

campaign for a **smoke-free** alberta

- News Release -

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TOBACCO TAXES AND POLICIES CONTRIBUTE TO CONSECUTIVE ANNUAL REDUCTIONS IN TOBACCO USE

Tobacco sales in Alberta have declined for a second consecutive year as the result of lower consumption, according to new sales data provided by Alberta Finance. The continued reduction in consumption points to a strong cause-and-effect relationship between tobacco taxes, effective tobacco control policies and consumption.

"Alberta's tobacco taxes and policies are having the desired effect on tobacco consumption" said Ev Glasser, Manager of Health Education for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Alberta, NWT, & Nunavut. "The implementation of a provincial workplace smoking ban in 2008 combined with a 63 cent per pack tobacco tax increase in 2007 have contributed to lower sales. The evidence shows that tax increases and smoking bans are two of the most effective policy measures to help reduce tobacco use and Alberta's experience supports this conclusion."

The sales data reveals that per capita consumption fell by 6.13% in 2007 following a 63 cent per pack tobacco tax increase in April 2007. In 2008, per capita consumption decreased by 7.53% subsequent to the introduction of a provincial workplace smoking ban in January 2008 and a tobacco retail display ban in July 2008. Conversely, between 2003 and 2006 per-capita tobacco consumption increased steadily by 8.4% overall due to the absence of any meaningful tobacco control policy measures.

Health groups are expecting further reductions in consumption in 2009 as a result of a \$3.00 per carton tobacco tax increase in April 2009 combined with the implementation of the tobacco products sales ban in pharmacies, post-secondary institutions and healthcare settings in January 2009.

"Tobacco taxes are the single most effective measure to reduce tobacco use, especially among youth" said Les Hagen, Executive Director of Action on Smoking & Health. "Alberta made history in 2002 with a \$2.25 per pack tax increase on cigarettes. This tax increase contributed to a whopping 24 percent reduction in tobacco sales and it drove down teen smoking rates by one-third. We urge the Alberta government to continue to increase tobacco taxes to help achieve its objective of achieving a 12% smoking rate by 2012".

According to the World Bank, a 10% increase in the price of cigarettes results in a 4% decline in consumption among adult smokers and an 8 to 12%% decline in consumption among adolescent smokers.

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Action on Smoking & Health (ASH) • Canadian Cancer Society, Alberta/NWT Division •
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Alberta, NWT and Nunavut • The Lung Association - Alberta/NWT •
• Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada • Alberta Health Services, Cancer Epidemiology, Prevention &
Screening

CAMPAIGN FOR A
SMOKE-FREE ALBERTA 

Tobacco kills an estimated 3,000 Albertans annually — representing about one in every five deaths. Tobacco is the only legal product that kills half of its users when used exactly as intended by its manufacturers.

The Campaign for a Smoke-Free Alberta is a coalition of prominent health organizations that are working together to reduce tobacco use in Alberta.

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