

Media Contacts:

*Las Vegas:*

Amy Beaulieu, 702-948-4157 |

*Reno*

Jennifer Hadayia 775-328-3645 or 775-544-3898



Health  
Investment  
Partnership  
of Nevada



## **HEALTH INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP AND NEVADA YOUTH UNITE TO KICK BUTTS**

*1,000 Postcards from Nevada Youth Delivered to Governor for National Kick Butts Day*

**Carson City, Nev.**—March 23, 2011—The Health Investment Partnership (HIP) and Teens Against Tobacco Use a program of the American Lung Association (TATU) are joining thousands of kids across the country who are taking part in Kick Butts Day, a nationwide initiative that makes kids leaders in the effort to stop youth tobacco use. As part of the Kick Butts Day celebration, HIP and TATU delivered 1,000 postcards to the Governor handwritten by teens statewide. The postcards ask Governor Sandoval to help prevent teen tobacco use and fix Nevada’s budget deficit by introducing a health impact fee on tobacco products.

“The tobacco companies make smoking look cool in their ads, but that’s nothing but a lie,” said Sean Judd, a member of Teens Against Tobacco Use. “There’s nothing cool about bad breath, a nasty cough and an early death.”

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, killing more than 400,000 people every year. Every day, more than 4,000 kids try their first cigarettes; another 1,000 kids become addicted smokers, one-third of whom will die prematurely as a result.

Tobacco use is also costing the State of Nevada. Nevada spends \$565 million on tobacco-related healthcare costs, \$123 million of which is paid by the state through Medicaid. In addition to save lives, HIP and TATU are advocating for a health impact fee to help offset the costs Nevada incurs from tobacco use.

(more)

A study recently released by renowned economic analyst Dr. Frank Chaloupka, distinguished professor of economics at University of Illinois at Chicago, estimated that introducing a \$1.20 health impact fee on tobacco products will generate nearly \$85 million in additional revenues for the state during the first year and approximately \$350 million over five years. Additionally, such a health impact fee would prevent 21,800 Nevada youth from becoming adult smokers and save 11,200 Nevadans from a premature death.

“A health impact fee on tobacco products is a win-win situation,” said Christopher Roller, president of the Nevada Tobacco Prevention Coalition. “This policy has already been proven in other states to simultaneously save lives and generate revenue. It’s not just a common-sense approach—it’s good policy.”

HIP and TATU are not alone in their support for a health impact fee. A recent public poll released by American Lung Association in Nevada (ALAN) indicates that a strong majority of Nevada voters would support an increase on taxes of tobacco products. The survey, which polled more than 800 registered voters, found **73 percent** of voters are in favor of increasing the state tobacco tax to help solve Nevada’s budget deficit and fund important state priorities. The poll also showed that the support crosses party lines, with **77 percent** of Democrats and **69 percent** of Republicans indicating support. In addition, **69 percent** of respondents who self-identified with the tea party movement indicated support.

“Nevadans of all ages and every political affiliation are making it clear that supporting a health impact fee on tobacco products is not a political liability, but rather a vote for the will of the people,” says Amy Beaulieu, director of tobacco control policy for ALAN and a member of the Health Investment Partnership. “We are calling on our leaders to enact landmark legislation that will create sustainable revenue for our state and significantly improve the health and well-being of all Nevadans—especially our youth.”

### **About the Health Investment Partnership**

*Health Investment Partnership is a statewide coalition of public health organizations, health care agencies, nonprofit organizations and tobacco control advocates who support introducing a health impact fee on cigarettes and other tobacco products to help reduce Nevada’s budget deficit and save lives. The campaign is comprised of health organizations including the American Lung Association in Nevada, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Nevada Cancer Institute, March of Dimes, and the Nevada State Medical Association.*

###

Editor’s note: Dr. Chaloupka’s report and ALAN’s poll results are accessible at [www.tobaccofreenv.org](http://www.tobaccofreenv.org)