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Statement in support of raising taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco products

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Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States, killing close to a half million people a year. The American Lung Association is committed to ending the death and disease caused by tobacco use.

Our 2017 **State of Tobacco Control Report** found that Ohio failed to do enough to enact proven and effective policies that would save lives. The report gave Ohio an “F” grade for the level of state tobacco taxes.

Increasing taxes on tobacco is a win-win proposition: significantly increasing cigarette taxes results in fewer kids starting to smoke and in more adults quitting while at the same time providing important funding to improve health.

Tobacco-related illnesses are expensive and harmful for all of us. In Ohio, smoking is estimated to cost \$5.64 billion in direct health care costs, including \$1.72 billion in Medicaid costs. Additionally, Ohio experiences \$5.88 billion in productivity losses annually.

In Ohio, it is estimated that 20,000 deaths are caused by smoking each year. Over 30% of cancer deaths are caused by smoking. In addition to cancer, tobacco increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, COPD, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, preterm delivery, stillbirth, low birth weight, SIDS, and other diseases.

Increasing Ohio’s cigarette tax by \$1 per pack would raise an estimated \$313 million annually. This could lead to over \$2.34 billion in long term health care cost savings as adult and youth smoking rates decline.

Increasing the wholesale tax on other tobacco products at the same time would produce additional health and economic benefits for Ohio. Currently other tobacco products are taxed at a lower rate than cigarettes, making them an appealing alternative for price-sensitive consumers including youth.

This proposal can prevent kids from starting to smoke and help adults quit while raising needed revenue for Ohio. We strongly support this initiative.

Respectfully,

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