

Jefferson County Board of Health
September 9, 2015

Adopted by the Jefferson County
Board of Health on

September 9, 2015
MS [Signature]

Health Officer

Resolution in Support of a Tobacco Tax Increase by the Alabama Legislature

The Jefferson County Board of a Health hereby reaffirms and updates the Board of Health Resolution of October 13, 2010 in support of a tobacco tax increase by the Alabama Legislature.

Whereas, tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death and disability nationwide; and

Whereas, 8,600 adults in Alabama die each year from their own smoking;¹ and

Whereas there are 108,000 kids now under 18 and alive in Alabama who will ultimately die prematurely from smoking ;² and

Whereas, 21.5% (804,400) of adults in Alabama smoke tobacco³, compared to the national rate of 17.8%;⁴ and

Whereas, 18.0% (45,700) of Alabama high school students smoke, compared to the national average of 15.7%;⁵ and

Whereas, each year in Alabama 5,200 youth under the age of 18 become new daily smokers;⁶ and

Whereas 23.1% of male high school students in Alabama use smokeless tobacco, compared to the national rate of 14.7% (The percent of female users is much lower);⁷ and

Whereas, the annual health care cost in Alabama directly caused by smoking is \$1.88 billion, and the portion of that cost covered by the state Medicaid program is \$288.2 million;⁸

Whereas, smoking-caused productivity losses in Alabama are equivalent to \$2.71 billion;⁹

Whereas, Alabama ranks 48th in the nation with one of the lowest rates of cigarette excise tax at 42.5 cents per pack;¹⁰ and

Whereas, raising the price of tobacco products can help prevent people from initiating tobacco use. For example, adolescent tobacco use drops by a median of 3.7 percent for every 10 percent price hike;¹¹ and

Whereas, studies have shown an estimated 3–5% reduction in overall cigarettes consumed as a result of a 10% increase in cigarette prices, and youth and young adults have proven to be even more responsive than adults to higher cigarette prices;¹² and

Whereas the U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that increased cigarette taxes would lead to substantial long-term improvements in health;¹³ and

Whereas, smoking declines produce enormous public and private sector savings that more than offset any state revenue reductions from fewer packs being sold;¹⁴ and

Whereas, numerous public opinion polls across the country have shown that a majority of voters is supportive of increases in state tobacco excise taxes;¹⁵ and

Whereas, the benefits of raising tobacco excise taxes in reducing death and disease can be further increased when combined with other evidence-based interventions of a comprehensive tobacco control program;¹⁶

Be it therefore resolved that the Jefferson County Board of Health urges the Legislature of the State of Alabama to raise smoking and smokeless tobacco taxes to a level at least high enough (an increase of over \$1.00) to offset tobacco-related costs to state government, including the Medicaid program, and to support expanded statewide and local evidence-based comprehensive tobacco control interventions including tobacco use cessation programs.

References:

- ¹CDC, "Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs" 2014.
- ²A Report of the Surgeon General, "The Health Consequences of Smoking: 50 Years of Progress" 2014.
- ³CDC, 2013 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) online data
- ⁴2013 National Health Interview Survey.
- ⁵CDC, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey.
- ⁶U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS), "Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health"
- ⁷CDC, 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey.
- ⁸Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, updated May 12, 2015 (See additional details about data sources at https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/sources/)
- ⁹Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, updated May 12, 2015 (See additional details about data sources at https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/sources/)
- ¹⁰Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (Available at <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0097.pdf>)
- ¹¹Community Preventive Services Task Force (Available at <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/tobacco/>)
- ¹²2012 Surgeon General's Report, "Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults"
- ¹³CDC: "Reducing tobacco use: a report of the Surgeon General" 2000. (Available at http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/2000/complete_report/index.htm)
- ¹⁴Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (Available at <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0303.pdf>)
- ¹⁵Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (Available at <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0309.pdf>)
- ¹⁶Institute of Medicine, "Ending the tobacco problem: a blueprint for the nation" 2007. (Available at http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=11795)