

ASK: We respectfully ask that you support a recurring increase of $16.5 million in additional funding for the West Virginia Division of Tobacco Prevention Program.

* Tobacco prevention and cessation is one of the smartest and most fiscally responsible investments that West Virginia can make, as smoking now directly causes $2.4 billion in health care costs annually in our state.
* This funding cannot only help individuals quit smoking but also prevent our children from ever starting a lifetime of addiction to tobacco.
* It is especially important since West Virginia has the highest adult smoking rate in the country and ranks 2nd in smoking-attributable cancer deaths.
* Tobacco use remains the number one cause of preventable death in the United States.
* For every $1 spent on comprehensive tobacco control programs, states receive up to $55 in savings from averted tobacco-related health care costs.
* Tobacco is an addictive and deadly product. Smoking harms nearly every organ in the body[[1]](#endnote-1) and remains the number one cause of preventable death. In West Virginia:

ASK: Support HB 4983- To fund the Tobacco Use Cessation Initiative. With this additional funding we can work toward investing in Tobacco Control to Reduce Taxpayer Cost, Protect Kids, and Save Lives.

* + 21% of adults smoke cigarettes, the highest adult smoking rate in the nation. ii
	+ 27% of high school students use tobacco products, including 3.8% who smoke cigarettes, 27.5% who use e-cigarettes, and 2.5% who use smokeless tobacco, iii
	+ 37.8% of cancer deaths are caused by smoking.
* West Virginia receives $227.6 million in tobacco revenue annually from tobacco settlement payments and taxes combined, yet currently invests only $451,404 in tobacco prevention and cessation programs, which is only 1.6% of the $27.4 million the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that West Virginia spend to combat the health and economic consequences of tobacco. Increasing funding is a vital first step to protect our West Virginia youth from the dangers of tobacco.

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)