



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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HIGHER TAXES ON CIGARETTES MAKE IT A GREAT TIME TO QUIT

HONOLULU – Today, the federal cigarette tax increased to \$1.00 per pack under Public Law 111-3 (the Children’s Health Insurance Program Re-Authorization Act of 2009 was signed into law on February 4, 2009 and takes effect on April 1, 2009). This brings the average retail cost of a pack of cigarettes in Hawai’i to \$6.15 a pack, or \$2,040 for a pack-a-day smoker a full year. This increase in the price of cigarettes can encourage smokers to quit. Many states have experienced an increase in tobacco cessation after similar tax increases.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General’s Report on *The Health Consequences of Smoking*, smoking harms virtually every organ in the body. In addition to lung cancer, heart attacks, and stroke, cigarette smoking has been found to cause coronary heart disease, ulcers, and cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas. Despite these serious consequences there is good news — quitting smoking has immediate and long-term health benefits, regardless of your age or how long and how much you’ve been smoking.

With the price of cigarettes going up, it will be easier to make the decision to quit. Fortunately, today’s smokers don’t have to rely on willpower alone. Research shows that seeking support can help smokers significantly increase their chance of quitting successfully.

“Help may come from family and friends, health care providers, counseling programs, or through medication such as the nicotine gum, patch or lozenge,” advised Dr. Chiyome Fukino, director of health.

(more)

In Hawai'i, people who want to stop smoking can receive immediate help by calling the Hawai'i Tobacco Quitline at **1-800-QUIT-NOW** (1-800-784-8669). The Hawai'i Tobacco Quitline is a free and confidential service that offers advice and counseling for those who want to quit smoking. In addition to over-the-phone assistance, residents can also take advantage of new online resources offered by the Hawai'i Tobacco Quitline, including the Click to Call and Web Coach™ programs. The Quitline can also provide free nicotine patches or gum for the uninsured, and assists those with coverage work with their insurance company or community resources to receive free or reduced-cost nicotine replacement therapy. Quitline Hours are from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Non-smokers can also call the Quitline to get help for a loved one.

The Department of Health is working in collaboration with community partners to educate and promote available tobacco cessation services and resources to better support those in their communities who are tackling nicotine addiction. There are more than 36 hospital and community-based tobacco cessation service providers that offer tobacco treatment programs across the state.

The department has developed a list of "Cessation Resources in Hawai'i" for the public, and a "Cessation Service Providers Referral Guide" for providers. The Referral Guide assists those who are interested in either using or referring a patient/client to tobacco cessation services. These guides/resources are also available on the Hawai'i State DOH website at www.hawaii.gov/health under "brochures".

Dr. Fukino concluded, "Most smokers want to quit and the tax increase may be the impetus for many to finally make a quit attempt."

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