

# Benefits of a Tobacco Excise Tax Increase

CHART has been a long-time proponent of increasing the tobacco taxes in Tennessee in an effort to reduce youth tobacco consumption.

We are asking the Tennessee General Assembly to pass an increase of the cigarette excise tax to improve the quality of life of all Tennesseans. By increasing the cigarette tax, it will create substantial new revenue for the state as well as achieving the public health benefit of keeping kids from beginning to smoke. According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, every 10 percent increase in the price of cigarettes will reduce overall cigarette consumption by 3-5 percent. It will also reduce youth smoking by 7 percent.

Currently in Tennessee, 26.3 percent of high school students smoke and kids purchase 17.3 million packs of cigarettes each year. In addition, an estimated 9,500 adults will die each year from tobacco use. By raising the cigarette excise tax by 40-cents, Tennessee's General Assembly can help to drop these high numbers.

## Benefits to our Youth

- 8.6% decrease in youth smoking
- 33,000 kids alive today who will not become smokers
- 10,500 kids alive today who will be saved from premature smoking-caused death
- 6,200 smoking-affected births avoided over the next five years

## Benefits to our Adults

- 25,000 current adult smokers will quit
- 5,500 current adults smokers will be saved from smoking-caused death

Raising the cigarette tax will greatly improve the fiscal health of Tennessee. Taking into account the declines in tobacco use that will occur, raising the tax by 40-cents will also realize between \$220-230 million in new revenue. Every state that has raised its tobacco tax has seen revenues increase and consumption decline.

The 2000 U.S. Surgeon General's Report, "Reducing Tobacco Use," found that increasing the price of tobacco products would decrease the prevalence of tobacco use, particularly among kids and young adults, and that tobacco tax increases would lead to "substantial long-term improvements in health." From its review of existing research, the report concluded that raising tobacco taxes is one of the most effective tobacco-use prevention and control strategies.

It is time to raise the tobacco tax in Tennessee. Doing so will provide Tennesseans with a healthier way of life, improve our children's futures and generate money for our state budget. The choice is obvious: raise the tobacco tax, and raise quality of life.

That's why CHART and its partner groups, including among many others, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association of Tennessee, the Tennessee Medical Association and the Tennessee Public Health Association, all support tobacco tax increases.



**The Campaign for a Healthy and Responsible Tennessee (CHART), is the statewide coalition of more than 50 partner organizations and thousands of individuals working to protect Tennesseans from the health effects of tobacco use through public education and mobilization. More information about CHART can be found at [www.tnchart.org](http://www.tnchart.org)**