

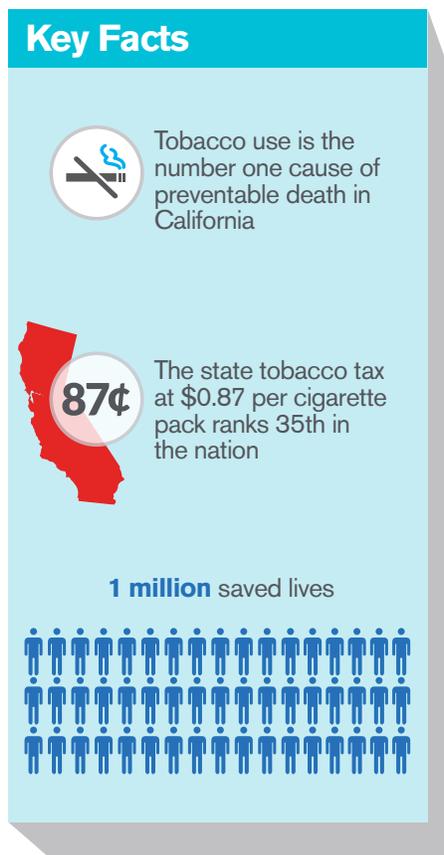
Tobacco use still has a devastating toll in our state. Every year, tobacco-related diseases impact the lives of thousands of Californians. In the past year, more than 16,000 kids started smoking, and over 220,000 high school aged kids smoked regularly. Currently, there are more than 440,000 kids alive today who will ultimately die prematurely from tobacco-related disease. Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of disease and death in California and the policies detailed in this report are proven strategies that lead to better lung health outcomes and ultimately save lives.

The American Lung Association State of Tobacco Control 2016 national report tracks progress on key tobacco control policies at the state and federal levels as of January 2, 2016. The report assigns grades to every state in four key areas: tobacco prevention and control spending, smokefree air, tobacco tax and cessation coverage.

In 2015, California did not see any upward movement in its state-level grades. While state legislative interest in tobacco control was at an all-time high during this period, Big Tobacco has fought progress every step of the way at the State Capitol. The battle between tobacco industry interests and public health in state politics has put California in a tenuous position: the tobacco industry's vast financial resources has successfully stalled meaningful public health legislation, while new, unregulated tobacco products have hit the consumer market.

This is increasingly evident in California's F grades: we rank at the bottom of the pack in funding for proven tobacco prevention and research programs and our state tobacco tax, at \$0.87, places us at 35th in the nation. Every state in the country except Missouri has raised their tobacco tax since California's last hike in 1998. If California is to make progress in reducing the number one cause of preventable death in the state, it's clear that raising the tobacco tax and increasing program funding is our best opportunity.

Key Facts



Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable death in California

The state tobacco tax at \$0.87 per cigarette pack ranks 35th in the nation

1 million saved lives

While poor state grades reflect important issues that California should address, there is much that can be done locally. Over this same period, local cities and counties in California have taken action to enact strong policies in tobacco control.

In coordination with the national report, the American Lung Association in California releases its State of Tobacco Control 2016 – California Local Grades report to track how well California municipalities protect their citizens from the burden of tobacco. The State of Tobacco Control 2016 – California Local Grades report is based on a review of county and municipal codes in four key areas for all 58 counties (which cover the unincorporated areas of the county) and 482 incorporated cities and towns in the state. Since the first such report, the number of communities with an overall A or B grade has increased dramatically.

The purpose of the State of Tobacco Control 2016 – California Local Grades report is to increase public knowledge about local laws that protect residents from the deadly toll of tobacco and to encourage local leadership to take action where improvement is needed. Leadership on key issues and solutions to these difficult problems can come from every level of government. Local elected officials can, and should, take steps to protect residents of their communities from tobacco and secondhand smoke.