



National  
Indigenous  
Diabetes  
Association

Association  
Nationale  
Autochtone  
du  
Diabète

# FOOD FORESTS OF THE FUTURE

THE FUTURE OF INDIGENOUS HEALTH WILL DEPEND HEAVILY ON OUR ABILITY TO ADDRESS AND OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES SURROUNDING THE SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF THE FOODS WE EAT.



# PROPOSED TAX ON SUGAR DRINKS



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATIONAL INDIGENOUS DIABETES ASSOCIATION AND FEARLESS R2W, WE ARE SHARING A SECOND SET OF RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS WE CONDUCTED IN THE NORTH END NEIGHBORHOOD OF WINNIPEG.



# FEATURES

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Attitudes towards a proposed tax on sugar drinks among Indigenous adults residing in Winnipeg's North End neighborhood

NIDA newsletters are distributed on a bi-monthly basis. We welcome submissions related to all things related to wellness of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

Please send submissions to [executivedirector@nada.ca](mailto:executivedirector@nada.ca)

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Happy holidays and best wishes in 2022 from the National Indigenous Diabetes Association Board of Directors and Staff.

All my relations,

Jeff LaPlante  
Executive Director

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# GROWING FOOD SOVEREIGNTY:

## FOOD FORESTS OF THE FUTURE

**Cody McGregor**

Indigenous Diabetes  
Health Circle



As awareness of the impact of Diabetes grows and the momentum towards rebuilding healthy nations hastens, our focus remains steadfast on the wellness of our people and the generations to come. The future of Indigenous health will depend heavily on our ability to address and overcome the challenges surrounding the security and sovereignty of the foods we eat. Both figuratively and literally speaking, the seeds we sow today will nourish the bodies and minds of tomorrow.

This writer believes there is a small and simple step that we can take, that will move us closer to our goal of reclaiming pre-colonial health for Indigenous people. A step that will remind us of the beauty of Mother Earth and the cyclical nature in which she provides for us. A place for us to gather and celebrate the bounty of a fall harvest. A symbol of our commitment to the good work that continues to be done. A nation wide, chain collection of locally grown food forests.

The design, scale and diversity of this concept will be unique to each community that chooses to take on this project, but the objective remains the same. Create a low-maintenance forest garden space consisting of fruit bearing trees.

Apple trees, ideal for beginners, are easily transplanted and can be acquired at different stages of growth, potentially bearing fruit the same year as installation. But there is still much to consider when developing a successful forest, and some preparation will need to



*This writer believes there is a small and simple step that we can take, that will move us closer to our goal of reclaiming pre-colonial health for Indigenous people.*

be done to ensure a healthy and hearty yield. Start small and plan your space to grow in phases with new varieties of fruit and nuts being introduced year after year. Include small plaques to accompany each tree that detail the species of fruit, date and that which you hope to achieve by bringing it home. Celebrate your planting day and invite community members to attend. Peaches, pears, plums and cherries make great future additions to your food forest and can be included in a variety of healthy recipes for decades to come.

With a new year upon us, the time for planning and preparation for projects such as this is drawing near. Make this spring a season of renewal and commit to creating tangible change in practical and exciting ways. Whether you choose to plant two trees or ten, plant in rows or a circle, from yearlings or seed, at the elementary school or seniors complex; remember that the labour we put forward today will bear the fruit of tomorrow.

# THE POWER TO CHANGE HOW YOU LIVE WITH DIABETES

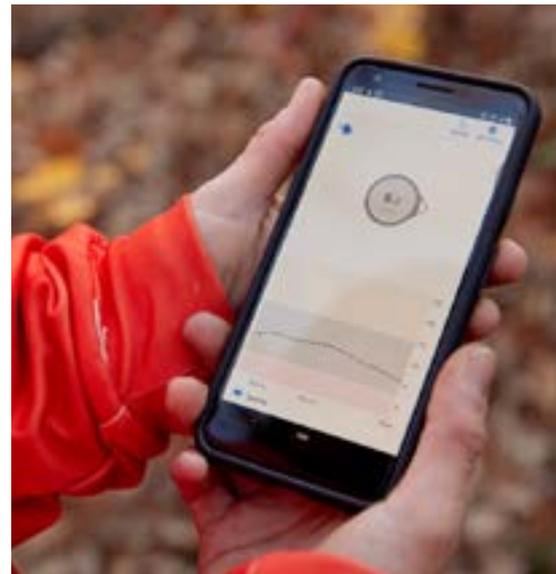
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Charles,  
First Nations T1D Warrior



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†Dexcom Data on file. 2021. Individual benefits may vary by policy and plan.

1 Beck, RW, et al. JAMA. 2017;317(4):371-378.

2 Welsh, JB et al. Diabetes Technol Ther. 2019;21(3).

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# ATTITUDES TOWARDS A PROPOSED TAX ON SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES AMONG

# INDIGENOUS ADULTS RESIDING IN THE NORTH END NEIGHBORHOOD, WINNIPEG MB



Results from the 2019 -2020 interviews

**OVERARCHING THEME:** Majority of participants are not supportive of the proposed sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) tax.

## SUB-THEME: GOVERNMENT NOT TRUSTWORTHY

Participants are not supportive of the proposed SSB tax because of:

- Government's mismanagement of previously implemented taxes
- Government's suspicious motives behind the proposed tax
- Out-of-touch elitists pushing an all-too-familiar agenda

## PARTICIPANTS



AGES: 20 - 65 YRS

## TAXING EXPERIENCES

- Lack of transparency
- Token gestures

"THE TAX MONEY IS SUPPOSED TO BE USED FOR SOMETHING POSITIVE THAT PEOPLE WANT, BUT IT'S NOT MOST OF TIME. OR YOU JUST DON'T KNOW WHERE THE HECK IT'S GONE."

## SUSPICIOUS MOTIVATIONS

- Cash grab
- Pocketing
- Financial siphon

"IT'S JUST GOING TO BENEFIT THOSE WITHIN MORE NICE AREAS ALWAYS... THE MONEY THAT IS PRODUCED TENDS TO GO IN THOSE AREAS MORE OFTEN THAN THIS AREA. SO IT'S JUST A FINANCIAL LIKE SIPHON HOMELESS AREA. THAT'S IT."

## IGNORANT DO GOODERS



- Out-of-touch
- The true benefactors

"IT'S KIND OF LIKE ELITIST IN A LOT OF TIMES. IT'S ALWAYS LIKE THE DO-GOODERS WITHIN POLITICS OR WITHIN ACTIVISM THAT SAY THOSE KINDS OF THINGS. NOT REALLY REALIZING LIKE THOSE FOLKS ARE STILL GOING TO BUY IT NO MATTER WHAT."

## SUB-THEME: ANTICIPATING INEFFECTIVE AND INEQUITABLE OUTCOMES

Participants are not supportive of the proposed SSB tax because:

- It will not be effective at reducing SSB consumption
- Its ineffectiveness will exacerbate socio-economic inequities

## [IN]EFFECTIVE

- Band-aid solution
- Substitution

"I DON'T THINK LIKE ONE FAMILY IS GONNA COMPLETELY CUT OUT A, A HABIT THAT THEY HAD FOR YEARS... UM, THEY'RE GONNA BUY IT, BUT FOR A CHEAPER PRICE SOMEWHERE ELSE OR DEAL SOMEWHERE."

## EFFECTIVE

- Price increase
- Educational tool

## WIDENING OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC INEQUITIES

### SOCIAL

- Stigmatizing
- Demoralizing
- Dividing

"BECAUSE AS AN INDIGENOUS PERSON, IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE TRYING TO TAX A SPECIFIC GROUP OF PEOPLE UM- AND LIKE REPRIMAND US FOR ADJUSTING TO THIS NEW WORLD."

### ECONOMIC

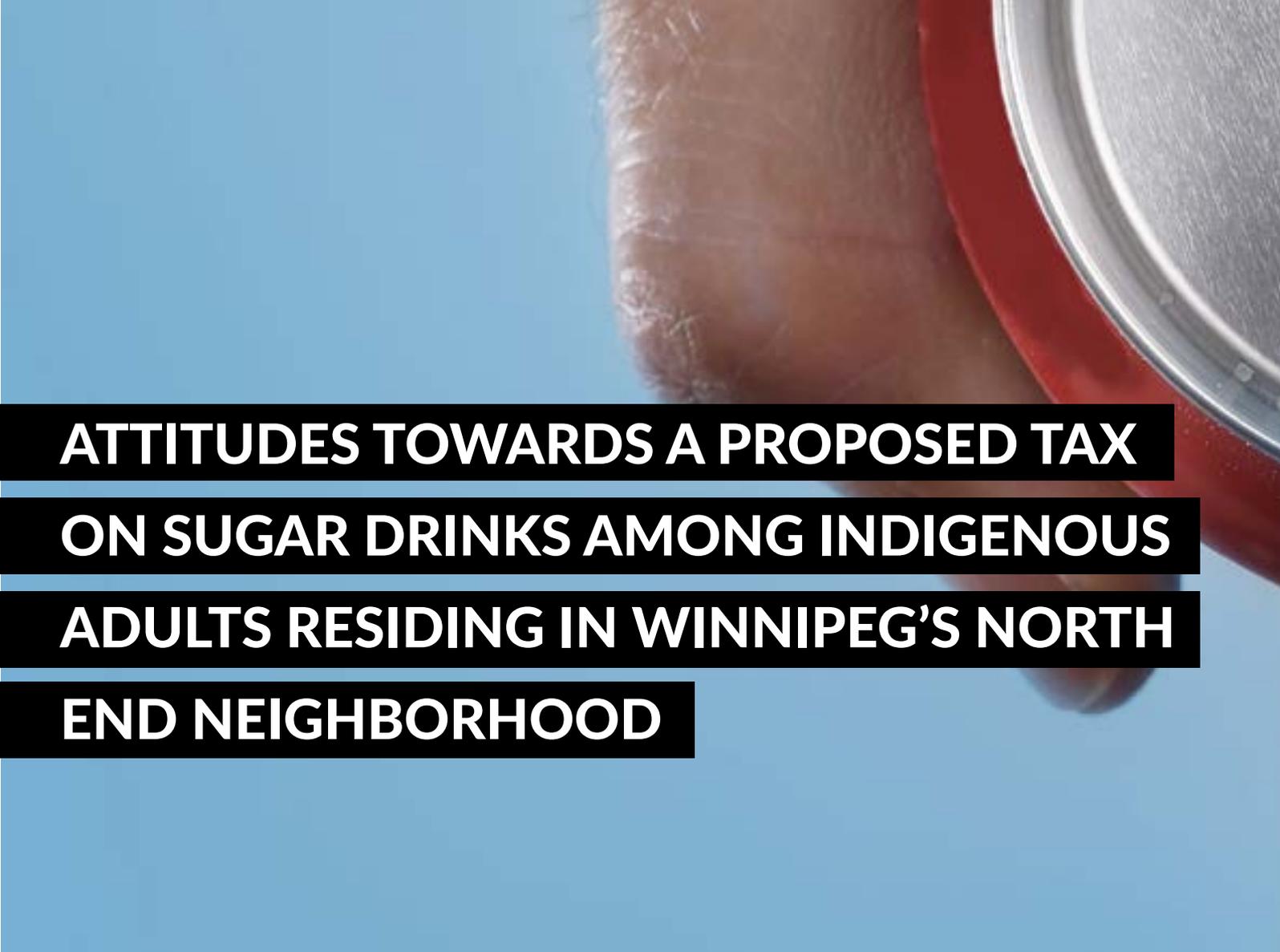
- Hurt pockets
- Rich richer

"LIKE IF POP GOES UP, POP'S STILL CHEAPER, POP'S STILL MORE ACCESSIBLE. TO THEM, IT'S STILL MORE NORM. SO IF THEY'RE SPENDING MORE MONEY ON POP, AND THAT LITTLE EXTRA MONEY THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO USE ON MORE LIKE HEALTHIER GROCERIES, THAT'S JUST CANCELED."

## EARMARKED TAX REVENUE

Participants expressed greater support for SSB taxation if the generated revenue were to be allocated to initiatives of their choice and that directly improve the lives of community members.

For more information contact: [sugartax@umanitoba.ca](mailto:sugartax@umanitoba.ca)



# ATTITUDES TOWARDS A PROPOSED TAX ON SUGAR DRINKS AMONG INDIGENOUS ADULTS RESIDING IN WINNIPEG'S NORTH END NEIGHBORHOOD



In partnership with National Indigenous Diabetes Association and [Fearless R2W](#), we are sharing a second set of results from interviews we conducted in the North End neighborhood of Winnipeg ([see first set of results](#)). This research is part of a larger research study to bring forward the perspective of Indigenous people on a proposed public-health policy to tax sugary beverages. The [World Health Organization](#), [Diabetes Canada](#), and [Heart and Stroke Foundation](#) have all advocated for a tax on sugary drinks; to date, only [Newfoundland and Labrador](#) has committed to implementing a provincial tax.

While the proposed tax is aimed at discouraging the purchase and consumption of sugary drinks, a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages is regressive, meaning it represents a proportionately larger amount among lower income individuals and households. Furthermore, we know that sugary drinks are more commonly consumed among lower income and food insecure populations, which further contributes to the regressive nature of the proposed tax. Given the existing social and economic disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada, it is critically important to understand how Indigenous adults perceive a proposed tax on sugary drinks.



We conducted a total of 20 interviews between Nov 2019 and August 2020, with 6 interviews carried out in person, and 14 over the phone once the COVID 19 restrictions were announced. Thanks to the outstanding recruitment efforts of Riel Dubois, community research assistant, the participants were diverse both in age and gender.

We analyzed all 20 interview transcripts to identify common patterns and themes. We found that most participants are not supportive of the proposed tax on sugary beverages due to tax-specific concerns as well as apprehensions associated with the policy makers themselves.

Participants are suspicious of the motives behind the proposed tax because of the government's poor track record implementing taxes and allocating the revenue equitably. Specifically, participants perceived that government was not transparent regarding how tax generated revenue was distributed currently, and in the past. Participants expressed that revenue tended to be invested in more established neighborhoods, and when it was invested into the North End community, it was token gestures – directed towards low-priority initiatives such as infrastructure and parks. Given these experiences, participants are concerned that the tax is another 'cash grab' that will siphon money out of the community.

Participants also spoke specifically of policy makers as misinformed “do-gooders” that are out of touch with the specific challenges faced by urban Indigenous communities, proposing initiatives that end up being more harmful. Participants also describe the “do-gooders” as the true benefactors, who are more likely to reduce their already low sugary drink consumption and be on the receiving end of the financial siphon from lower income individuals.

The second major reason participants are not supportive of the tax is that they anticipate it to be ineffective at reducing consumption of sugary beverages, which will exacerbate social and economic inequities. The tax is anticipated to be ineffective at behavior change because it will not address the underlying factors of consumption of sugary beverages such as food insecurity, social norms, and addiction. Participants also predict that overall consumption of sugary beverages will not be meaningfully reduced because people will price shop for cheaper substitutions and/or buy in bulk. Finally, participants are concerned that the tax will only aggravate existing economic inequities because it will dig deeper into resident’s pockets, as well as contribute to existing stigmatizing narratives around “junk food” consumption among Indigenous people and how it intersects with perceptions of parenting.

While the majority of participants were strongly opposed to the tax, they expressed greater support when discussing earmarking of the tax-generated revenue to initiatives of their choice that would directly and meaningfully improve the lives of community members. This underscores the importance of self-determination in generating support for health policies among Indigenous people.

We plan to share these findings more broadly within the policy and academic community to further inform discussions regarding this policy.

We welcome any feedback on these results. Please email: [sugartax@umanitoba.ca](mailto:sugartax@umanitoba.ca)

#### Bibliography:

Maria Kisselgoff is a MSc student in the Department of Food and Human Nutritional Sciences at the University of Manitoba, studying sugar-sweetened beverages. She completed her BSc in Psychology at Lakehead University. Maria immigrated to Canada (Thunder Bay, ON, Robinson-Superior Treaty 60) when she was 17 years old and enjoys being at the lake.



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