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## **Governor Dayton signs bill to prevent more than 47,700 kids from smoking**

*Raising the tobacco tax is a proven method of saving kids from a lifetime of addiction*

St. Paul, MN (06/05/13) – Members of the Raise it for Health coalition, a group of Minnesota's leading health and nonprofit organizations, joined Governor Mark Dayton today at a ceremonial signing of the bill that increases Minnesota's cigarette tax. Minnesota Commissioner of Health Ed Ehlinger, House Majority Leader Erin Murphy, other lawmakers who fought to pass a tobacco tax increase in the Legislature and health advocates from around the state attended a signing ceremony at the Capitol today. *Photo attached.*

**"Governor Dayton and legislative leaders took a bold step for the health of all Minnesotans by raising the price of cigarettes this session,"** said Molly Moilanen, Public Affairs Director at ClearWay Minnesota and co-chair of the Raise it for Health coalition. **"On behalf of the tens of thousands of Minnesota kids who will live longer and healthier lives free of tobacco addiction, thank you."**

On July 1, the new law will take effect, and Minnesota's per-pack tax on cigarettes will go up by \$1.60. It is the only increase of its kind across the nation this year, and it will move Minnesota's national rank for cigarette taxation from 28<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>. Cigarette taxes are considered a key indicator for excellence in tobacco control, and all but three states have increased their taxes since 2002.

Research shows that raising the price of tobacco is a proven method to reduce both adult and youth smoking. According to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, raising the per-pack price by \$1.60 will:

- Prevent more than 47,700 kids from becoming addicted adult smokers;
- Save more than 25,700 Minnesotans from premature smoking-related deaths;
- Save Minnesotans more than \$1.65 billion in long-term health care costs; and
- Help over 36,600 current Minnesota smokers quit.

**"Every state that has significantly increased its cigarette tax has reduced smoking,"** said Danny McGoldrick, Vice President of Research for the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, a national advocacy organization that studies the effectiveness of public policies to curb the harm of tobacco. **"The power of the tax increase has also been demonstrated by an increase in the use of smoking cessation services in many states."**

Help to quit smoking is available to all Minnesota tobacco users. **“QUITPLAN® Services has helped more than 20,000 Minnesotans successfully kick the habit in the last decade”** said Moilanen. **“We are ready to help anyone who is ready to quit.”**

Minnesotans have counted on QUITPLAN Services to help them quit after previous price increases. When the federal tax on cigarettes went up by 62 cents on March 31, 2009, QUITPLAN Services saw a marked increase in requests for help. During the week of March 30 through April 5, QUITPLAN Services helped 420 callers, an increase of 150 percent from the first week in March. In addition, 568 people registered at [www.quitplan.com](http://www.quitplan.com) over the same time-span, an increase of 207 percent from the first week in March.

Launched by ClearWay Minnesota in 2001, QUITPLAN Services offers all Minnesotans, free access to quit-smoking counseling and can provide individuals with nicotine patches, gum or lozenges. Minnesotans can find out about all the free help to quit smoking available through QUITPLAN Services by visiting [www.quitplan.com](http://www.quitplan.com) or calling 1-888-354-PLAN (7526).

*Raise it for Health is a coalition of Minnesota’s leading health and nonprofit organizations who share a common goal of reducing tobacco use in the state. Raise it for Health partners include: AARP Minnesota, Allina Health, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Heart Association, American Lung Association in Minnesota, Association for Nonsmokers – MN, Association of Minnesota Counties, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, CentraCare Health System, Children’s Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota, ClearWay Minnesota<sup>SM</sup>, Courage Center, Four Corners Partnership, HealthEast Care System, HealthPartners, LAAMPP Institute, Local Public Health Association, Mayo Clinic, Medica, Metro-MN Oncology Nursing Society, Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians, Minnesota Cancer Alliance, Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association, Minnesota Council of Health Plans, Minnesota Hospital Association, Minnesota Medical Association, Minnesota Public Health Association, Park Nicollet Health Services, PartnerSHIP 4 Health, School Nurse Organization of Minnesota, Service Employees International Union Healthcare Minnesota, Southwest Community Health Improvement Program, and Twin Cities Medical Society.*

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