

# TOBACCO FREE RHODE ISLAND



**SUPPORT H7805 and S2460**

**To raise the Rhode Island cigarette excise tax by \$1 and dedicate a portion of the new revenue to fund tobacco prevention and cessation programs for Rhode Islanders**

The most effective proven approach to reducing death and disease caused by smoking and other tobacco use is a three-pronged strategy combining:

1. Comprehensive smoke-free and tobacco-free laws;
2. Regular and significant increases in tobacco taxes; and
3. Fully-funding evidence-based tobacco prevention and cessation programs.

H7805, sponsored by Representative Arthur Handy, and S2460, sponsored by Senator Juan Pichardo, provide 2 out of the three best practices for reducing tobacco use: Higher prices and a meaningful investment in prevention and cessation services.

Rhode Island has not made a significant increase in its cigarette tax since 2009. Increased tobacco taxes are a win-win-win solution for Rhode Island – a HEALTH WIN that will reduce tobacco use and save lives, a FINANCIAL WIN that will raise revenue to help alleviate budget shortfalls, and a POLITICAL WIN that polls show is popular with the voters.

#### **A win-win-win solution for Rhode Island:**

**HEALTH WIN** - A \$1 cigarette tax increase will motivate 3,300 Rhode Islanders to quit smoking for good and will **stop 2,300 kids from ever becoming addicted** to cigarettes.<sup>i</sup> And provide \$3.1 million in new revenue to fund needed **tobacco prevention and cessation** programs and services.

**FINANCIAL WIN** - A \$1 cigarette tax increase will generate an estimated **\$17.48 million in new revenue** for the state of RI.<sup>ii</sup>

**POLITICAL WIN** - A \$1 cigarette tax increase is popular with voters. It generates significant state revenue without raising sales tax, income tax or property tax, improves health outcomes for Rhode Islanders, and reduces healthcare costs.

**We urge you to protect the state's proud commitment to tobacco control and public health by approving H7805 and S2460, vital disease prevention and revenue-generating legislation.**

Respectfully yours,



Patricia Nolan, MD  
Chair, Tobacco Free RI

American Academy of Pediatrics, Rhode Island Chapter  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American Heart Association  
American Lung Association of Rhode Island

American Thoracic Society, Rhode Island Chapter  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids  
CODAC Behavioral Healthcare  
March of Dimes  
New England Laborers' Health & Safety Fund  
Progreso Latino  
Rhode Island Dental Association  
Rhode Island Medical Society  
Rhode Island Public Health Institute  
Rhode Island State Nurses Association  
The Providence Center  
Thundermist Health Center  
Young Voices

Barrington Prevention Coalition – The Bay Team  
Bristol Prevention Coalition  
Central Falls Prevention Coalition  
City of Providence, Healthy Communities Office  
Cumberland Prevention Coalition  
East Providence Prevention Coalition  
Lincoln Prevention Coalition  
Narragansett Prevention Partnership  
North Smithfield Prevention Coalition  
Portsmouth Prevention Coalition  
South Kingstown Partnership for Prevention  
Warren Prevention Coalition  
West Warwick Prevention Coalition

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<sup>i</sup> “New Revenues, Public Health Benefits & Cost Savings from a \$1 Cigarette Tax Increase in Rhode Island”  
Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, March 10, 2014.  
Projections are based on research findings that each 10% increase in the retail price of cigarettes reduces youth smoking by 6.5%,  
adult prevalence by 2%, and total cigarette consumption by about 4% (adjusted down to account for tax evasion effects).  
Revenues still increase because the higher tax rate per pack will bring in more new revenue than is lost from the tax-related drop  
in total pack sales.

<sup>ii</sup> “New Revenues, Public Health Benefits & Cost Savings from a \$1 Cigarette Tax Increase in Rhode Island”  
Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, March 10, 2014 .  
NOTE: Revenues still increase because the higher tax rate per pack will bring in more new revenue than is lost from the tax-  
related drop in total pack sales.