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CAMPAIGN FOR A HEALTHY AND RESPONSIBLE TENNESSEE APPLAUDS GOVERNOR BREDESEN FOR HIS PROPOSED TOBACCO TAX INCREASE

CHART and its partners applaud Governor Bredesen for his proposed 40 cents per pack tobacco tax increase as outlined in the State of the State address.

“CHART has been a long-time proponent of increasing the tobacco taxes in Tennessee in an effort to reduce youth tobacco consumption,” said Nathan James, American Heart Association representative and CHART board president.

Increasing the cigarette tax will create substantial new revenue for the state as well as achieving the public health benefit of keeping kids from beginning to smoke.

Currently in Tennessee, 26.3 percent of high school students smoke and kids purchase 17.3 million packs of cigarettes each year. In addition, an estimated 9,500 adults will die each year from tobacco use. By raising the cigarette excise tax by 40-cents, we can realize the following benefits:

Benefits to our Youth

- 8.6% decrease in youth smoking
- 33,000 kids alive today who will not become smokers
- 10,500 kids alive today who will be saved from premature smoking-caused death
- 6,200 smoking-affected births avoided over the next five years

Benefits to our Adults

- 25,000 current adult smokers will quit
- 5,500 current adults smokers will be saved from smoking-caused death

Raising the cigarette tax will also greatly improve the fiscal health of Tennessee. Taking into account the declines in tobacco use that will occur, raising the tax will also realize between \$220-230 million in new revenue. Every state that has raised its tobacco tax has seen revenues increase and consumption decline.

It is time to raise the tobacco tax in Tennessee. Governor Bredesen’s leadership on this issue will provide Tennesseans with a healthier way of life, improve our children’s futures and generate needed money for education programs.

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The Campaign for a Healthy and Responsible Tennessee (CHART), is the statewide coalition of more than 50 partner organizations and thousands of individuals working to protect Tennesseans from the health effects of tobacco use through public education and mobilization. More information about CHART can be found at www.tnchart.org