

April 2010

Navy Prohibits Smoking Below Decks on Submarines

In April, the U.S. Navy announced that smoking will be prohibited below decks on submarines effective December 31, 2010. In announcing its decision, the Navy cited a 2009 study conducted on nine different submarines that showed non-smoking sailors were still exposed to the hazardous effects of secondhand smoke. An estimated 35 to 40 percent of active sailors on submarines are smokers, according to recent survey data from the U.S. Navy. Individual submarine commanders will still be allowed to decide if crews will be permitted to smoke on deck. The Navy plans to provide tobacco cessation programs including counseling and drug therapy in the lead up to the policy change. The American Lung Association supports the U.S. Navy's move as a step toward a tobacco-free military. (Source: *Navy Nixes Smoking on Submarines*, Matt Cherry, CNN Radio, April 9, 2010.)

Washington Increases Cigarette Tax by \$1.00, But Cuts Funding for Tobacco Control Program

On May 1, a \$1.00 increase in the tax on cigarettes took effect, having been signed into law by Gov. Christine Gregoire on April 23. This brings Washington's cigarette tax to \$3.025 per pack, 2nd highest in the country. However, it appears that funding for tobacco prevention and cessation programs was cut despite the cigarette tax increase. This will make it harder for smokers who want to quit as a result of the cigarette tax increase to get the help they need to do so. (Source: *Washington Governor Signs Package of Tax Hikes*, Curt Woodward, Associated Press, April 23, 2010.)

Senators Call for Dissolvable Tobacco Products to be Pulled from the Market

In April, U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) sent letters to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) asking that the agency pull certain dissolvable tobacco products from the market until the FDA conducts a study of their effects on children and teenagers. R.J. Reynolds is test-marketing Camel Orbs, Strips and Sticks in 3 U.S. cities—Columbus, OH; Portland, OR; and Indianapolis, IN. In their letters, the Senators cited a recent study in the journal *Pediatrics*, which showed that dissolvable tobacco products have high levels of nicotine compared to regular cigarettes posing a potential risk to children who might eat them and get sick. The new products, made out of ground tobacco with mint or cinnamon flavoring, come in a several sizes and are designed to dissolve in the user's mouth. The Orbs are small pellets that look like pez candies, the Sticks are twisted sticks that resemble toothpicks, and the Strips are thin sheets similar to breath strips. FDA's scientific advisory committee is expected to take a look at these products after it finishes studying the effects of menthol in cigarettes. (Source: *Lautenberg Wants FDA to Yank Candy-Like Tobacco from Store Shelves*, Jordy Yager, The Hill, April 24, 2010.)

Senators Introduce Legislation to Help Prevent Tobacco Smuggling

On April 29, U.S. Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Representative Lloyd

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Doggett (D-TX) introduced legislation designed to address tobacco smuggling in the United States. The Smuggled Tobacco Prevention (STOP) Act would require unique markings on packages of tobacco products such as high-tech tax stamp systems, enhance law enforcement's ability to prevent and punish illegal diversions of tobacco products and impose new labeling and reporting requirements to be able to better track tobacco products. The Department of Justice estimates that tobacco smuggling in the U.S. costs federal and state governments at least \$5 billion in lost revenue annually.

News on Smokefree Air Laws/Ordinances

Michigan

On May 1, a Michigan law prohibiting smoking in almost all public places and workplaces, including restaurants and bars took effect, finally giving workers and patrons protection from toxic secondhand smoke. The law was approved in December 2009. Smoking will continue to be allowed in existing casinos, cigar bars and tobacco specialty stores. Similar laws in Kansas and Wisconsin will take effect in July. For information on the new law from the Michigan Department of Community Health, click here.

To view your state's restrictions on smoking, go to: <http://slati.lungusa.org>, click on a state and then the "Clean Indoor Air link.

News on Cigarette Tax Increases

Hawaii

On April 24, Gov. Linda Lingle signed legislation into law that increases Hawaii's cigarette tax by 20 cents per pack, effective July 1. This increase is on top of an already scheduled 20 cent increase, meaning the state cigarette tax will increase by a total of 40 cents on July 1 to \$3.00 per pack. Once the increase takes effect, there will be four states with cigarette taxes of \$3.00 per pack or more. The tax on little cigars will go up by the same amount, as Hawaii law requires the products to be taxed at the same rate as cigarettes. (Source: *Hawaii Passes \$10.1B Budget*, Tax Hikes, Mark Niese, Associated Press, April 28, 2010.)

South Carolina

On May 5, the state Senate gave its final approval to legislation increasing South Carolina's cigarette tax by 50 cents per pack. The bill was previously approved by the state House of Representatives, so it will now go to Gov. Mark Sanford for his action. Governor Sanford has promised to veto the legislation, according to media reports. If the measure is vetoed, it would require a 2/3 vote in the state House and Senate to override the veto. If ultimately approved, the increase would bring South Carolina's cigarette tax to 57 cents per pack. (Source: *SC Lawmakers Raise Lowest Smoke Tax; Veto Promosed*, Jim Davenport, Associated Press, May 5, 2010.)

For more information on tobacco taxes in your state, go to: <http://slati.lungusa.org>, click on a state and then the "Tobacco Excise Tax" link.

If you have questions or comments about the content in this e-newsletter, or have questions on tobacco control policy issues, please contact Thomas Carr, Manager, National Policy, American Lung Association National Office, Washington, DC, at tcarr@lungusa.org. To subscribe to this e-newsletter, go to <http://www.lungusa.org/get-involved/sign-up.html>.

American Lung Association

1301 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20004

T: 202 785 3355 | F: 202 452 1805 | E: eNewsletters@lungusa.org

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