



Who Pays the Cost of Smoking? Women Support

Women and Their Babies Pay for Smoking

Tobacco is known to cause a variety of cancers in women and men, including lung cancer -- the leading cause of cancer death in women. Smoking also causes heart disease, stroke, emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Women smokers bear an elevated risk of cervical cancer, osteoporosis and other gender specific illnesses men do not share. *American women annually lose 2.1 million years of potential life to smoking related diseases each year.*

When women smoke or are exposed to second hand smoke they have an increased risk of losing a pregnancy through spontaneous abortion or stillbirth, or of having their baby born prematurely or of low birth weight with attendant serious medical problems. *Fetal mortality rates are 35% higher among pregnant women who smoke than among nonsmokers.* Many other health problems associated with smoking threaten maternal and fetal health, undermine a healthy delivery, and create health problems for newborns and infants that may persist throughout their entire lives.

Added annual U.S. health costs caused by pregnant women smoking or exposed to smoke include:

- \$2 billion for birth complications; and
- \$4.5 billion for problems to newborns, infants and children, and pregnancy complications.

Girls Pay a Higher Price for Smoking Too

Women and girls are aggressively targeted by tobacco companies with significant impact on smoking rates. 90% of smokers begin before age 18. Smoking among high school girls rose 30% from 1991-99. Research shows girls have a harder time stopping and have stronger dependence on smoking than boys. (over)

Women Support the Tobacco Tax

Recent polling in Georgia demonstrates that women overwhelmingly support an increase in the tobacco tax. Voters know that raising Georgia's fees for tobacco:

- Confers significant health benefits by saving 114,100 Georgia youth from death, addiction and disease who would otherwise have taken up smoking.
- Saves \$2.5 billion in tobacco related health care costs. Smoking related health costs and loss to productivity in Georgia cost over \$9.00 for every pack of cigarettes sold.
- Allows Georgia's competitive markets to remain strong. Georgia's tobacco taxes now rank 43rd lowest in the U.S.

Revenue Needed to Balance the Budget

The House passed FY 2010 Budget leaves \$150 million for projected Medicaid enrollment growth unfunded – funds the Governor insists must be appropriated now and not deferred to next year, when more cuts will be needed. In addition, the equalization grants for public education are cut \$260 million, raising the prospect of teacher furloughs and other unwanted reductions that will further endanger Georgia's ability to provide a quality education and compete in attracting new industry to the state. Cuts are expected to persist beyond 2010 -- undermining key state and local infrastructures for public health, education and safety. At the same time, legislators continue to entertain hundreds of millions of dollars in corporate special interest tax breaks. New revenue sources are desperately needed now.

A \$1.00 per pack increase on cigarettes could generate over \$400 million per year while state revenues are in historic decline - meeting a huge need for new resources.

Sources: "Deadly in Pink: Big Tobacco Steps Up Its Targeting of Women and Girls," American Cancer Society et al., 2009; HHS, "Women and Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General" 2001; Campaign Tobacco Free Kids, Fact Sheet: Women and Tobacco, 2009.

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