



*Bringing physicians together  
for a healthier Ohio*

To: Members of the House Ways & Means Committee  
From: Tim Maglione, Senior Director of Government Relations, Ohio State Medical Association  
Monica Hueckel, Director of Government Relations, Ohio State Medical Association  
Date: March 9, 2017  
Re: Support for Proposed Tobacco Taxes in HB 49

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On behalf of the 16,000 physician, resident, and medical student members of the Ohio State Medical Association (OSMA), we write to express our strong support for the Executive Budget's proposed taxes on cigarettes, other tobacco products and e-cigarettes.

While national data shows declining smoking rates across the country, Ohio's smoking rate is actually rising. According to a 2012 National Health Interview Survey, over 23% of adult Ohioans smoke, compared to the national average of 17.8%. Within the population of adults receiving Medicaid benefits, the smoking rate is over 50%. Perhaps more sobering than all of this, approximately 20,200 adults in Ohio die each year from causes directly related to their own smoking – that's approximately 55 Ohio deaths every day.

While the public health ramifications of smoking are undeniable, consider the following economic impacts of cigarettes in our state, as presented by the Center for Disease Control and the American Cancer Society:

- \$5.64 billion: Annual health care costs in Ohio directly caused by smoking;
- \$1.67 billion: Annual health care costs to treat sick smokers within Ohio's Medicaid program;
- \$1,098 per household: Ohioans' state and federal tax burden from smoking-caused government expenditures.

As introduced, HB 49 would increase the tax on cigarettes from \$1.60 per pack to \$2.25 per pack. Similarly, the tax on other tobacco products and vapor products (e-cigarettes) would be equalized with the state cigarette tax rate. According to the American Cancer Society, this proposal would save the state \$2.67 billion in future health costs, prevent 65,000 youth from smoking as adults, and encourage over 73,000 adults to quit smoking.

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The OSMA applauds Governor Kasich's commitment to public health. We support the 2018-2019 Executive Budget's tobacco tax provisions.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important issue.