

## National Report: New Jersey Tied for Last in Protecting Kids from Tobacco

News Provided by: Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids  
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WASHINGTON, Dec. 14, 2016 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- New Jersey is tied for last nationwide in funding programs to prevent kids from smoking and help smokers quit, according to a report released today by a coalition of public health organizations. New Jersey is one of two states, along with Connecticut, that have budgeted zero state funds this year for tobacco prevention and cessation programs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends New Jersey spend \$103.3 million on tobacco prevention programs.

The report challenges states to do more to fight tobacco use – the nation's No. 1 cause of preventable death – and help make the next generation tobacco-free. In New Jersey, 8.2 percent of high school students still smoke, and 3,900 kids become regular smokers each year. Tobacco use claims 11,800 New Jersey lives and costs the state over \$4 billion in health care bills annually.

Other key findings in the report include:

- New Jersey will collect \$944.5 million in revenue this year from the 1998 state tobacco settlement and tobacco taxes, but will spend none of it on tobacco prevention programs. This year marks the fifth in a row that the state has not budgeted any funds for tobacco prevention and cessation programs.
- Tobacco companies spend over \$175 million each year to market their deadly and addictive products in New Jersey. Nationwide, tobacco companies spend \$9.1 billion a year on marketing – more than \$1 million every hour.

Today's report, titled "Broken Promises to Our Children: A State-by-State Look at the 1998 State Tobacco Settlement 18 Years Later," was released by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Lung Association, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights and Truth Initiative.

The report spotlights the need for stronger tobacco prevention efforts in New Jersey. In addition to increasing funding for tobacco prevention and cessation programs, health advocates in New Jersey are urging lawmakers to increase the minimum sale age for tobacco products to 21. Nearly all adult smokers start smoking before they turn 21, so this legislation will prevent young people from ever starting to smoke. The legislature passed the measure last session, but Gov. Chris Christie vetoed the bill.

"New Jersey is putting children's health at risk and costing taxpayers money by refusing to fund tobacco prevention programs that save lives and health care dollars," said Matthew L. Myers, President of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. "Because of the tremendous progress our

country has made in reducing smoking, it is within our reach to win the fight against tobacco and make the next generation tobacco-free. New Jersey should be doing everything it can to protect kids from tobacco, including raising the tobacco age to 21."

Nationwide, the U.S. has cut smoking rates to record lows – 15.1 percent among adults and 10.8 percent among high school students in 2015. If recent progress in reducing adult smoking continues, the U.S. could eliminate smoking by around 2035, according to a [recent analysis](#) in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

By funding tobacco prevention and cessation programs at the CDC's recommended levels, the states can help achieve this goal. But today's report finds most states are falling far short:

- The states will collect \$26.6 billion this year from the tobacco settlement and tobacco taxes, but will spend *less than 2 percent* of it (\$491.6 million) on tobacco prevention programs.
- The \$491.6 million that the states have budgeted for tobacco prevention is a small fraction of the \$3.3 billion the CDC recommends. Only two states – North Dakota and Alaska – fund tobacco prevention programs at CDC-recommended levels.
- States with well-funded, sustained tobacco prevention programs have seen remarkable progress. Florida, with one of the longest-running programs, reduced its high school smoking rate to 5.2 percent this year, one of the lowest rates ever reported by any state. One study found that during the first 10 years of its tobacco prevention program, the state of Washington saved more than \$5 in health care costs for every \$1 spent on the program.

Each year in the U.S., tobacco use kills more than 480,000 people and costs the nation at least \$170 billion in health care expenses.

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