

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NEWS RELEASE

HEALTH CARE ADVOCATES PURSUE JOINT TOBACCO TAX INITIATIVE FOR NOVEMBER 2006

*Measure Designed to Save Lives, Provide Emergency Care,
Fund Children's Health Insurance and Disease Research and Prevention*

SACRAMENTO—Sponsors of two proposed ballot initiatives that would provide critical funding to keep emergency rooms open, provide health insurance for children, expand nursing education and reduce smoking joined forces today to place one overall proposal on the November 2006 ballot.

The Coalition for a Healthy California joined forces with the California Hospital Association, the California Chapter Academy of Emergency Physicians, and the California Association of Emergency Nurses to sponsor a statewide initiative that would raise the state's tobacco tax by \$2.60 per pack of cigarettes to fund emergency rooms, health insurance for children, nursing education, tobacco-related disease prevention and treatment, care for patients and to reduce smoking addiction.

Joining the new effort include the American Cancer Society, American Lung Association of California, American Heart Association, The Children's Partnership, the California Hospital Association, the California Chapter, American College of Emergency Physicians, California Emergency Nurses Association, PICO California, Children Now, California Primary Care Association, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Association of California Nurse Leaders, Emergency and Acute Care Medical Corporation, and the California Association of Physician Groups.

The initiative will raise approximately \$2.27 billion annually and be distributed as follows:

- **Treatment** — 52.75% (\$1.1 billion) Includes hospital emergency care services (\$828 million), nursing education (\$100 million), community clinics (\$64 million), emergency physicians (\$72 million), Steve Thompson physician education fund (\$8 million), prostate cancer treatment (\$19 million), tobacco cessation services (\$19 million).
- **Prevention** — 42.25% (\$891 million) Includes children's health insurance (\$405 million), tobacco control, education and enforcement programs (\$194 million), cancer, heart and asthma prevention and control programs (\$292 million).
- **Research** — 5% (\$105 million) Includes tobacco-related disease and cancer research.
- **Funding** for Proposition 10 programs (\$159 million) and estimated administrative costs (\$3 million).

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"This initiative offers Californians the best way to help tackle key elements of our growing health care crisis," said Jim Knox, legislative advocacy vice president of the American Cancer Society. "We know that every 10 percent increase in the price of cigarettes will reduce youth smoking by about seven percent and overall cigarette consumption by about four percent. Tobacco tax increases are a proven way to deter our youth from smoking. We have the scientific data to show that funding comprehensive tobacco control programs results in direct benefits to the state.

"This tobacco tax will save lives," said Christine Bryant, volunteer with the American Lung Association of California and board member of the Coalition for a Healthy California. "Increasing the tobacco tax will help prevent teens from starting to smoke and will provide new resources to help California's four million smokers quit."

"Tobacco places a tremendous strain on the state's health care system, impeding our ability to address important diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and asthma," added Hannah Valantine, M.D., president of the American Heart Association Western States Affiliate.

C. Duane Dauner, president of the California Hospital Association, noted that the combined initiative will provide essential funds earmarked to help preserve hospital emergency care services.

"The joint initiative will provide direct, tangible improvements in health care for all Californians. Preventing the closure of more hospital emergency rooms and making sure we have enough nurses to care for patients are important priorities for all of us," Dauner said. "This initiative is a landmark step forward in addressing these issues."

"We believe this unprecedented coalition of well-respected health organizations is the right group to help our kids keep from smoking and lead our state to the finish line in providing affordable health insurance to all of California's children. With only 10 percent of kids still uninsured, this is an achievable goal," said Wendy Lazarus, co-president of The Children's Partnership, one of the sponsoring organizations.

Initiative sponsors said they plan to start gathering signatures early next year after receiving Title and Summary from the Attorney General's office.

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