



## **THE NEBRASKA SOCIETY FOR RESPIRATORY CARE**

**A Chartered Affiliate of the American Association for Respiratory Care**

February 22, 2011

Senator Abbie Cornett, Chair, and members of the Revenue Committee  
Nebraska State Capitol  
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Senator Cornett and Members of the Committee:

The Nebraska Society for Respiratory Care would like to voice its support of the Legislative Bill 436 to increase the state cigarette tax from \$.64 to \$1.99 per pack and increasing the tax on other tobacco products as well.

We are practitioners of a profession that focus on respiratory diseases, many of which are exacerbated or caused by cigarette smoking. Chronic obstructive lung disease frequently becomes apparent later in life and the aging of our state's population will mean that there will be a bigger burden on the state's Medicaid and Medicare coverage. Our society is also concerned with those that currently smoke and with children that might start or are currently smoking. The state's resources should also be focused on prevention as well as smoking cessation counseling and cessation strategies. The increase in taxes per pack creates another incentive for children and adults to **not**-initiate or to **stop** smoking.

The long term benefits apart from the increasing revenues are that healthier Nebraskan's live longer, stay engaged in work and family, and demand less in expenses for chronic health care.

There are 1,300 respiratory care practitioners in Nebraska who care for patients' everyday in homecare, long term care facilities and hospitals. We care about lung health and believe that this increased tax on tobacco will improve the health of Nebraskans.

Sincerely,

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