



Tobacco Prevention Program Facing Cuts

April 2, 2009

Did you know that members of the LGBT community are between 40% and 70% more likely to smoke than non-GLBT individuals? And did you also know that tobacco use, which is responsible for heart disease, strokes, and many cancers, is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States?

That means that each year, LGBT individuals are dying from tobacco use. Our community is at risk.

Colorado's tobacco prevention program is facing drastic cuts. As of April 1, elected members of Colorado's JBC are discussing CUTTING Colorado's tobacco education and prevention program by at least \$10 million for next fiscal year (July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010). A decision may be reached by JBC in the next 48 hours!

A 2006 study conducted among nine Designated AIDS Treatment Centers (DACs) and five adult day healthcare centers found that 59.4% of patients living with HIV/AIDS were smokers. That's almost three times the smoking rate of the general population! Each year, more deaths result directly from tobacco use than from HIV, illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, suicides, and murders combined.

More About The Cuts and Our Community

In Colorado, cigarettes are exempt from sales tax, providing a \$30 million dollar tax exemption for the tobacco industry. In 2004, over 62 percent of Colorado voters approved Amendment 35 - a tax increase on both cigarettes and other tobacco products. The revenue was designated for health care services and tobacco education and cessation programs to improve the health of all Coloradans.

Colorado's Tobacco Prevention, Education and Cessation program is showing results.



Information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) showed that from 2001 to 2006, Colorado adult tobacco use dropped from 22.3 to 17.9 and youth tobacco use decreased from 18.2 percent to 14.6 percent.

However, more work is needed. Tobacco use rates among low income and certain minority populations are unacceptably above the state average. Colorado's tobacco prevention and cessation program is currently underfunded – and the LGBT community suffers. Approximately 38-50% of GLBT youth, smoke compared to 28-35% of non-GLBT youth. Lesbians smoke approximately three times more than straight women.

The current funding level is less than 50% of what the CDC recommends for comprehensive program to address tobacco use. The last time Colorado cut tobacco prevention, education and cessation funding in the past, tobacco use increased.

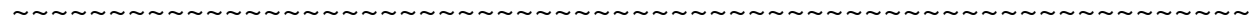


Tobacco Is a Burden on the Entire State

Tobacco use is a leading cause of increasing health care costs. Tobacco use is the primary cause of lung cancer, the number one cancer killer of men and women.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death, killing an estimated 4,300 people in Colorado each year, which is more than all fires, car accidents, suicides, homicides, cocaine or heroin overdoses and alcohol or AIDS-related deaths combined. In addition to the loss of life, tobacco related illnesses are responsible for more than \$1.3 billion in annual health care costs in Colorado. Of this \$1.3 billion, \$319 million is the portion covered by Colorado Medicaid.

History has shown that during down economic times tobacco use increases. Now is not the time to cut the only state program that address these critical health issues.





Quit Smoking Today - You Can Do It!

COLORADO QUITLINE

Check it out: A phone line just for quitters. The Colorado QuitLine will connect you to a GLBT friendly Quit Coach, who will work with you to develop a personalized quit plan and give you the guidance and support you need along the way. If you're 18 years of age or older, the QuitLine will even supply you with a free supply of nicotine patches.

And check this out: with the QuitLine, you're seven times more likely to quit successfully. So having a little help might be your thing. There's no reason to try and go it alone. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

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