



Resolution to Raise North Dakota's Tobacco Tax

Whereas, according to the 2014 US Surgeon General's Report, increasing tobacco excise taxes have proven highly effective in preventing initiation among youth, reducing tobacco use by promoting cessation among current users, discouraging relapse among former users, and reducing consumption among those who continue to use tobacco; and

Whereas, tobacco use remains North Dakota's leading preventable cause of death, killing more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined; and

Whereas, there is recognition that ceremonial and spiritual use of tobacco products by American Indians in North Dakota is different than the commercial sale of tobacco products;

Whereas, 11.7% (4,500) of youth in North Dakota smoke, and 500 North Dakota children (under 18) become new daily smokers each year, of whom more than 14,000 will die prematurely because of this addiction; and

Whereas, 19.9% (113,600) of adults in North Dakota smoke and nearly 1,000 North Dakotans will die each year from smoking and smoking-related disease; and

Whereas, tobacco use in North Dakota imposes economic burden, with smoking-caused direct-healthcare costs amounting to \$326 million each year, smoking-caused productivity losses approximating \$232.6 million annually, and each household paying \$795 per year in state and federal taxes from smoking-caused government expenditures; and

Whereas, each year, the North Dakota government Medicaid payments directly related to tobacco use are \$56.9 million; and

Whereas, the current cigarette tax of \$0.44 per pack, pipe tobacco and cigar tax at 28% of the wholesale purchase price, and snuff tax at \$0.60 per ounce, ranking North Dakota one of the four cheapest tobacco states in the nation, is dangerous to our state's citizens; and

Whereas, the legislative body in North Dakota has not enacted legislation to increase our state's tobacco taxes since 1993; and defeated legislation as recently as 2015;

Whereas, this resolution addresses commercial tobacco, which is different from traditional tobacco used in American Indian spiritual practices;

Now therefore be it resolved, The North Dakota Public Health Association supports increasing the tobacco tax in North Dakota as a proven way to prevent youth tobacco initiation, encourage a reduction of adult tobacco use, reduce health care costs, and provide an overall benefit to public health. Further, the North Dakota Public Health Association endorses an initiated measure on the November 2016 ballot to raise North Dakota's cigarette tax to a minimum of \$2.20 per pack and all other tobacco products by a proportional amount.

This resolution was adapted from the Raise it for Health resolution.

References

President's Cancer Panel's 2007 report, *Promoting Healthy Lifestyles*, <http://archive.tobacco.org/news/251230.html>

Report of the Surgeon General, U.S. Public Health Service, 2014 http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/50th-anniversary/index.htm

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, *Toll of Tobacco in North Dakota*, http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/north_dakota