



Kiowa County Health Department

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Oklahoma State Department of Health Disappointed in Supreme Court Cigarette Fee Decision

The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) is disappointed the \$1.50 per pack cigarette fee will not go into effect as scheduled. While OSDH understands the balance of powers and greatly appreciates the efforts of Governor Fallin and the Oklahoma legislature, and the decision of Oklahoma Supreme Court, it is a blow to state efforts to prevent smoking, particularly among our children.

"The tobacco companies profiting from cigarette smoking in Oklahoma understand the impact of this critical health policy," said Oklahoma Secretary of Health and Human Services and Commissioner of Health Terry Cline, "In fact, they acknowledged in their court filings that the fee would likely reduce smoking in our state."

Establishing the fee on cigarettes would have prevented 28,200 children from becoming adult smokers and would have resulted in more than 30,000 current smokers choosing to quit rather than pay the new fee. In addition, it would have saved the state \$1.2 billion dollars in long term health costs and prevented 16,700 lives from ending prematurely due to smoking-related illnesses.

"If we are going to create a healthier place for our children to live, it has to start with preventing smoking," said Dr. Cline, "Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death and disability in Oklahoma and raising the price of cigarettes to prevent our kids from taking up this deadly habit is the right thing to do."

The OSDH will continue to educate policy makers on the importance of raising the price point of cigarettes by a minimum of \$1.50 per pack. While OSDH would not have received any of the funding from the established fee, the impact on improving the health of Oklahomans makes this a critical policy issue.

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