

Impact of Tobacco in Oklahoma: The Need to Increase Tobacco Taxes to Reduce Healthcare Costs, Protect Kids, and Save Lives

Health & Economic Costs of Tobacco to Oklahoma

Tobacco is an addictive and deadly product. Smoking harms nearly every organ in the bodyⁱ and remains the number one cause of preventable death. In Oklahoma:

- 15.8% of adults smoke cigarettes.ⁱⁱ
- 22.1% of high school students use tobacco products including 4% who smoke cigarettes, 21.7% who use e-cigarettes, 2.3% who smoke cigars, and 2.6% who use smokeless tobacco.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 34.2% of cancer deaths are caused by smoking.^{iv}
- Smoking is estimated to cost Oklahoma \$1.88 billion in direct health care costs, including \$283.8 million in Medicaid costs annually.^v
- Smoking costs the state \$4.6 billion in productivity costs annually.
- On average, Oklahoma residents pay \$1,057 per household in state and federal taxes from smoking-caused government expenditures, whether they smoke or not.

The Solution: Increased Tobacco Taxes

Significant tobacco tax increases are one of the most effective ways to prevent kids from starting to use tobacco and help adults quit.^{vi,vii} Substantial increases in cigarette tax rates not only save lives, but it also generates substantial increases in new revenue.^{viii} In fact, every state that has significantly increased its cigarette tax has also boosted its state revenue - even after accounting for revenue loss due to beneficial health declines in cigarette purchases resulting from the tax increase.^{ix} Additionally, it reduces healthcare costs. Lower smoking rates translate into fewer smoking-related health problems and more productive workers.^x

ACS CAN's Recommendation

ACS CAN calls on Oklahoma lawmakers to increase the cigarette tax by \$1.50 per pack and tax all other tobacco products on parity with cigarettes to reduce health care costs, protect kids, and save lives.

Increasing the tax on all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, at the same time would produce additional health and economic benefits for Oklahoma. It is important that tax increases apply to all tobacco products at an equivalent rate to encourage people to quit rather than switch to a cheaper product and to prevent youth from starting to use any tobacco product.

Together we can create a cleaner, safer, healthier Oklahoma by increasing tobacco taxes on all forms of commercial tobacco products.

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Health Effects of Cigarette Smoking. Updated April 28, 2020.

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/effects_cig_smoking/

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2023 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

<https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/index.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/results.htm>

^{iv} Smoking-Related Cancer Deaths in 2020 Analysis by ACS, 2023.

^v Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Oklahoma. Updated 08.16.24. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/oklahoma>

^{vi} U.S. National Cancer Institute and World Health Organization. The Economics of Tobacco and Tobacco Control. National Cancer Institute Tobacco Control Monograph 21. NIH Publication No. 16-CA-8029A. Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute; and Geneva, CH: World Health Organization; 2016.

^{vii} HHS, 2014.

^{viii} Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Raising State Cigarette Taxes Always Increases State Revenues (And Always Reduces Smoking). Updated December 27, 2023. Available at: <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0098.pdf>.

^{ix} Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Raising State Cigarette Taxes Always Increases State Revenues (And Always Reduces Smoking). Updated December 27, 2023. <https://assets.tobaccofreekids.org/factsheets/0098.pdf>

^x Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Raising State Cigarette Taxes Always Increases State Revenues (And Always Reduces Smoking). Updated December 27, 2023. <https://assets.tobaccofreekids.org/factsheets/0098.pdf>