

# Contact Information

---



For more information on the Investing in Tobacco-Free Youth Coalition or House Bill 572, please contact:

Shelly Kiser  
Director of Advocacy  
American Lung Association of Ohio  
1950 Arlingate Lane; Columbus, OH 43228  
Office: 614-279-1700 or 800-232-5864  
Cell: 740-739-0187  
[skiser@ohiolung.org](mailto:skiser@ohiolung.org)

- or -

Cresha Auck Foley  
Ohio Advocacy Director, Great Rivers Affiliate  
American Heart Association  
5455 North High Street; Columbus, OH 43214  
Office: 614-396-4357  
Cell: 614-296-1665  
[cresha.auck@heart.org](mailto:cresha.auck@heart.org)

# Investing in Tobacco-Free Youth

## Protect Children, Save Lives, Reduce Healthcare Costs

---



### The Problem

- **Ohio youth are using cigars and smokeless tobacco.** “Other tobacco products” (OTP), which includes non-cigarette forms of tobacco like cigars, smokeless tobacco, and hookah tobacco, are a growing problem in Ohio. While high school students have decreased their use of cigarettes, they have not decreased their use of smokeless tobacco or cigars. These products come in candy flavors and kid-friendly packaging and are often displayed in convenience stores near candy and snacks.
- **Young African Americans, Appalachian Ohioans, and young males are especially at risk.** Little cigar use is especially high among young, African-American males, and smokeless use is a special problem for males in Appalachian Ohio. Among males 18 to 24, over 37% use some form of tobacco product other than cigarettes.
- **The tobacco industry spends \$2 million in Ohio every day.** The tobacco industry is serious about funding in Ohio. It spends over \$2 million a day promoting smoking and chewing tobacco to Ohioans, even in places kids go, like convenience stores. Columbus is the test market for a new kind of smokeless tobacco called Snus marketed by RJ Reynolds, and U.S. Smokeless Tobacco sends mailers to smokers in Ohio encouraging them to use smokeless tobacco when in smoke-free public places.
- **Youth tobacco prevention programs have been decimated.** Because of severe funding decreases, Ohio is unable to adequately help smokers quit and keep kids from starting. The youth tobacco prevention programs in schools, anti-tobacco programs in communities around Ohio, and the tobacco Quitline and other stop smoking help have been decimated. The decrease in funding will lead to increased smoking rates, more children using tobacco, more lives lost, and increased healthcare costs.
- **Tobacco hurts Ohio’s economy and drives up insurance and Medicaid costs.** Smoking costs Ohio over \$7 billion every year. Ohioans pay over \$4 billion in healthcare costs annually; \$1.4 billion of that amount is the portion covered by the state Medicaid program. The average Ohio household pays \$642 in state and federal taxes related to smoking-caused government expenditures annually.

### The Solution

- **Correct the other tobacco tax inequity.** When legislators increased the cigarette tax in 2003 and 2005, they failed to also raise the “other tobacco products” (OTP) tax which covers non-cigarette forms of tobacco. Legislators should correct this error so that the OTP tax equals 55% of wholesale price, equivalent to the current cigarette tax. (The current OTP tax rate is 17%.) The legislature should then link the OTP tax to the cigarette tax, so that no corrections will be needed in the future.
- **The correction would dramatically reduce youth tobacco use.** The correction would decrease the overall consumption of other tobacco products by over 13%, and 25% fewer youth would use the products, a dramatic decline.
- **Dedicate the income to tobacco prevention and community programs and reduce tobacco use in Ohio.** The income resulting from this correction, approximately \$50 million a year, should be dedicated to the Ohio Department of Health to continue the high quality, science-based tobacco prevention and cessation programs that have in the past been funded in communities around the state and that are inline with best practices as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Although the amount generated by the tax correction equals less than the tobacco industry spends in one month in Ohio, the funding helps Ohio reach toward the goal of funding programs at the level recommended by the CDC.
- **Legislators can save lives and save money.** For every thousand kids kept from smoking by tobacco prevention programs, future healthcare costs decline by roughly \$16 million. For every thousand adults prompted to quit, future health costs drop by roughly \$8.5 million.

### Investing in Tobacco-Free Youth Coalition

Protect Children, Save Lives, Reduce Healthcare Costs

1950 Arlingate Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43228, 614-279-1700

# Investing in Tobacco-Free Youth Frequently-Asked Questions

---



## **Doesn't a tax correction unfairly target tobacco users and make them shoulder the burden for statewide budget problems?**

The total income that the state gets from tobacco taxes is far less than conservative estimates of what tobacco use costs the state. However, to make the tax increase exceedingly fair to tobacco users, better for public health, and more popular among voters, the state must allocate the revenue generated from the correction to fund programs that help Ohioans who use tobacco quit and prevent Ohio kids from starting.

## **Would the tobacco tax correction hurt poor Ohioans?**

Though tobacco companies like to argue this, what really hurts low-income communities disproportionately is smoking-caused disease, disability, death, and the associated costs. Correcting the tax will lead more low-income tobacco users to quit or cutback, reducing the harms and costs to them and their families.

Tax increases help lower-income communities more because lower-income tobacco users are more likely to quit because of tax increases than higher-income tobacco users. Lower-income tobacco users not only save the money they previously paid for tobacco, but they get a tax cut because they no longer pay the taxes they were paying for tobacco. For an average tobacco user, typical savings can be more than \$1,000 per year that can be used for more productive expenditures like food, housing, or savings.

By dedicating the correction to tobacco prevention and cessation, the money could be used for programs and services that help low income smokers quit.

In addition, numerous polls show that there is strong support for tobacco tax increases among lower-income communities, because nobody wants cheap tobacco in their neighborhood.

## **Will the tax correction provide a reliable source of revenue for tobacco prevention in the future?**

After the correction, tax revenues will sharply increase and then slowly decline because of tobacco use rate declines, but those declines will be gradual and completely predictable. State tobacco tax revenues are more predictable and stable than state income tax or corporate tax revenues which can decline sharply because of unexpected economic recessions. Along with the small, gradual declines in tax revenue caused by tobacco use declines, the state will see significant reductions in tobacco use-caused costs. Also, if the money is dedicated to tobacco cessation, as the use declines, the need for cessation services will decline also. Over time these savings will more than make up for any tax revenue reductions.

## **Doesn't Ohio have more pressing issues than tobacco?**

Smoking is the number one preventable cause of death in the state of Ohio, killing over 18,000 Ohioans every year. Smokeless tobacco adds to the death toll.

Tobacco use also worsens some of Ohio's most pressing problems. Tobacco costs the economy almost \$8 billion a year. It hurts employers who are trying to provide healthcare to their employees by driving up healthcare costs. Tobacco use cuts the productivity of their employees and increases their chances of becoming disabled.

In Ohio, annual healthcare costs due to smoking are over \$4 billion dollars, \$1.4 of that being for Medicaid. A portion of Medicaid cost—\$575 million—comes directly from the state budget. Without the expense necessary to cover tobacco-related illnesses, the state program could provide healthcare to more Ohioans who currently go without coverage.

No circumstances should deter us from working toward goals that will save lives and advance toward the goals of reducing healthcare costs and improve the financial health of our state.

### **Aren't you asking for an excessive amount of money?**

To give some perspective to the problem, consider that tobacco costs the Ohio economy almost \$8 billion a year. Tobacco costs the state Medicaid program \$1.4 billion a year. The tobacco industry spends \$724 million a year promoting smoking and chewing tobacco to Ohioans.

The CDC recommends that Ohio spends \$145 million a year on tobacco prevention and cessation programs. We're asking the legislature to dedicate \$50 million. A \$7 billion problem; a \$50 million solution.

### **Didn't SmokeFreeOhio solve the tobacco problem?**

While smoke-free public places laws are primarily about protecting everyone's right to breathe clean indoor air, they also make smokers more likely to quit smoking and youth less likely to start. SmokeFreeOhio will likely help reduce tobacco use in Ohio, but it hasn't solved the problem. Over 22% of Ohio adults smoke, and 20.5% of high school students smoke. More than 20,000 Ohio kids become new daily smokers every year.

### **Will the tax correction increase smuggling, black markets, and tax avoidance?**

Research shows that smuggling and tax avoidance are relatively minor problems, especially compared to the additional new revenues, public health benefits, and smoking-caused cost reductions from state tobacco tax increases. Economic research studies show that state smuggling and tax avoidance revenue losses represent a very small percentage of total sales.

Most users buy a pack or a can at a time. Even those tobacco users that initially try to avoid tax increases soon use up their stockpile purchased right before the increase or tire of driving across the state border and return to the convenience of full-tax purchases in their own state.

### **Could the tax correction hurt the state's economy by reducing retailer revenues, tobacco sales and related employment?**

Money spent on tobacco will not disappear when tobacco sales decline; it will simply be spent on other products or will be used for savings or investments. Economic studies have shown that tax increases do not impact gross retailer revenues and can actually increase employment. Also, tax increases reduce direct public and private smoking-caused costs, further strengthening and improving the state's economy.

*Some information taken from: Responses to Cigarette Company Arguments Against State Tobacco Tax Increases, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids*

# Investing in Tobacco-Free Youth

## Protect Children, Save Lives, Reduce Healthcare Costs

---



### Steering Committee

American Cancer Society  
American Lung Association  
American Heart Association  
Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio  
Association of Ohio Health Commissioners  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids  
Children's Defense Fund  
Cleveland Clinic  
OhioHealth  
Ohio State Medical Association  
Tobacco Public Policy Center  
Universal Healthcare Action Network (UHCAN) Ohio

### Endorsers

Akron Community Health Resources  
Allen County Health Partners  
Amethyst, Inc.  
Asian Services in Action  
Athens County Tobacco Prevention Coalition  
Barberton Health District  
Bucyrus Community Hospital  
Cleveland Department of Public Health  
Columbus Urban League  
Community Action for Capable Youth, Mansfield  
Cuyahoga County Board of Health  
Fairfield County Combined General Health District  
Family Guidance Center, Ironton  
Gallia County Tobacco Use Prevention Coalition  
Greater Cleveland Health Education and Service Council, Inc.  
Greene County Combined Health District  
Hardin County Tobacco Prevention Coalition  
Healthy Worthington Coalition  
Holmes County Health District  
Holzer Consolidated Health Systems, Gallipolis  
Hospital Council of Northwest Ohio  
Jackson County Tobacco Use Prevention Coalition  
Lawrence County QUIT Coalition  
Licking County Health Department  
Lorain City Health Department  
Lucas County Tobacco Prevention Coalition

Meigs Cooperative Parish U.M.C. (Faith Community Nursing)  
Meigs County Tobacco Use Prevention Coalition  
Mercy Hospital of Willard  
Morgan Behavioral Health Choices, McConnellsville  
Muskingum Valley Tobacco-Free Coalition  
Nationwide  
Northwest Ohio Strategic Alliance for Tobacco Control  
Ohio Association of School Nurses  
Ohio Osteopathic Association  
Orrville YMCA  
Perry County Health Department  
Perry Wellness Coalition, New Lexington  
Private Duty Services, Inc., VanWert  
Rambo Memorial Health Center, Zanesville  
St. Luke's Hospital, Maumee  
Tobacco-Free Delaware County Coalition  
Your Human Resource Center, Wooster  
Your Quest Personal Health Solutions, Worthington

**Investing in Tobacco-Free Youth Coalition**

Protect Children, Save Lives, Reduce Healthcare Costs  
1950 Arlingate Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43228, 614-279-1700

## **Potential Questions to Ask During ITFY Interview**

- What is the purpose of the Investing in Tobacco-Free Youth Coalition?
- How did this coalition come about?
- What are “other tobacco products”?
- What are the benefits of equalizing the other tobacco products tax and the cigarette tax?
- Why is it important to provide funding for tobacco control programs?
- How will this help fix Ohio’s economy and the budget crisis?
- Are other tobacco products really a threat?
- Why are we seeing an increase in the use of non-cigarette forms of tobacco while the rate of cigarette usage is declining?
- What new products is the tobacco industry developing?
- Why has hookah or waterpipe smoking become popular with high school and college age young people and how dangerous is it?
- What are the dangers associated with the new spitless snus and dissolvable tobacco products?
- Why are “other tobacco products” appealing to children?
- How can people become involved or find out more information about the coalition?