



Tobacco Tax Increases- Key Message Points

- More than 3,500 kids try their first cigarette every day. Another 1,000 become daily smokers, and one-third of them will die prematurely as a result. The research is clear that increasing the price of cigarettes through tobacco taxes is one of the most effective ways to reduce youth smoking.
- Increasing the tobacco tax is a win-win-win solution for states: a public health win that reduces smoking and saves lives, a financial win that raises much-needed revenue and reduces smoking-caused health care costs, and a political win because tobacco taxes have the strong support of the public.
- A significant tobacco tax increase combined with full funding for tobacco prevention and cessation programs will deliver the maximum health and economic benefit for states. These steps will prevent kids from starting to smoke, help smokers quit, save lives, and save taxpayers money by reducing smoking-caused health care costs.
- States can also maximize the public health impact of the tobacco tax increase by dedicating some of the revenue to expanding access to health care for uninsured families.
- Significant cigarette tax increases are proven to reduce smoking and save lives. They make cigarettes too expensive for many kids to buy and give smokers another incentive to quit. The higher the tax, the more lives saved.
- Increased tobacco taxes are especially effective at reducing smoking among kids. Studies show that every 10 percent increase in the price of cigarettes reduces youth smoking by about 7 percent and overall cigarette consumption by about 4 percent. Even a slight decrease in youth smoking will save thousands of lives because for every three kids we prevent from becoming regular smokers, a life is saved.
- The American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and every major health group support cigarette tax increases to keep kids from starting to smoke and help smokers quit. And it's no surprise that the tobacco companies oppose increasing cigarette taxes because they know the result will be fewer customers for their products.
- Many families are hit hard by the cost of smoking related illness – losing family members to early deaths and having to pay tens of thousands of dollars to treat health costs associated with smoking. Even if higher cigarette prices encourage just some smokers to quit, it is worth it to them and their families
- 44 states and the District of Columbia have increased cigarette taxes since January 1, 2002—more than doubling the national average cigarette tax from 43.4 cents to \$1.19 per pack.
- Tobacco taxes are reliable source of revenue for states. Every state that has significantly increased its tobacco tax has enjoyed substantial increases in revenue despite the inevitable declines in tobacco consumption. States can count on tobacco taxes to reduce smoking and provide funding for tobacco prevention, health care and other critical health and state programs.
- National and state polls across the country show overwhelming public support for tobacco tax increases. This support exists throughout all regions of the country and extends across party lines. Support for increasing the tax is even higher when the revenue is used to fund tobacco prevention and health care programs.