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# Email Alert

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Updating you about current events in the battle against addictions

## Alcohol Taxes Beneficial on More than One Level

During these difficult economic times, officials at every level of government are looking for new sources of revenue to ease their respective budget crunches. In such situations, lawmakers often focus on "sin taxes". Peter Cressy, executive director of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, says his group is aware of proposals to increase alcohol taxes in at least 10 states. They anticipate that number will increase to 30 by the end of the year. In recent years, lobbying efforts by distributors, retailers and other industry groups have successfully defeated most tax increases. However, Cressy anticipates that it will be "extremely tough" to stop tax increases this year.

These considerations of lawmakers across the country make a study published online in the February edition of the journal *Addiction* very timely. According to the study authors, the more alcohol costs, the less likely people are to drink. When they do drink, they end to drink less. Researchers from the University of Florida - College of Medicine analyzed the findings from 112 studies spanning 4 decades and found a strong association between the amount of alcohol that people drink and the cost of alcohol. The consistency of the association indicates that raising taxes on alcohol could be "...among the most effective deterrents to drinking that researchers have discovered." It appears to be a more effective technique than law enforcement, media campaigns and school programs. That means that lawmakers' budget-balancing efforts may have an added benefit of reducing alcohol consumption. Interestingly, the study found that such tax or price increases affect consumption among most all drinkers including both heavy drinkers and light drinkers as well as both teens and adults.

### Sources:

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