

ACS CAN Hawaii-Pacific 2021 State Legislative Priorities



Hawaii State Legislative Priorities

Cancer is one of the most preventable and increasingly curable life-threatening diseases – but only if we take the steps necessary to prevent it outright, detect it early, and improve access to care. To this end, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) in Hawaii is working on the following legislative priorities in support of our mission to end cancer as a major health problem.

Reducing Cancer and Strengthening Tobacco Control

ACS CAN supports preserving funding of Tobacco Prevention and Control Programs in Hawaii. The \$7.9 million Hawaii spends on tobacco prevention and cessation, which includes Trust Fund programs, is only 58% of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended amount. For over 20 years, Hawaii's Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund has reduced the burden of tobacco in our state, saving both lives and healthcare costs. Since its inception, the state has achieved significant declines in smoking rates for both adults and youth. Preserving funding for this program would help our state address the significant health disparities that exist regarding tobacco use among communities of color, low-income populations and the LGBTQ community in Hawaii. ACS CAN opposes HB1296.

Currently in Hawaii, electronic smoking devices including e-cigarettes are not regulated as tobacco products. ACS CAN is advocating to ensure that all forms of tobacco products including electronic smoking devices be included in the definition of tobacco products. This would allow electronic smoking devices including e-cigarettes be included in tobacco sales restrictions, including retailer licensing and permitting requirements and to be taxed at 70% parity with all other tobacco products.

Funding Cancer Research

The University of Hawaii (UH) Cancer Center is one of 71 research organizations in the U.S. designated by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the only one in the Hawaii Pacific region. ACS CAN supports the continual funding of the UH Cancer Center to support research for more treatments, improve cancer patients' and survivors' quality of life. ACS CAN opposes HB1297.

Maintain Funding for HAWAII Tobacco Prevention & Cessation Programs



The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) recognizes that COVID-19 is serious and impacting all of our lives. At this critical moment with people focused on protecting their respiratory health, we must do everything in our power to keep our communities healthy and safe—which means building strong public health infrastructure including comprehensive tobacco control programs. Long after this pandemic passes, people deserve to live full, healthy lives free from the ills of tobacco use. ACS CAN is calling on you to preserve funding of the tobacco enforcement special fund, Hawaii tobacco settlement special fund, and Hawaii tobacco prevention and control trust fund.

Tackling Tobacco Use by Funding Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Programs

In 1998, Hawaii and 45 other states sued tobacco companies and won, resulting in the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA). The MSA included payments to the settling states to cover current and future costs of treating tobacco-related illnesses. A portion (12.5%) of the settlement funds are allocated to the Hawaii Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund. For over 20 years, Hawaii's Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund has reduced the burden of tobacco in our state, saving both lives and healthcare costs. Since its inception, the state has achieved significant declines in smoking rates for both adults and youth smoking rates. Despite this progress, the toll of tobacco is substantial, and there is still work to be done as we are facing increasing youth use of electronic smoking devices.

Fully funding evidence-based tobacco prevention and cessation programs, along with regular and significant tobacco tax increases and comprehensive smoke-free laws can reduce tobacco use. Hawaii currently invests \$7.9 million in tobacco prevention and cessation programs, which is only 57.8% of the \$13.7 million the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that Hawaii spends to combat the health and economic consequences of tobacco. The proposal to cut Hawaii's already underfunded program by 100% would have a devastating impact on the health of our youth. According to projections from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kidsⁱ, this cut would:

- Increase youth smoking rates by 8.7%.
- Lead to 1,900 more kids growing up to become addicted adult smokers.
- Lead to 600 more kids growing up to die prematurely from smoking.
- Cost the state \$39.9 million in future healthcare additional expenses.

A well-funded evidence-based tobacco control program is needed to counteract the \$26.1 million per year that tobacco companies are spending to market cigarettes and smokeless tobacco alone in Hawaii not including their other deadly and addictive products.ⁱⁱ

Health Impact of Tobacco Use in Hawaii

Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body and the use of tobacco products remains the nation's number one cause of preventable death. Tobacco use is responsible for nearly 1 in 5 deaths nationwide.ⁱⁱⁱ In Hawaii:

- An estimated 1,400 deaths are caused by smoking each year.^{iv}
- 12.30% of adults and 5.3% of high school students smoke cigarettes and approximately one third of high school students use tobacco products.^{v,vi}
- Over 24.6 % of cancer deaths in Hawaii are caused by smoking.^{vii}

People who smoke or who used to smoke are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Smoking is also a proven risk factor for cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart disease, which also put people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Regardless of any association with COVID-19, the adverse health effects of smoking are well-documented and irrefutable. Now is a better time than ever to quit.

After years of decline, in 2018 we saw an increase in tobacco use among youth nationwide, largely due to skyrocketing rates of e-cigarette use. Here in Hawaii, 30.6% of high school students currently use e-cigarettes. At the same time, progress on previously declining youth use of other tobacco products, including cigarettes and cigars, has stalled. Investing in tobacco control programs is needed to reverse these trends. As the tobacco industry is evolving, the need for funding for tobacco prevention programs has never been greater. It's imperative that programs are funded to protect the next generation from a lifetime of addiction.

Investments in Tobacco Control are Vital to the Health of Hawaii

Smoking is estimated to cost Hawaii \$526 million in direct health care costs, including \$141 million in Medicaid costs annually.^{viii} Given the projected budget deficit, it is vital that evidence-based programs are in place to reduce tobacco use and reduce taxpayer-funded healthcare costs. Increasing the Hawaii cigarette tax by \$1 per pack with a parallel tax on all other tobacco products would provide a substantial source of revenue for the Hawaii while further reducing tobacco use. Maintaining funding for Hawaii's tobacco enforcement, prevention and cessation programs is crucial to prevent kids from starting to use tobacco and help people already addicted to tobacco quit.

There are disparities in tobacco use and tobacco related disease, particularly impacting communities of color, LGBTQ communities, and people with lower incomes, increasing their risk for chronic illness like cancer. Well-funded, evidence-based tobacco control programs can counter the tobacco industry's targeted marketing strategies that have contributed to tobacco-related health disparities while providing resources to support those trying to quit and other health programs that directly benefit populations with higher tobacco use and deaths due to tobacco.

Research shows that the more states spend on comprehensive tobacco control programs, the greater the reductions in smoking. The longer states invest in such programs, the greater and quicker the impact. For example, one study found that Washington saved more than \$5.00 in just tobacco-related hospitalization costs for every \$1.00 spent during the first 10 years of its program.^{ix} The future health cost savings from youth and adult smoking declines between 2011 and 2019 in Hawaii is estimated at \$771.7 million.^{ix}

For some people who use tobacco products, COVID-19 might provide motivation to quit; for others, trying to quit during a time of stress might be even harder. Hawaii should do everything we can to help those who choose to quit to succeed. While Hawaii is facing unprecedented public health challenges, it is critical that programs to prevent kids from starting to use tobacco and help adults quit are preserved. ACS CAN urges lawmakers to continue to fund tobacco prevention and cessation programs in the state.

ⁱ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Impact on Youth Smoking, Deaths & Related Health Costs From Changes to Hawaii Tobacco Prevention Funding. February 5, 2021.

ⁱⁱ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. State Report: Hawaii January 14, 2021. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what-we-do/us/statereport/hawaii>

ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Health Effects of Cigarette Smoking. Updated April 28, 2020. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/effects_cig_smoking/

^{iv} Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK). The Toll of Tobacco in Hawaii. Updated October 20, 2020. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/hawaii>

^v Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK). The Toll of Tobacco in Hawaii. Updated October 20, 2020. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/hawaii>

^{vi} Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK). The Toll of Tobacco in Hawaii. Updated October 20, 2020. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/hawaii>

^{vii} American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. [State-Specific Smoking-Related Cancer Cases and Deaths, 2017](#). December 2020.

^{viii} Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Hawaii. October 20, 2020. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/hawaii>

^{ix} Dilley, Julia A., et al., "Program, Policy and Price Interventions for Tobacco Control: Quantifying the Return on Investment of a Hawaii Tobacco Control Program," *American Journal of Public Health*, Published online ahead of print December 15, 2011. See also, Washington Hawaii Department of Health, Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, Progress Report, March 2011. Washington Hawaii Department of Health, Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, News Release, "Thousands of lives saved due to tobacco prevention and control program," November 17, 2010, http://www.doh.wa.gov/Publicat/2010_news/10-183.htm.

^{ix} Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK). Benefits and Savings From Smoking Declines in Hawaii