

LEGISLATIVE ASKS

Please ask your senator and representative to ...

#1 – Reduce the Toll of Tobacco:

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Georgia. We need local jurisdictions to have the authority to pass stronger regulations than the state on issues related to tobacco control and other matters impacting the public's health by **opposing attempts to preempt Local Smokefree Laws**.

- More than 10,000 adult Georgians die from smoking-related illnesses annually.
- Each year Georgia spends approximately \$1.8 billion in healthcare costs and \$3.2 billion in lost productivity costs due to cigarette smoking among adults.

Increasing the Tobacco Tax in Georgia is an easy way to make more money for the state while also saving lives. Raising the tobacco tax is proven to decrease tobacco use among current smokers and discourage young people from starting. We need lawmakers to support an increase of \$1.50 and includes a similar tax on other tobacco products.

- The current state cigarette tax is 37 cents per pack (49th among all states and DC).
- Annual health care expenditures in Georgia directly caused by tobacco use are \$3.18 billion.
- The projected New Annual Revenue from Increasing the Cigarette Tax by \$1.50 Per Pack is over \$425 million.

#2 - Support Access to Health Coverage for Georgians through Medicaid Expansion.

Low-income individuals and families in Georgia should have access to health insurance coverage through state Medicaid programs. We need **full Medicaid expansion** in our state so low-income parents and adults can have comprehensive and affordable health insurance coverage.

- Medicaid provides cost-effective, high-quality coverage to beneficiaries who, on average, have greater health needs. Additionally, Medicaid serves as a vital source of financial protection by limiting out-of-pocket costs for beneficiaries.
- Full Medicaid expansion will provide low-income parents and adults earning up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) access to comprehensive and affordable health insurance coverage
- Georgia's recently approved "Pathways to Coverage" (1115 waiver program) continues to deny low-income cancer patients and survivors' access to health insurance coverage – falling short of our goal to reduce cancer incidence and mortality.
- Medicaid expansion has had a large impact on Medicaid coverage or uninsured rates in rural populations.