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## **Governor Doyle Launches Statewide Anti-Smoking Initiative**

### ***Calls for Statewide Smoking Ban, Increasing Cost of Cigarettes, and Expanding Smoking Cessation Programs***

MADISON – In an effort to prevent Wisconsin kids from starting to smoke and to help motivate adults to quit smoking, Governor Jim Doyle today launched a comprehensive statewide anti-smoking initiative that will ban smoking, increase the cost of cigarettes, and expand smoking cessation programs to improve public health for people in Wisconsin.

“Throughout my career in public life, I’ve fought to protect our kids and our citizens from the scourge of tobacco,” Governor Doyle said. “Despite our progress over the last few years, too many of our kids are still lighting up, too many lives are being cut short, and the cost of treating tobacco related illnesses in Wisconsin alone has swelled into the billions. Today we are launching a statewide initiative that employs proven strategies to reduce smoking and save lives.”

According to the American Cancer Society, 5,000 kids try their first cigarette every day and 2,000 of them become regular smokers. One-third will eventually die from their addiction.

The U.S. Surgeon General, the American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association, and the American Heart Association report that exposure to secondhand smoke increases the risk of heart disease, lung cancer, and respiratory disease – even in non-smokers.

To address public health and the hazards of second-hand smoke, Governor Doyle will call on the Legislature to pass a statewide smoking ban that is fair and equitable – banning smoking in all public buildings, workplaces, restaurants, and taverns. This ban would be in legislation separate from the budget.

The Governor also proposed an increase in the cigarette tax by \$1.25 and said he would dedicate the funds to paying the cost of tobacco-related illness. A study from the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids projects that because of this increase over 42,000 Wisconsin adults will quit smoking; over 84,000 kids in Wisconsin will never start; nearly 12,000 smoking-affected births will be avoided; and overall will result in a 20 percent reduction in the number of kids who smoke.

Over five years ago, Wisconsin increased the cigarette tax to \$0.77 per pack. Since then, nearly 20,000 Wisconsin smokers quit.

This increase will be coupled with a major and long-overdue campaign to help people quit smoking and live healthier lives.

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In 1999, then-Attorney General Doyle negotiated a settlement with the tobacco companies that would have delivered \$180 million annually to pay for anti-smoking efforts. Instead, it was used to fill a one-time budget hole.

The Governor's new anti-smoking initiative will include a plan to partially restore this funding and ensure the money gets used the way it was originally intended. Over the next few weeks, the state will refinance the tobacco settlement bonds, securing a lump sum of \$600 million that will be permanently locked away. Each year \$30 million of the interest from this account will be used to pay for a major expansion in anti-smoking efforts.

These new efforts will make Wisconsin a national leader in efforts to tackle youth smoking, joining three other states that fund smoking prevention and cessation programs at a level recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Maine – another state that has made this investment in smoking cessation programs – has seen a sharp decline in youth smoking rates among both high school and middle school students.

The funding generated by both the refinancing of tobacco bonds and the increase in the cigarette tax will be placed into the Healthy Wisconsin Trust Fund, a new segregated account that will be used exclusively to pay for new smoking cessation programs and the rising cost of smoking-related illnesses.

A recent analysis showed that Wisconsin taxpayers are forced to pay nearly \$500 million every year in Medicaid costs directly related to smoking, including over \$13 million per year to fight children's asthma and \$10 million annually to deal with poor birth outcomes caused by smoke exposure during pregnancy.

Since 2000, the smoking rate among Wisconsin high school students has decreased by 40 percent. And recently, Governor Doyle announced that Wisconsin had reduced the illegal sales of tobacco products to minors to the lowest point in state history.

For more information about the impact of smoking, visit the American Cancer Society's website at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).