



Tobacco Control Tribune

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Leading Tobacco Control Stories

Ban on Candy-Flavored Cigarettes Takes Effect

On September 22, a ban on cigarettes that have a characterizing flavor other than tobacco or menthol took effect. This is the first major action the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has taken since President Obama signed the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act in June, which gives the FDA the authority to regulate tobacco products. Tobacco companies have used candy and fruit flavors such as strawberry and lime in cigarettes as a way to mask the taste and draw in underage smokers. Each day about 1,100 kids become new, regular daily smokers in the U.S. The American Lung Association urges the FDA to strictly enforce this ban on candy and fruit flavored cigarettes and to move forward without delay in implementing the other important provisions of the law. The newly constituted Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee will make recommendations to the FDA Commissioner on menthol next year. For more information from the American Lung Association on this topic, please [click here](#).

U.S. House of Representatives Closes Smoking Rooms

The Architect of the Capitol recently took steps to eliminate one of the final places to smoke in Congress. Following a decision by the House Building Commission, which consists of the Speaker, majority and minority leaders of the U.S. House of Representatives, the smoking rooms in the Longworth and Cannon House Office Buildings were closed September 17. This follows a trend begun in 2007 when Speaker Nancy Pelosi eliminated smoking in the Speaker's Lobby, the only indoor area where smoking was allowed in the U.S. Capitol at the time. Other rule

changes since 2007 include the requirement that smokers move 25 feet away from all doors, and that shops in the House are no longer permitted to sell cigarettes. One of the few places that smoking is still allowed in the Capitol complex is in the individual and committee offices of Members of Congress (Source: *House Smoking Rooms to Close Thursday*, Emily Yehle, Roll Call, September 15, 2009.)

Connecticut Cigarette Tax Increase Goes into Effect

After a long budget stalemate, a \$1.00 increase in the cigarette tax goes into effect October 1st, after Gov. Jodi Rell allowed the budget to go into effect without her signature during September. The cigarette tax will rise to \$3.00 per pack, the second highest in the nation behind Rhode Island at \$3.46 per pack. The increase is expected to bring in \$217 million over the next two years and will be used to close the state budget gap. (Source: *Cigarette tax, water bottle bill to take effect Thursday*, Ken Dixon, Danbury News-Times, September 28, 2009.)

Adult Smoking Rate Declines in Utah

In 2008, the adult smoking rate in Utah reached an all time low of 9.1 percent. Since 1999, the adult smoking rate has declined 33 percent from 13.5 percent, though it has fluctuated somewhat in recent years. Utah's tobacco prevention and cessation program was one of the chief reasons for the decrease, according to the executive director of the Utah Department of Health. The demand for smoking cessation services also increased 36 percent in the last fiscal year. This could be due to the comprehensive smokefree air law in Utah that took effect January 1, 2009 as well as the federal cigarette tax increase that took effect April 1. (Source: *Utah Smoking Rate Dropped in 2008*, The Salt Lake Tribune, September 21, 2009.)

More Studies Confirm the Health Benefits of Smokefree Air Laws

Two separate analyses recently conducted on studies of smokefree indoor air laws re-emphasized the health benefits that such laws provide, and noted that those benefits take effect soon after the law is implemented. Both summaries found that the risk of being hospitalized due to a heart attack fell by 17 percent, one overall, the other after a year. The benefits of smokefree indoor air laws only increased the longer the law was in place, with the risk decreasing 26 percent each year after implementation. (Source: *Heart attack rates fell after smoking bans*, Liz Szabo, USA Today, September 24, 2009.)

News on Smokefree Air Laws/Ordinances

Kansas

Kansas Gov. Mark Parkinson recently announced that he will push the legislature to pass a statewide smokefree indoor air law when it re-convenes in January 2010. A statewide law was passed by the state Senate earlier this year but fell short in the state House of Representatives. Many cities and municipalities have already passed local smokefree air ordinances in Kansas. (Source: *Kansas governor says he'll push for statewide ban on public smoking*, Associated Press, September 2, 2009.)

Montana

The final implementation phase of Montana's smokefree indoor air law that was passed in 2005 goes into effect on October 1st. Certain restaurants, stand-alone bars and casinos, which were given a four year exemption from the law, will now be required to go smokefree. Currently, there are 25 states, including Montana, that have passed comprehensive smokefree indoor air laws. (Source: *Local bar, casino owners react to smoking ban*, Canda Harbaugh, The Western News, September 28, 2009.)

To view your state's restrictions on smoking, go to: <http://slati.lungusa.org>, click on a state and then the "Clean Indoor Air" link.

News on Cigarette Tax Increases

Illinois

Facing a \$200 million shortfall in funding for a college scholarship program, Gov. Pat Quinn and Speaker of the House Michael Madigan proposed an increase in the cigarette tax to close the gap. The state cigarette tax would rise from 98 cents to \$1.98 per pack under the proposal. The Illinois State Senate has already passed legislation that would increase the cigarette tax, but the proposal has not been brought up for a vote in the House. (Source: *Quinn, Madigan favor cigarette tax hike to pay for college scholarships*, Abdon M. Pallasch, Chicago Sun-Times, September 9, 2009.)

Michigan

Gov. Jennifer Granholm recently released a budget plan which includes an increase in the cigarette tax. To help close a \$1.8 billion budget gap, the cigarette tax would rise 25 cents to \$2.25 per pack. Taxes on other tobacco products would double. The state Senate has already passed a plan that does not include a cigarette tax increase, and the House has yet to pass a plan. (Source: *Granholm outlines plans for balancing Mich. Budget*, Kathy Barks Hoffman, Associated Press, September 8, 2009.)

Pennsylvania

After a long stalemate over the budget, a tentative compromise was reached between Gov. Ed Rendell and legislative leaders that included an increase in the cigarette tax. If approved by the legislature, the cigarette tax would rise 25 cents, from \$1.35 to \$1.60 per pack. Under the budget proposal, little cigars would also be taxed at the same rates as cigarettes. Unfortunately, a tax on other tobacco products was not included, leaving Pennsylvania as the only state in the nation that does not tax most tobacco products other than cigarettes. The cigarette tax national average will stand at \$1.34 per pack on October 1. (Source: *Pa. Budget deal ends impasse with cuts, taxes*, Mark Scolforo and Marc Levy, Associated Press, September 19, 2009.)

For more information on tobacco taxes in your state, go to: <http://slati.lungusa.org>, click on a state and then the "Tobacco Excise Tax" link.

If you have questions or comments about the content in this e-newsletter, or have questions on tobacco control policy issues, please contact Thomas Carr, Manager, National Policy, American Lung Association National Office, Washington, DC, at tcarr@lungusa.org. To subscribe to this e-newsletter, go to www.lungnews.kintera.org.

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