

A HEALTHIER AMERICA: 10 TOP PRIORITIES FOR PREVENTION

Preventing Tobacco Use and Exposure

WHY IS TOBACCO USE A THREAT TO OUR NATION'S HEALTH?

A Lingering Problem:

- Worldwide, tobacco use causes nearly 5 million deaths per year.²
- Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S. Every year, smoking and secondhand smoke kill about 440,000 people in the U.S. by causing lung cancer, emphysema, heart disease and other illnesses.³
- Exposure to second-hand smoke is responsible for approximately 38,000 of these deaths each year.⁴
- Nearly 21 percent of U.S. adults still smoke, as do 23 percent of U.S. high school students.⁵ While significant reductions were achieved in the late 1990's and early 2000's, progress has stalled in recent years.

Health Consequences:

- Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body; causing many diseases and reducing the health of smokers in general.⁶
- Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the U.S.; more than 80 percent of lung cancer deaths and about 20 percent of all cancer deaths are caused by tobacco.⁷
- Smoking causes cancers of the bladder, oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, cervix, kidney, lung, pancreas, and stomach, and causes acute myeloid leukemia.⁸
- Smoking causes coronary heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States.⁹ Smoking triples the risk of dying from heart disease among middle-aged men and women.¹⁰
- Cigarette smoking causes 80-90 percent of deaths from chronic obstructive lung disease.¹¹

High Costs:

- Tobacco use costs the U.S. almost \$100 billion annually in health care bills, imposing a hidden tax on every individual, family

and business. Productivity losses from premature death total another \$97 billion.¹²

- People exposed to secondhand smoke run up an average \$10 billion annually in health care costs.¹³

Alarming Trends:

- Every day in America, 4,000 kids try their first cigarette. Another 1,000 kids become daily smokers and one-third of them will die prematurely as a result.¹⁴
- Progress in reducing smoking has stalled among both youth and adults. In 2006, 20.8 percent of adults smoked cigarettes, about the same as the 20.9 percent in 2004 and 2005. Among high school students, smoking increased from 21.9 percent in 2003 to 23 percent in 2005. This increase followed a 40 percent decline in high school smoking between 1997, when rates peaked at 36.4 percent, and 2003.¹⁵
- Tobacco company marketing expenditures have skyrocketed since the 1998 state tobacco settlement. From 1998 to 2005, tobacco marketing expenditures nearly doubled from \$6.9 billion to \$13.4 billion, according to the Federal Trade Commission's most recent report on tobacco marketing.¹⁶
- Most states still fail to fund tobacco prevention programs at levels recommended by the CDC. In FY 2008, states will spend less than 3 percent of the \$24.9 billion available to them from tobacco excise taxes and the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) with the tobacco companies on tobacco prevention and cessation programs. Investing only 15 percent of these funds would allow every state tobacco control program to be funded at the level recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).¹⁷

"IT IS TROUBLING NEWS FOR AMERICA'S HEALTH THAT PROGRESS HAS STALLED IN REDUCING TOBACCO USE, THE NATION'S NUMBER ONE PREVENTABLE CAUSE OF DEATH. IT IS ALSO INEXCUSABLE THAT ELECTED LEADERS HAVE NOT DONE MORE GIVEN THE OVERWHELMING SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE OF WHAT WORKS TO REDUCE TOBACCO USE AMONG BOTH CHILDREN AND ADULTS."¹

-- WILLIAM V. CORR,
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**PREVENTING EPIDEMICS.
PROTECTING PEOPLE.**

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO STAMP OUT SMOKING?

- **Regulate Tobacco Products.** Congress should enact long-standing legislation to grant the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulatory authority over tobacco products. FDA should have the authority to crack down on tobacco marketing and sales to children, stop tobacco companies from misleading consumers and require changes in tobacco products to make them less harmful and less addictive. Currently, FDA regulates food, drugs, cosmetics, and even dog food but does not regulate the products that kill more than 400,000 Americans every year.
- **Expand Proven Tobacco Control Measures.** State and local leaders should implement proven measures to reduce tobacco use and protect everyone from the harms of second-

hand smoke. These include tobacco taxes, comprehensive laws to make all workplaces and public places smoke-free, full funding of tobacco prevention and cessation programs, and access to proven smoking cessation methods (e.g., counseling, FDA approved medications) for all tobacco users.

- **Reduce Global Tobacco Use and Exposure.** Nations around the world should ratify and implement the new international tobacco control treaty, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, in order to reduce tobacco use and save lives.
- **Fund Tobacco Prevention Initiatives.** Congress and the President should increase the amount the CDC receives in federal government funding for tobacco prevention.

ENDNOTES

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- 10 Ibid.
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