



Dear Lawmaker:

A decrease in cancer rates. Fewer heart attacks and strokes. Less lung disease. Together we can make this happen for Iowans by keeping kids from starting an addiction to tobacco and helping adults quit.

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States. Smoking increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. Lung cancer is the number one cancer killer in Iowa.ⁱ Almost 28 percent of cancer deaths in Iowa are linked to smoking.ⁱⁱ Each year, tobacco claims the lives of 5,100 Iowans and costs the state \$1.28 billion in health care expenditures.ⁱⁱ

Unfortunately, Iowa is on the wrong path when it comes to tobacco use. Currently, 16.7 percent of Iowa adults smoke compared to the national average of 15.5 percent.^{ii, iii} Additionally, 18 percent of Iowa high school students smoke which is significantly higher than the national average of 8 percent.ⁱⁱ Every year, 1,300 kids under 18 become new daily smokers in Iowa.ⁱⁱ

We must reverse this trend. We know what works in tobacco use prevention and cessation—the combination of regular and significant tobacco tax increases, investments in tobacco prevention and cessation programs that use proven best practices, and comprehensive smoke-free laws that cover all workplaces.

We have the opportunity in the next state budget to turn these numbers around. We are asking you to:

- **Increase the cigarette tax by \$1.50 per pack.** A \$1.50 increase in the cigarette tax will reduce Iowa's youth smoking rate by 16.4 percent, prevent 15,900 kids under 18 from becoming adult smokers, help 20,400 current adult smokers quit, prevent 10,100 smoking caused deaths and save the state over \$754 million in long-term health care costs. The increase will also result in an estimated over **\$101 million in new annual revenue.**

- **Invest in tobacco use prevention and cessation programs.** Of the \$101 million in new revenue, invest an additional \$8.78 million in tobacco use prevention and cessation programs. This needed additional funding would bring the tobacco control budget to \$12.8 million. Tobacco prevention programs play a crucial role in the prevention of many chronic conditions including cancer. Comprehensive tobacco prevention and cessation programs prevent kids from starting to smoke and help adult smokers quit. This investment will allow the state to revive its successful comprehensive program. The additional revenue should be dedicated to other health programs to help improve the health and wellness of all Iowans.

By increasing the state cigarette tax by \$1.50 per pack and increasing funding to \$12.8 million for the tobacco prevention and cessation program, we can once again have an effective state strategy to keep kids tobacco-free and help adult tobacco users beat their addiction.

As leaders in our communities we are doing everything we can to educate young people about the dangers of tobacco use and help those currently addicted to tobacco to quit. We are doing our part and now need you to do yours. It's time to create a healthier Iowa by reducing tobacco use and smoking. We ask you to fully support these proven strategies for Iowa.

Sincerely,

Above + Beyond Cancer

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American Heart Association, Midwest Affiliate

American Lung Association in Iowa

Blank Children's Hospital

Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa

Broadlawns Medical Center

CAFE IOWA CAN

Child and Family Policy Center

Genesis Cancer Care Institute

Hall-Perrine Cancer Center/Mercy Medical Center Cedar Rapids

HCI-VNS

Helen G. Nassif Community Cancer Center

Iowa Academy of Family Physicians

Iowa Alliance of YMCAs

Iowa Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

Iowa Association of Rural Health Clinics

Iowa Cancer Consortium

Iowa Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Iowa Medical Society

Iowa Nurse Practitioners Society

Iowa Osteopathic Medical Association

Iowa Pharmacy Association

Iowa Primary Care Association

Iowa Public Health Association

Iowa School Counselor Association

June E. Nysten Cancer Center

March of Dimes – Iowa Chapter

Mercy Cancer Center – Des Moines

Mercy Health Network

Methodist Jennie Edmundson

NAMI Iowa

Susan G. Komen Greater Iowa
United Way of Central Iowa
UnityPoint Health

ⁱ American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2017. <http://www.cancer.org/research/cancerfactsstatistics/cancerfactsfigures2017/index>

ⁱⁱ Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Iowa. Updated July 26, 2017. http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/iowa

ⁱⁱⁱ Ahmed Jamal, MBBS; Elyse Phillips, MPH; Andrea S. Gentzke, PhD et al., Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults — United States, 2016. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2018;67:[53-59] https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6702a1.htm?s_cid=mm6702a1_w