

# Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition



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## New Study: Federal Tobacco Tax Increase Effective in Reducing Youth Smoking

"A well-designed, across-the-board tobacco tax policy can deliver both economic and health benefits, and as implications for policymakers at all levels when considering effective tobacco control policies to reduce tobacco use among youth," according to a new study released by researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

**The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids writes:** The large federal tobacco tax increase implemented on April 1, 2009, reduced the number of youth smokers by at least 220,000 and the number of youth smokeless tobacco users by at least 135,000 in the first two months alone. The study "showed that a large national tax increase can influence youth tobacco use prevalence within a very short time period," the researchers wrote. "Adolescents not only respond to tax policy changes, but the speed of their response is fast. The prevalence of smoking and

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## Keeping Your Pets Nicotine and Smoke Free—Protecting Your Animals

In February, Nebraska's Human Society Director of Humane Education Kerry Ecklebe, presented to the MOTAC membership on the importance of keeping pets free from secondhand smoke and ensuring you pets are not poisoned by nicotine.

Important information to know about the dangers of second-hand smoke and its effect on birds, cats and dogs living in the home of a smoker:

- Cats exposed to second-hand smoke in the home have a higher rate of oral cancer. When cats groom themselves they eat the poisons from second-hand smoke that settles on their fur.
- Dogs that inhale second-hand smoke are three times more likely to develop nasal cancer than dogs living in smoke free homes.

- Birds that sit on smokers hand can experience contact dermatitis from the nicotine that remains on the smokers hands.

Cats and dogs tend to wander outside. Pay careful attention to where your pet likes to play outside to ensure it is free of cigarettes, cigarette butts and other tobacco products. If you think your pet has swallowed tobacco or nicotine, call your veterinarian.



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use of smokeless tobacco... dropped immediately following the tax increase in this study, and statistically significant and meaningful changes could be measured and detected within 30 days of the tax increase...."

The study was published online by the National Bureau of Economic Research and can be found at:

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w18026>.

### **Impact of a Tobacco Tax Increase In Nebraska**

State after state has found decreases in tobacco use and increases in revenue when they raise tobacco taxes.

What impact would an increase in the tobacco tax have in Nebraska?

- According to the Campaign For Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK), a national youth smoking prevention organization in Washington D.C., if Nebraska raised the price of a pack of cigarettes by \$1.35, it will result in 19,500 kids in Nebraska kept from becoming addicted adult smokers and 3,850 smoking-affected births avoided over the next five years.
- Smoking-caused costs in Nebraska are at \$9.64 per pack, according to CTFK. Nebraska can expect to receive \$72.9 million in new annual revenue from increasing the cigarette tax rate by \$1.35 per pack, according to the CTFK.
- Cigarette tax increases combined with comprehensive tobacco prevention programs work to reduce tobacco use.

- 73 percent of Nebraska voters surveyed support raising the tobacco tax by \$1.35 per pack to help fix the state's finances and fund healthcare programs, including programs to reduce tobacco use among kids. Support in the survey, which was conducted in December 2010, cuts across party lines, with 74 percent of Republicans, 72 percent of Democrats and 75 percent of independent voters supporting the tobacco tax increase.
- Nebraska lags behind other states on this issue. Thirty-seven other states have cigarette taxes that are higher than Nebraska's. Nebraska cigarette tax per pack is 64 cents, compared to the overall state average of \$1.49 per pack.

From Philip Morris: Of all the concerns, there is one - taxation - that alarms us the most. While marketing restrictions and public and passive smoking [restrictions] do depress volume, in our experience taxation depresses it much more severely. Our concern for taxation is, therefore, central to our thinking.



*Special thanks to Cindy Jeffry of Health Education, Inc. for contributing to this article.*

### **Local Youth Attend Advocacy and Empowerment Training**



Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare, in collaboration with No Limits Nebraska and other prevention partners, hosted a Youth Advocacy and Empowerment Training for students grades 9 through 12 on May 31, 2012 at the Downtown DoubleTree Hotel in Omaha. Attendees learned their role in advocating for change in their community and had a chance to speak with policy makers. In addition, they participated in a community advocacy activity by implementing a smoke-free parks survey with the public by Gene Leahy Mall. Special thanks to Nebraska Teen Princess for participating in the event.



## Three Businesses Recognized for Smoke-Free Policies



Pat and Sharron Paterson own seven, smoke-free buildings which include over 65 quality apartments and duplexes in the midtown area. For over 15 years, they have proudly offered smoke-free housing. "We are proud to be among the first companies in Omaha to offer completely non-smoking living spaces. While some said the idea would never be popular, we have found that, for many of our residents, it was one of the top reasons they chose us." *Pictured above from left: Marcy Thompson, Mary Crosby, Toni Hernandez, Sharon Paterson, Carla Evans and Rita Rodriguez. Photo taken by Hanneka Brown.*



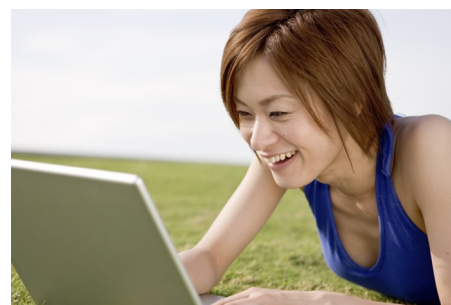
The Residences at Old MarketPlace are located in the heart of downtown Omaha. The building has 22 units, and its smoke-free policy includes patios and balconies. *Pictured above from left: Mary Crosby, Craig Stedry, and Chrissy Stewart. Photo taken by Hanneka Brown.*



In May, DoubleTree by Hilton Downtown was recognized for their 100% smoke-free policy. *Pictured above are Dana Ramos and Stephen Meier both with DoubleTree by Hilton.*

## World No Tobacco Day UNMC hosts social media campaign

UNMC'S School of Public Health and the Center for Reducing Health Disparities hosted an online educational social media campaign on World No



Tobacco Day, May 31, 2012. As part of this project, the Center reached more than 600 people through 5 Blog posts with 22 comments, 94 Facebook posts with 10 new Fans to the Center page and 77 Tweets.

Tobacco use is one of the leading preventable causes of death. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the global tobacco epidemic kills nearly 6 million people each year, of which more than 600,000 are people exposed to second-hand smoke. Unless we act, it will kill up to 8 million people by 2030, of which more than 80% will live in low- and middle-income countries. Every year, World No Tobacco Day (May 31), is geared to be a 24-hour abstinence from tobacco and all its products is encouraged throughout the world. WNTD also hopes to draw attention to widespread tobacco use, the health hazards that stem from it, and this year the tobacco industry's interference.

We hope that this is just the beginning and that everyone will continue to be involved in the tobacco control movement!



MOTAC member Creighton Cardiac Center participated in the Power to End Stroke 2012 on June 2, 2012. Over 300 individuals walked including many from exercise programs at the Benson Health Community Center. In it's third year, the walk works to raise awareness about the signs of stroke and stroke prevention including living a tobacco-free lifestyle.



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**Fighting Tobacco Through  
Community Action!**

**Partners/Members:**

Alegent Health System  
American Cancer Society  
American Lung Association  
Creighton Cardiac Center  
Douglas County Health  
Department  
Douglas County Housing  
Girl Scouts Spirit Nebraska  
Group to Alleviate Smoking  
Pollution of Nebraska  
(GASP-NE)  
Iowa Western Community  
College  
LiveWise Coalition  
No Limits  
Omaha Police Department  
Omaha Public Schools  
Pfizer  
Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare  
Setting the Captives Free  
Tobacco Free Cass County  
(TFCC)  
Tobacco Free Nebraska  
Tobacco Free Sarpy (TFS)  
University of Nebraska Medical  
Center - College of Nursing  
University of Nebraska Medical  
Center - Center for  
Reducing Health Disparities  
University of Nebraska Medical  
Center -Evaluation  
...and many individuals.

The **Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition (MOTAC)** is a dynamic coalition comprised of over 50 health related individuals, organizations, and educational groups. MOTAC was formed in 1992 in order to strengthen tobacco control and prevention efforts in the metro Omaha area. Since its inception, MOTAC has taken the lead within Douglas County to address tobacco related issues through public education and community action.

**Mission:** To prevent and reduce tobacco use and the accompanying health and economic consequences in the Omaha area via prevention through public policy and education.

**Goals:** Reduce tobacco use, reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, and increase capacity from diverse groups.

This Newsletter is supported by Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare through funding provided by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services/Tobacco Free Nebraska Program as a result of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement.

**MOTAC Officers: Toni Hernadez, President  
Open, Treasurer**

**Open, Vice President  
Rita Rodriguez, Secretary**

**Join us!** MOTAC meets the first Tuesday of each month, except for July, at 10:00 am at the American Cancer Society, 9850 Nicholas Street in Omaha.