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Adams County Health Department  
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American Cancer Society, Cancer Action Network  
American Cancer Society, Illinois Division  
American Heart Association, Midwest Affiliate  
American Lung Association of Illinois  
American Medical Association  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois  
Building a Healthier Chicago  
Chicago Department of Public Health  
Chicago Hispanic Health Coalition  
Chicago Public Schools  
Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC)  
Cook County Department of Public Health  
DuPage County FORWARD Initiative  
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Illinois Academy of Family Physicians  
Illinois Action for Children  
Illinois African American Coalition for Prevention  
Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
Illinois Association of School Nurses  
Illinois Association of Public Health Administrators  
Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Illinois Dietetic Association  
Illinois Hospital Association  
Illinois Local Food & Farm Coalition  
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition  
Illinois Public Health Association  
Illinois Public Health Institute  
Illinois State Alliance of YMCAs  
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Salud Latina/Latino Health  
Southern Illinois Healthcare  
University of Illinois at Chicago Health Policy Center  
University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health  
Voices for Illinois Children  
YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago

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

#### Convened by

##### Illinois Public Health Institute

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## RETHINK YOUR DRINK MONTH REMINDS ILLINOISANS TO LIMIT SUGARY BEVERAGES

AS MORE RESEARCH SHOWS HARMFUL EFFECTS OF SUGARY BEVERAGES, STATEWIDE COALITION TAKES ACTION

**Chicago, IL- January 13, 2014**—The Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity (IAPO) has declared January 13 - February 13 “Rethink Your Drink Month” in Illinois as part of its year-long Rethink Your Drink Campaign. With sugary beverages making up 46% of added sugars in the American diet, IAPO is encouraging residents to “go on green,” drinking beverages with less than 5 grams of sugar per 12 ounces and to “stop on red” with drinks that have 12 grams or more of sugar per 12 ounces.

In January and February, IAPO is asking employers, hospitals and healthcare institutions, schools and daycare centers, municipalities and health departments to host Rethink Your Drink educational events and help Illinoisans make healthy beverage choices in the new year. The coalition, made up of more than 140 organizations across the state, has focused on raising awareness of the health harms of sugary beverages since 2010.

IAPO plans to promote Rethink Your Drink throughout the month, but is working with the following sectors to host targeted events during their designated weeks:

#### Health Departments/Local Government Education Week:

Monday, 1/20-Friday, 1/24

#### After-School Programs/Non-Profits Education Week:

Monday, 1/27-Friday, 1/31

#### School Education Week:

Monday, 2/3-Friday, 2/7

#### Worksite/ Hospital/ Healthcare Education Week:

Monday, 2/10-Friday, 2/14

Interested organizations can visit the IAPO website at [www.preventobesityil.org](http://www.preventobesityil.org) for the Rethink Your Drink Toolkit and post images and videos of their events on the IAPO [Facebook Page](#).

“Experts estimate that roughly 1/5 of the additional weight gained across the population between 1977 and 2007 can be attributed to increased consumption of sugar sweetened beverages,” says Elissa Bassler, CEO of the Illinois Public Health Institute, the administrative agency for IAPO. “We know sugary beverages increase the risk for obesity, diabetes, heart

disease, and some cancers. One study even found that the odds of a child becoming obese increased 60% with each additional sugary beverage consumed per day.”

We know that there are approximately 15-18 teaspoons of sugar in the average 20 oz. bottle of soda, along with almost 240 calories. The average person would have to walk 3.3 miles to burn off the calories in just one 20- ounce soda.

“Our bodies respond differently to the sugar we drink versus the sugar we eat,” said Heather Gavras, a Registered Dietitian and the Senior Director of Community Health at the American Heart Association, Midwest Affiliate. “Sugar-sweetened beverages are the single largest source of added sugar and the top source of energy intake in the U.S. diet, a major risk factor for obesity and obesity-related diseases. In this season of New Year’s resolutions where many pledge to get healthier, we hope people will also rethink their drink as part of their 2014 plan.”

“This focused month of education will help bring a spotlight to the issue at a time of year when people are thinking about improving their health behaviors,” said Dr. Rao, a family physician at Northshore University Health System. “I work with families to teach them the 5 key behaviors of obesity prevention, and reducing or eliminating sugary beverages from their diet is one of the easiest behavior changes to make.”

For more information about the educational materials and resources, contact Janna Simon, Campaign Coordinator at 312-850-4744.

Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity: [www.preventobesityil.org](http://www.preventobesityil.org)

*The primary goal of the Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity is to ensure that trends in obesity in Illinois are stable by 2015 and moving downward by 2018. The statewide coalition of over 140 organizations works to implement solutions to the obesity epidemic through coordinated and comprehensive policy, systems, and environmental changes.*

Illinois Public Health Institute: [www.iphionline.org](http://www.iphionline.org)

*The Illinois Public Health Institute works through partnerships to promote prevention and improve public health systems that maximize health and quality of life for the people of Illinois.*

American Heart Association: [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

*Our mission is to build healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. That single purpose drives all we do. The need for our work is beyond question.*

Dr. Rao at Northshore University Health System: <http://www.northshore.org/pbrn/leadership-team/goutham-rao-md/>

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