

public policy

R.I. gets 'F' for tobacco spending

Grade Summary: Rhode Island

GRADE: Tobacco Prevention Control and Spending

F

- **FY2012 State Funding for Tobacco Control Programs: \$372,665**
- **FY2012 Federal Funding for State Tobacco Control Programs: \$3,112,616***
- **FY2012 Total Funding for State Tobacco Control Programs: \$3,485,281**
- **CDC Best Practices State Spending Recommendation: \$15,200,000**
- **Percentage of CDC Recommended Level: 22.9%**

*Includes regular funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as tobacco-related grants to states and communities from federal stimulus and health care reform funds.



Thumbs down for Rhode Island for spending little state money on tobacco control programs despite smoking costing the state close to \$870 million in economic costs every year.

THE American Lung Association gave Rhode Island an 'F' for its tobacco prevention control and spending.

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WASHINGTON – The American Lung Association gave Rhode Island an “F” for its tobacco prevention control and spending.

The organization, in its 10th annual [State of Tobacco Control](#) report, found a “frustrating mix of progress and backsliding” on a state and federal level.

“Over the past year, most states’ efforts to protect children and curb tobacco-related disease have been, in a word, abysmal. The federal government fared significantly better by making major advances in 2011, but still squandered one significant opportunity to save lives,” it said.

The report looked at four factors: tobacco prevention control and spending; smoke-free air; cigarette tax; and cessation. Only four states received all passing grades. Six received straight “F’s.”

“Thumbs down for Rhode island for spending little state money on tobacco control programs despite smoking costing the state close to \$870 million in economic costs every year,” the report said.

Rhode Island received the “F” for its program spending, but also received two “A’s” for its smoke-free air - prohibited everywhere indoors except for casinos/gaming establishments, where it is restricted – and the \$3.46 per 20-pack cigarette tax.

Rhode Island cut its tobacco control program funding by 50 percent for fiscal 2012 to \$372,665, and its total funding (including federal funds) was at \$3.49 million - 22.9 percent of the Centers for Disease Control’s recommended state spending level.

The Ocean State's cessation programs earned a "D." The state quit line has a \$1.77 investment per smoker, while the CDC recommends a \$10.53 investment per smoker. Under the "barriers to coverage" category, the group noted that there are limits on duration and other requisites for the state Medicaid program and the state employee health plans.

"Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death, as 443,000 people die each year from tobacco-related illnesses and secondhand smoke exposure. It also drains the economy of an enormous sum, more than \$193 billion annually, in health care costs and lost productivity," the ALA said.

The Rhode Island Tobacco Control Network also released a statement following the report noting: "Smoking kills more than 1,600 Rhode Island citizens annually – more than all deaths from alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders and suicides combined," said state Rep. Joseph McNamara, D-Cranston. "Effective policies alongside properly funded cessation and prevention programs are essential to fight against tobacco's negative effects."