

Decrease youth tobacco use. Increase the tobacco tax.

The price of Maine's status quo is too high.

Maine's next generation is rapidly becoming dependent on tobacco products - in particular, e-cigarettes - setting them up for chronic health conditions, lost productivity, and economic challenges.

- 95% of smokers start by age 21.¹
- 27,000 Maine kids now under the age of 18 will ultimately die prematurely from smoking and/or e-cigarette use.²

According to the Surgeon General's Report, *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress*, "The evidence is sufficient to conclude that increases in the prices of tobacco products, including those resulting from excise tax increases, prevent initiation of tobacco use, promote cessation, and reduce the prevalence and intensity of tobacco use among youth and adults."³

In Maine, smoking is estimated to cost \$811 million in direct health care expenditures, including \$262 million in Medicaid costs, and an additional \$647 million in productivity losses every year.⁴

Each year, 2,400 Maine people die from tobacco-related illness.⁵

Youth are particularly sensitive to price increases. Price is one of the most effective tools to prevent youth from becoming regular smokers,⁴ and price is a *strong incentive* to help current tobacco users quit or cut back.³ A \$2.00 per pack increase is estimated to reduce youth smoking by nearly 20%, preventing 4,300 Maine kids under the age of 18 from becoming adult smokers, and reducing long-term health care costs by \$300 million.²

Maine's tax on cigarettes has not increased in 15 years. The current \$2.00 per pack cigarette tax is the second lowest in the Northeast.⁶ This is nothing to be proud of. Maine kids are paying the price for this inaction.



Nicotine exposure during young adulthood can change the way the brain works, leading to a lifetime of addiction and increased risk of impulsivity and mood disorders.³



Increasing Maine's cigarette excise tax to \$4.00 per pack will garner \$48 million per year in new revenue, in addition to the revenue from equivalent, relative increases in taxes on other tobacco products.⁷



**Raise the price of tobacco products now,
so Maine kids don't pay later.**

**Give Maine's next generation the
opportunity to grow up tobacco-free.**

Good health is good for our families and good for our pocketbooks. It makes Maine a place where businesses want to be and where young people want to stay.

70% of Mainers support using tax revenue from an increase in tobacco taxes to prevent youth from starting to smoke or use other tobacco products, such as e-cigarettes, Juuls, or other e-cigarette products.⁷

Let's save lives while generating additional revenue for public health and prevention.



The Maine Public Health Association is the state's largest and oldest association for public health professionals. As a statewide association, we advocate, act and advise on critical public health challenges, assuring that all people in Maine lead healthful lives.

To learn more visit:
www.mainepublichealth.org.

This fact sheet was supported by the Maine Cancer Foundation.

Endnotes

- 1 Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK). Increasing the sale age for tobacco to 21 will reduce smoking and save lives. https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/content/what_we_do/state_local_issues/sales_21/tobacco21_factsheet_brief.pdf.
- 2 Projections of revenue, public health benefits and cost savings associated with a \$2 cigarette tax increase in Maine are calculated using an economic model developed jointly by CTFK, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, and Tobacconomics. For more information, see: <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0281.pdf>.
- 3 United States Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS). 2016. E-cigarette use among youth and young adults: A report of the surgeon general. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.
- 4 US DHHS. 2014. The health consequences of smoking: 50 years of progress. *A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/index.html>.
- 5 CTFK. 2020. The toll of tobacco in Maine. www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/maine.
- 6 CTFK. 2020. Map of state cigarette tax rates. www.tobaccofreekids.org/us-resources/fact-sheet/map-showing-state-cigarette-tax-rates.
- 7 Maine Public Health Association. 2019. Voter poll – public health issues. *Critical Insights*. https://mainepublichealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Polling.Results-for-public-release_CTI-Presentation.pdf.