



## HEALTH NEWS FROM DR. YU

Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department

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### Save Money, Quit Smoking!

Prepared May 2010

Statistics say that most people who smoke cigarettes want to quit. Quitting for one's own health and that of loved ones are common reasons why people quit. Now people who smoke in Washington State will have another reason to quit: More money in their pocket.

- The price of tobacco products such as cigarettes, snuff, and cigars sold in Washington State increased starting May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010.
- The average price of a pack of cigarettes is between seven and eight dollars.
- The new tax on tobacco will raise this price even more.

People who smoke could save over \$49 per week, and over \$2500 in one year alone. Ten years of non-smoking adds up to over \$25,000! The new tax increase is a great added incentive to quit smoking. While the amount of money spent on smoking is tremendous, the real reason to quit smoking has to do with your life. Smoking will lead to chronic health conditions, such as cancer, heart disease, and emphysema, which often result in premature death. Unfortunately, before smoking kills its victims, it robs them of their resources and their quality of life.

Smoking also affects others who may be around you. Smoke emitted from the end of a burning cigarette is known as secondhand smoke. This smoke is then inhaled by others and can cause serious health problems, including lung infections and cancer. Children that are exposed may increase their risk of developing respiratory infections and otitis media, or middle ear infections. Exposed babies increase their risk of SIDS. There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke!

You can protect yourself and others from the dangers of tobacco smoke by either quitting or recommending to a friend or loved one that they quit. If you are ready to quit, call the **Washington State Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW**. When you call the Quit Line, a trained Quit Coach will be waiting to help you develop a quit plan and provide encouragement. You may also be eligible to receive medications and self-help materials. The Quit Line is available to all Washington State residents at no cost to them.

The **Smoking in Public Places Law**, a state law, prohibits smoking in public buildings, including offices, restaurants, and other public venues. Smoking is also not allowed within 25 feet of entryways and windows. Some organizations have even taken this law one step further and have implemented 100% smoke-free policies, which do not allow smoking anywhere on their campuses. Several apartment managers and owners throughout the state have also created legal, smoke-free policies to protect their tenants' health and well-being.

- If your organization or apartment community is interested in learning more about smoke-free policies and their benefits, please contact Kateri Wimsett, Tobacco Prevention & Control Coordinator at 360-867-2516. Interested in advocacy work? Contact Meghan Sullivan, Thurston TOGETHER!, at 360-493-2230 ext. 19.

Quitting smoking is not easy, but the benefits are overwhelming! Quitting will not only save you money and resources, but it will also increase your chances for living a long and healthy life. Now those are some great incentives!

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