

Why Voters Should Vote “Yes” on Measure 3.

Here’s the problem: Tobacco use continues to take a toll on North Dakota, killing more than 900 residents every year and costing the state \$247 million in annual excess health care costs – much of it borne by taxpayers.

Here’s the solution: We can reduce this terrible toll on our state’s physical and fiscal health by voting “Yes” on Measure 3 on November 4th.

Measure 3 requires that a portion of the money North Dakota receives from tobacco companies from the 1998 tobacco settlement be used to create a comprehensive statewide tobacco prevention program. Measure 3 would require North Dakota to spend the tobacco settlement money in the way it was originally intended – to fund tobacco prevention programs that prevent kids from smoking and help smokers quit. Importantly, not one penny of taxpayer money would be used to fund this program.

Each year, more than 2,500 kids in North Dakota try their first cigarette, and another 800 kids become regular smokers. One-third of these smokers will eventually die from their addiction. The tobacco companies know that 90 percent of smokers start as teens, and they need to addict a new generation of customers to replace the smokers who quit or die every day. Despite our best efforts, 1.9 million packs of cigarettes are bought and sold to our kids, aged 18 and under in North Dakota annually. We, as a community, share a responsibility to model good behavior and support policies that protect our kids from being preyed upon by an industry quoted by saying, “The base of our business is the high school student,” Lorillard Tobacco 1978. It is our responsibility to value our youth as much, if not more, as the tobacco does and continues to do. We must continue to protect our kids from tobacco.

We know that tobacco prevention programs work. After funding for tobacco prevention was increased in California, smoking rates have dropped to 14 percent, compared to 21 percent for North Dakota, and lung cancer rates have declined four times faster than in North Dakota

Accordingly, it is clear that fully funding North Dakota’s tobacco prevention and cessation efforts at the CDC-recommended level would, among other public health benefits:

- Reduce youth smoking by 12.7 percent
- Stop more than 4,500 North Dakota kids from becoming addicted adult smokers
- Prompt more than 3,500 current adult smokers to quit for good
- Save more than 2,380 North Dakota citizens from dying prematurely from smoking
- And, would save North Dakota \$113 million in related healthcare costs

More than 42 public health organizations, including the American Lung Association, the March of Dimes, the North Dakota Medical Association, the North Dakota Nurses

Association and the Respiratory Therapists have endorsed Measure 3. Please join these organizations on November 4th by voting “Yes” on Measure 3.

Keep our promise to North Dakota’s kids, vote “Yes” on Measure 3.
(See STPND.com for more information)