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**NORTH DAKOTA  
CENTER FOR NURSING**  
A unified voice for nursing excellence.

## Tobacco Tax Policy Brief

September, 2016

The North Dakota Center for Nursing is a non-profit, 501c3 organization that was developed to represent over 18,000 nurses and over 40 nursing organizations across North Dakota. The mission of the North Dakota Center for Nursing is through collaboration to guide ongoing development of a well-prepared and diverse nursing workforce to meet healthcare needs in North Dakota through research, education, recruitment and retention, advocacy and public policy. This policy brief has been approved by our Board of Directors and is an official policy of the North Dakota Center for Nursing.

**Tobacco tax increases have been proven to be one of the most effective policies to prevent kids from using tobacco. The proposed increase is estimated to decrease youth initiation rates by 20% and 5,800 ND youth under the age of 18 from ever starting.** Reductions in tobacco use from the increase taxes are projected to save the State of North Dakota \$246.57 million in health care costs. Currently, ND's cigarette tax is 44 cents per pack compared to \$3.00 in Minnesota, \$1.53 in South Dakota and \$1.70 in Montana (<http://raiseitforhealthnd.com/>)

Tobacco use is a public health problem that impacts all North Dakotans. In ND, 500 kids become new daily smokers each year and purchase 900,000 packs of cigarettes.

In North Dakota, 12% of high school students, 19% of adults' and 20% of Veterans smoke. Nearly 9 out of 10 cigarette smokers first tried smoking by age 18, and 99% first tried smoking by age 26 ([www.tobaccofreekids.org](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org), 2015 BRFSS).

***The nursing community of North Dakota supports efforts to reduce tobacco use. The Raise It for Health Coalition has forwarded a ballot measure for the November 8, 2016 state ballot. The ballot measure included 22,840 signatures well over the required 13,452 required signature showing strong community support.***

***The measure will increase the cigarette tax to \$2.20 per pack and increase the tax on other tobacco products to 56% of the wholesale price and eliminates special tax treatments of some products.***

***Money raised from the increased taxes will support vital programs during a time of state-budget cuts:***

- ***Community Health Trust Fund which will include funds dedicated to a Behavioral Health Comprehensive Plan, local public health unit services and chronic disease detection, prevention, treatment and control.***
- ***Veterans Tobacco Tax Trust Fund to support veterans needs throughout North Dakota.***