

Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition



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Advocacy Day



On February 22, 2011, over 100 volunteers and advocates from all over the state gathered at the Nebraska State Capitol in Lincoln to support of increasing taxes on tobacco products. Representatives from diverse groups such as the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association, the Nebraska Medical Association, AARP, and others gathered for a breakfast at the Cornhusker Hotel before going to the Capitol to meet with their respective Senators.

“This bill (LB 436) is going to save so many lives,” commented Marilyn Wise, an American Cancer Society volunteer from Fremont. “A raise in this tax may make people stop and think, ‘Do I really want to spend my money on something that’s not good for me?’ That’s the message I want to get across to my senator.”

In Nebraska, 2,200 kids under 18 become new daily smokers each year while roughly the same number of adults die each year from smoking related cause. In addition, smoking-

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related medical costs total \$537 million each year. Increasing cigarette taxes are one of the most effective ways to reduce smoking among both youth and adults.

New revenue created by the increase would help with the state budget deficit and fund health programs including tobacco prevention and cessation.

“In addition to raising over \$100 million annually, the tobacco tax increase called for in LB 436 will save thousands of lives by helping smokers quit and keeping our young people from starting an addiction to nicotine,”

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said David Holmquist, Director of State Legislative Government Relations for the American Cancer Society. "In addition to saving lives and reducing suffering from tobacco use, funding from the bill will help medical providers continue seeing patients who may be most in need of their services," he added.

Groups such as the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids support higher tobacco taxes because it is a proven solution to improve public health. Research has shown that every state that has significantly increased its cigarette tax has seen substantial increases in revenue, even while reducing smoking. In a recent poll, 73 percent of Nebraska voters surveyed support raising the tobacco tax by \$1.35 per pack.



Senator Tanya Cook with MOTAC President Vickie Young and Somer Young at Advocacy Day

NO Limits: Youth Opportunity

No Limits is recruiting members for its 2011-2012 Youth Board. The Board is the guiding body for the movement. Board members plan, implement, and participate in statewide events, activities, and marketing strategies for No Limits. They also engage in local activism, educate teens on tobacco issues, and empower Nebraska youth to take action. Transportation, lodging, and meals are provided for all board meetings. Applicants must be 14-18 years old, entering grades 9-12 in the fall of 2011. Applications must be received by April 20, 2011.

About No Limits

No Limits is a youth-led movement that's all about taking a stand against Big Tobacco. Their focus is on taking action to minimize the impact the tobacco industry has in Nebraska. There are no limits to what Big Tobacco will do to market its deadly and addictive products, and there are no limits to what Nebraska teens will do to fight back! To learn more visit www.nolimitsnebraska.com.

Kidz Explore

On February 19th - 20th, MOTAC partnered with Tobacco Free Sarpy to host a booth at Kidz Explore at the Mid-America Center.

Pictures: MOTAC volunteers Denishia and Hanneka with Bucky and Kidz Explore Booth



Youth Congress

Youth Congress is a one-day event that gives Omaha Public School (OPS) students the opportunity to discuss tobacco issues. Youth Congress encourages young people to envision creative tobacco prevention projects to carry-out at their school. It is a free, all-day event with Continental Breakfast and Lunch provided. Youth Congress has sessions available to 6th, 7th and 9th grade students.

For more information, contact Toni Hernandez, with the OPS Department of Student and Community Services, at (402) 557-2143.

Pictures: October 2010 Youth Congress with 9th graders and Action 3 News provided Media Coverage.



Learn about the benefits of renting smoke-free.

Tune in to hear MOTAC on **The Real Estate Factor**.

Saturday, April 30

11 a.m.–12 p.m.

KOIL-AM 1180

For more information and free resources, visit RentSmokeFree.org.





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**Fighting Tobacco Through
Community Action!**

Partners/Members:

- Alegent Health System
- American Cancer Society
- American Lung Association
- Christ Cathedral
- Creighton Cardiac Center
- Douglas County Health Department
- Douglas County Housing
- Girl Scouts Spirit Nebraska
- Gray Group, Inc.
- Group to Alleviate Smoking Pollution of Nebraska (GASP-NE)
- Hidden Hills Health & Rehab
- Iowa Western Community College
- LiveWise Coalition
- New Creations, Inc.
- No Limits
- Omaha Police Department
- Omaha Public Schools
- Pfizer
- PRIDE-Omaha, Inc.
- Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare
- Setting the Captives Free
- Tobacco Free Cass County (TFCC)
- Tobacco Free Nebraska
- Tobacco Free Sarpy (TFS)
- University of Nebraska Medical Center - College of Nursing
- University of Nebraska Medical Center - Center for Reducing Health Disparities
- University of Nebraska Medical Center -Evaluation
- ...and many individuals.

The **Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition (MOTAC)** is a dynamic coalition comprised of over 50 health related individuals, organizations, and educational groups. MOTAC was formed in 1992 in order to strengthen tobacco control and prevention efforts in the metro Omaha area. Since its inception, MOTAC has taken the lead within Douglas County to address tobacco related issues through public education and community action.

Mission: To prevent and reduce tobacco use and the accompanying health and economic consequences in the Omaha area via prevention through public policy and education.

Goals: Reduce tobacco use, reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, and increase capacity from diverse groups.

MOTAC Officers: **Vickie Young, President** **Paul Carter, Vice President**
 Tamicka Bradley, Treasurer **Christine Stewart, Secretary**

MOTAC meets the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00 am at the American Cancer Society, 9850 Nicholas Street in Omaha. Please join us.

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