

Impact of Tobacco in Pennsylvania: The Need to Invest in Tobacco Control to Protect Kids, Save Lives, and Reduce Taxpayer Costs

Health Costs of Tobacco to Pennsylvania

Tobacco is an addictive and deadly product. Smoking harms nearly every organ in the bodyⁱ and remains the number one cause of preventable death. According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, in Pennsylvania:ⁱⁱ

- 22,000 deaths each year in Pennsylvania are caused by smoking, and 30% of cancer deaths are due to smoking.
- 11.7% of adults smoke cigarettes.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 17% of high school students use tobacco products including 3.7% who smoke cigarettes, 16% who use e-cigarettes, and 6.7% who smoke cigars.^{iv} If nothing is done to reduce smoking rates, 244,000 Pennsylvania kids currently under 18 will ultimately die prematurely from smoking. Pennsylvania can and must do better.
- 21,400 kids, under the age of 18, try cigarettes for the first time every year^v

Economic Costs of Tobacco to Pennsylvania

Smoking costs Pennsylvania approximately \$7.41 billion in direct health care costs, including \$2.22 billion in Medicaid annually. This does not include health costs caused by secondhand smoke exposure, smoking-caused fires, smokeless tobacco use, or cigars and pipe smoking. Additionally, smoking costs the state \$13.4 billion in productivity annually. Tobacco use also imposes additional costs such as workplace productivity losses and property damage. These costs far outpace the \$1.3 billion in annual tobacco revenue the state receives from tobacco settlement payments and tobacco taxes.^{vi} On average, Pennsylvania residents pay \$1,172 per household in state and federal taxes from smoking-caused government expenditures,^{vii} whether they smoke or not. It is vital that fact-based programs are in place to reduce tobacco use and reduce taxpayer-funded health care costs.

Investment in Pennsylvania's Youth

Pennsylvania receives over \$1.3 billion in tobacco revenue annually from tobacco settlement payments and taxes combined yet only invests approximately 16% of those funds in tobacco prevention and cessation programs. This investment has declined each year due to the overall fluctuation of the settlement fund, from \$16.4 million in 2023 to only \$14.8 million in 2025. Yet, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends Pennsylvania invest \$140 million into tobacco prevention and cessation to combat the health and economic consequences of tobacco. While the percentage of the total MSA has remained the same for each budget year, due to the overall decline in the overall fund, the tobacco cessation and prevention program has received cuts to their funding in Pennsylvania. Restoring the program's funding level at \$18.4 million is a vital first step to protect our Pennsylvania youth from tobacco.

Countering Tobacco Industry Marketing

A well-funded fact-based tobacco control program is needed to counteract the \$343.5 million per year that tobacco companies are spending to market their deadly and addictive products in Pennsylvania.^{viii} Increased funding is needed to negate the influence Big Tobacco's marketing has on youth. As Big Tobacco has been working hard to addict future generations with e-cigarettes and other tobacco products, the need for funding for tobacco prevention programs has never been greater.

Recommendation

Protecting funding for Pennsylvania's Division of Tobacco Prevention and Control is crucial to prevent kids from starting to use tobacco and helping people already addicted to tobacco quit. ACS CAN urges Pennsylvania to restore funding to \$18.4 million for its vital tobacco prevention and cessation program to reduce taxpayer costs, protect kids, and save lives. We recommend the legislature plan to offset continued cessation and prevention funding through tobacco taxes.

ⁱ 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/

ⁱⁱ Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Pennsylvania. Updated December 15, 2025. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/pennsylvania>

ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2024 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System <https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/index.html>

^{iv} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. <https://nccd.cdc.gov/Youthonline/App/Results.aspx?LID=PA>

^v Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Updated 8.16.24 <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/pennsylvania>

^{vi} Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids. Broken Promises to Our Children. Updated January 21, 2026. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what-we-do/us/statereport/pennsylvania>

^{vii} Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Updated 12.17.24. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/pennsylvania>

^{viii} Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Updated 1.8.24. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what-we-do/us/statereport/pennsylvania>