


SC's Cigarette Tax Increase- One State's Experience



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A Quick History

- SC's tax was the lowest in the country at 7-cents
- The tax hadn't been raised for 33 years, back in 1977
- The Division of Tobacco Prevention and Control did not receive recurring funds from either MSA dollars or the state budget
- Advocates initially could not get any legislator to sponsor a bill to increase the tax

The Campaign

- Over the years, a diverse group of advocates joined forces, spearheaded by
 - American Cancer Society
 - American Heart Association
 - American Lung Association
 - The SC Tobacco Collaborative (state coalition)
- Using many of the tools found in the toolkit, state-specific messages were developed and utilized for advocacy and education
- Many of the “myths” listed in the toolkit were used by opponents of the increase. They are easily debunked by data

Results

- Following a lengthy, hard-fought ten year campaign, the cigarette tax in SC was increased to 57-cents
 - An increase of 50-cents
 - \$5 million dollars allocated to tobacco prevention and cessation
- Cultivating legislative champions (by the partners) was key

And now...

- Despite the allocation of recurring funding, we must continue to be vigilant
 - Legislative champions continue to be important as both internal and external demands on the dollars develop resulting from extreme state budget cuts
 - Have to be able to show short-term successes along with the improvements in long-term outcomes
 - Will be interesting to see if these funds become a solution rather than a problem (i.e. will they increase it more or support OTP increases?)