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Does Idaho Make the Grade in Tobacco Control Policies?

BOISE – Idaho scored a range of grades from A to F in the American Lung Association's annual *State of Tobacco Control 2007* report, which highlighted progress in limiting youth access to tobacco products and detailed challenges the state faces in higher cigarette taxes and spending on tobacco prevention and control.

Idaho received the following grades in the report's four key tobacco control policies:

- F** - Tobacco Prevention and Control Spending
- B** - Smoke-free Air
- D** - Cigarette Taxes
- A** - Youth Access to Tobacco Products

Although Idaho's annual spending on tobacco prevention and control is much lower than the Center for Disease Control's *Best Practices Minimum State Spending Requirement*, the state has already increased its funding for FY 09 from \$2.7 million to \$4.2 million.

"Idaho is making a concerted effort to increase spending on its tobacco prevention and control programs," stated Kristin Matthews, Executive Director of the American Lung Association of Idaho. "Through the Millennium Fund, Idaho is moving toward protecting Idahoans from the impact of tobacco use, especially its children," added Matthews.

Idaho spends an estimated \$561 million per year on smoking-related expenses. This is based on smoking-attributable health care expenditures and average annual productivity losses.

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One Breath
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Cigarette tax raises prevent children from starting to smoke and have motivated thousands of Americans to quit smoking. Idaho's D-grade is based on its low tax rate of 57 cents on a pack of cigarettes. Only twelve states have lower cigarette taxes with the majority of them from tobacco growing states. Studies show that for every 10 percent increase in the cost of a pack of cigarettes, there is a seven percent decline in youth consumption.

Data released in 2007 shows the tobacco industry spends more than \$13 billion dollars annually to market its products to consumers. Approximately \$58 million dollars of that amount is spent each year in Idaho. Data further suggests the tobacco industry continued to target youth in its marketing campaigns.

"Only the strongest tobacco control laws will protect people in Idaho. The tragedy of tobacco use will be resolved only when comprehensive, strong policies are adopted to curb smoking," said Matthews. "Our recent successes in smoke-free air laws and restricting youth access to tobacco products shows that Idaho can be a leader in protecting the health of all its citizens," expressed Matthews.

The Report Card

The *American Lung Association State of Tobacco Control* report card grades each state on key tobacco control policies including cigarette taxes, smoke-free air, tobacco prevention programs and youth access to tobacco products. The laws are graded against recognized criteria and translates each state's relative progress into a letter grade comprised of A, B, C, D or F. A grade of A is assigned to excellent state policy, while an F indicates inadequate state laws. The report can be found online at www.lungidaho.org

About the American Lung Association of Idaho

The American Lung Association of Idaho was founded as part of the first nationwide corps of volunteers organized to combat a single disease: tuberculosis. Our goals include reducing tobacco use, especially among young people; preventing and controlling air pollution; and providing education and funding research to make life more comfortable for people with asthma or other lung disease. For more information on programs to fight tobacco use, bad air and the asthma epidemic, call 1-800-LUNG USA or visit our website at www.lungidaho.org