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Upcoming \$1 cigarette tax hike projected to save 15,300 New Yorkers' lives

Higher costs deter youth from smoking, but flavored tobacco products continue to attract and addict new smokers

Health care providers and the NYS Smokers' Quitline offer support for quitting

(New York, NY) 8/16/23 Beginning Sept. 1, 2023, New York State's cigarette tax will be the highest in the nation. The \$1 hike is the first cigarette tax increase since 2010 and changes the tax from \$4.35 to \$5.35 per pack of 20 cigarettes. Research shows a 10% increase in tobacco prices would be expected to decrease tobacco consumption by 4% in high-income countries.¹

Increasing the cost of cigarettes is one of the most effective ways to promote smoking cessation and prevent youth initiation. The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network projects the impact of the higher tax will save 15,300 New Yorkers' lives and prevent 14,400 youth under age 18 from becoming adults who smoke.² The latest data from the NYS Department of Health show that one in five high school-age youth uses tobacco products.³ New York State spends approximately \$9.7 billion annually on preventable smoking-related health care costs.⁴

Director of [New York City Treats Tobacco](#), Dr. Donna Shelly, states, "With a 10.9% current smoking prevalence among adults and 3.3% prevalence among youth across New York City, this price increase may continue to usher in historically low smoking rates in NYC."^{5,6}

Flavored tobacco products continue to attract and addict new smokers

While higher cigarette costs are proven to reduce youth smoking and prevent initiation,⁷ flavored tobacco products like cigars, cigarillos and chew continue to attract and addict new tobacco users. Tobacco companies use flavors like menthol in tobacco products to make them more appealing to new users, almost all of whom

¹ U.S. National Cancer Institute and World Health Organization. The Economics of Tobacco and Tobacco Control. National Cancer Institute Tobacco Control Monograph 21. NIH Publication No. 16-CA- 8029A. Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute; and Geneva, CH: World Health Organization; 2016. https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/m21_complete.pdf. Accessed July 2023.

² American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. 15,300 New Yorkers' Lives to Be Saved with Cigarette Tax Increase. Jan. 23, 2023. Accessed July 2023. <https://www.fightcancer.org/releases/15300-new-new-yorkers%280%99-lives-be-saved-cigarette-tax-increase>

³ New York State Department of Health Bureau of Tobacco Control. [StatShot Vol 15, No. 1, May 2023: Youth Tobacco Use Continues to Decline Across All Product Types in 2022, One in Five Youth Still Use Tobacco](#). Accessed July 2023.

⁴ New York State Department of Health. The Health and Economic Burden of Smoking in New York. (p. ES-1). New York, 2020. Accessed July 2023. https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/tobacco_control/reports/docs/health_and_economic_burden.pdf

⁵ Merizier J, Orkin-Prol L, Talati A, Jasek J, Debchoudhury I. Addressing New York City's Smoking Inequities. NYC Vital Signs. 2022;20(1):1-4.

⁶ New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. EpiQuery - NYC Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2019. Accessed August 2023. <https://nyc.gov/health/epiquery>

⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Smoking Cessation: a report of the Surgeon General*. (p. 599). Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2020. Accessed July 2023. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2020-cessation-sgr-full-report.pdf>

are under 18.⁸ Eighty-one percent of youth who have ever tried tobacco started with a flavored product; more than half (54%) of youth ages 12-17 who smoke use menthol cigarettes.⁹

Tax increase is the latest in strong, evidence-based tobacco control policies enacted by New York State to prevent smoking initiation, promote cessation

In 2019, New York raised the minimum legal sale age to purchase tobacco and vapor products to 21, established a 20% tax on vaping products, and required registration for vapor product retailers to regulate the sale of these products to restrict access, especially among young people.

Those policies were followed in 2020 by several strategies that restrict youth access to tobacco and vaping products. Among other things, new state laws ended the sale of tobacco and vapor products in pharmacies, banned the sale of flavored vapor products, ended price discounts on tobacco products, and stopped the shipment and delivery of vapor products to private residences.

Support available for New Yorkers who want to quit smoking and vaping

Health care providers and the [New York State Smokers' Quitline](#) provide support to smokers who want to quit, and quitting leads to fewer smokers, the potential for better health outcomes and reduced health care costs. When health care providers treat nicotine addiction with medication and counseling, it can double or even triple their patients' chances of success.¹⁰ The New York State Smokers' Quitline is a free and confidential service for all New York State residents who wish to overcome use of commercial tobacco and/or vape products. Participants can receive individualized coaching and assistance with quit planning from highly trained tobacco treatment specialists, text and online chat support, and a free starter supply delivery of nicotine replacement therapy medications such as patches, gum and/or lozenges for those 18 and older. Residents of all ages may contact the Quitline for support and educational materials. Visit [nysmokefree.com](#) anytime or text QUITNOW to 333888 for more information, or call 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) seven days a week, beginning at 9 a.m.

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⁸ Impact of Menthol Cigarettes on Youth Smoking Initiation and Health Disparities. Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2021. Accessed June 2023. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0390.pdf>.

⁹ Flavored Tobacco Products Attract Kids: Brief Overview of Key Issues. Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2022. Accessed June 2023. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0399.pdf>.

¹⁰ Fiore MC, Jaén CR, Baker TB, et al. [Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update—Clinical Practice Guidelines](#). Rockville (MD): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2008. Accessed July 2023.