



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 17, 2010

Contacts: ABA Press Office  
(202) 463-6770

### **REDUCING SODA CONSUMPTION IS A SIMPLISTIC AND INEFFECTIVE SOLUTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A paper published today in the *American Journal of Public Health* fails to provide real evidence that reducing sugar-sweetened beverage consumption will reduce obesity or prevent other negative health outcomes. Rather, it simply measures impact on sales in one specified location through price increases, as well as misleading educational materials. In fact, the authors themselves acknowledge that their study has several limitations and that future research is needed.

The fact remains that price increases on specific products don't make people healthier – a balanced diet and exercise do that. A report by researchers from the Mercatus Center at George Mason University showed that a 20 percent tax on a soft drink would decrease Body Mass Index (BMI) for an obese person by just 0.02, an amount not even measurable on a bathroom scale.

“Singling out one item as the cause of obesity completely misses the mark,” Susan Neely, president and CEO of the American Beverage Association said. “If we really want to solve this national public health challenge, we must focus on educating Americans through comprehensive approaches that include nutrition education based in fact and focusing on total diet and exercise – not efforts that are simplistic and will be ineffective.”

Soda, along with sweetened waters, sports drinks and energy drinks, contribute only 5.5 percent of the calories in the American diet according to government data presented to the U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee just last year. Therefore, focusing solely on sugar-sweetened beverages overlooks the more than 94.5 percent of calories that come from other sources.

The beverage industry agrees that obesity is a serious challenge, and has stepped up to be part of the solution. With its School Beverage Guidelines, the beverage industry has removed full-calorie soft drinks from all schools and replaced them with lower-calorie, smaller-portion beverage choices. As a result of the guidelines, there has been an 88 percent reduction in calories in beverages shipped to schools since 2004.

In support of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" campaign, the beverage industry recently announced it will make the calories in its products even more clear and consumer-friendly. America's leading beverage companies will put the information on the front of all their packages, as well as company-controlled vending machines and fountain machines.

**-MORE-**

## **AJPH RESPONSE/ADD ONE**

Furthermore, the beverage industry continues to innovate to meet consumer demand, introducing more no- and low-calorie beverage options. In fact, since 1998 there has been a 21 percent decrease in beverage calories available in the marketplace.

###

*The American Beverage Association is the trade association representing the broad spectrum of companies that manufacture and distribute non-alcoholic beverages in the United States.*