere Yet?

- Many places with sales taxes have exemptions for food, and exemptions-to-the-exemptions for soda.
- Some, including Colorado & Washington DC, have recently made soda non-exempt.
- Baltimore City Council passed a modest soda tax in June of 2010 for specific but non-obesity-related programs.
  - 2 cents per single-serving bottle
  - Does not include fountain drinks
  - “temporary” (3 years)

# In the News: Washington State

- Proposed tax was 2 cents per 12 ounces
- General revenue
- Washington Legislature passed in April, 2012
- ABA collected signatures and referred it to the ballot November, 2010
- I-1107 passed, repealing the measure, by a margin of 60.44%
- The soda industry – American Beverage Association and Washington Beverage Association – disclosed \$16.5 million in expenditures to defeat the tax.

# In the News: Philadelphia

- Mayor Nutter
- Two tries, 2010 and 2011
- Proposed funding for general fund /  
No authority to dedicate funds to specific purpose
- Insufficient public & political support
- Not brought to a vote
- Tax increases through other mechanisms instead

# In the News: New York City



The New York Times

September 13, 2012

## Health Panel Approves Restriction on Sale of Large Sugary Drinks

By MICHAEL M. GRYNBAUM

Seeking to reduce runaway obesity rates, the New York City Board of Health on Thursday approved a ban on the sale of large sodas and other sugary drinks at restaurants, street carts and movie theaters, the first restriction of its kind in the country.

The measure, championed by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, is certain to intensify a growing national debate about soft drinks and obesity, and it could spur other cities to follow suit, even as many New Yorkers say they remain uneasy about the plan.

# In the News: New York City, (continued)

- Mayor Bloomberg
- Wanted to pass tax but didn't have political ability
- Went to portion size instead because it was possible
- Difficult messaging (“portion control”)
- “All the nanny-state accusations of a tax and none of the revenue.”
- But great research supporting “default bias.”
- Does not apply to all sales.

# In the News: California

- **Richmond (North of Oakland/Berkeley)**
- **El Monte (East Los Angeles County)**
- **Both 1 cent/ounce**
- **Both poor**
- **Tiny “pro” efforts**
- **Long shot**
- **November 2012**



# Chicago

## Chicago opts for wellness competition over soda tax

Chicago Tribune

# BREAKING BUSINESS

**By John Byrne and Wailin Wong**  
**Tribune staff reporters**

*12:32 p.m. CDT, October 8, 2012*

Pop machines in Chicago government buildings will carry calorie information and city workers will be able to win cash in a health competition paid for by Coca-Cola and other beverage giants under a plan Mayor Rahm Emanuel unveiled today.

Other places are giving the boot to pop machines or taxing sugary drinks, but Emanuel said his approach to the health issue is better because it emphasizes personal responsibility.

# Oregon Options

- **Excise Tax**
- **Ban**
- **Portion Restrictions**
- **Advertising Restrictions**

# Oregon Cautions

- 1. ABA can refer anything to the ballot**
  - **Whoever creates the ballot initiative has more power to set language, etc.**
  - **Consider starting there**
  - **Remember: They spent \$16.5M in Washington**
- 2. High administrative cost absent sales tax**

# Oregon Next Steps

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

Kasandra Griffin  
Policy Manager, Food & School health  
Upstream Public Health  
[kasandra@upstreampublichealth.org](mailto:kasandra@upstreampublichealth.org)  
Phone: 503.284.6390

[www.upstreampublichealth.org](http://www.upstreampublichealth.org)