

# No-tobacco plan includes tripling ND cigarette tax

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By: **Associated Press**, Associated Press

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The advisory board also wants to ban smoking in businesses and places where people gather. Smoking in bars and outdoor stadiums would be outlawed. The board wants to meet those goals within five years.

North Dakota voters approved the board's formation last November. It is financed by money from a state lawsuit settlement against tobacco companies.

Former state Health Department tobacco prevention director Kathleen Mangskau chairs the board.

Mangskau says North Dakota is known as the "ashtray of the upper Midwest" because of its low cigarette tax of 44 cents a pack. She says the tax should be \$2 a pack.

Details of a North Dakota anti-tobacco committee's plans for reducing tobacco use in the state over five years:

**TOBACCO TAX:** North Dakota's tax on a pack of 20 cigarettes would rise from 44 cents to \$2, with a proportional increase in state taxes on other forms of tobacco, including smokeless, pipe and chewing tobacco. The tobacco tax has not increased since 1993. If the Legislature declined to approve the tax increase, it could be offered to voters directly as an initiated measure.

**SMOKING BANS:** The North Dakota Legislature and local communities will be pushed to ban smoking in all workplaces and places of public assembly, including bars and outdoor arenas. The plan sets a goal of having five communities with comprehensive smoke-free ordinances by June 2013.

**LOCAL SCHOOLS:** At least half the North Dakota's school districts would not allow tobacco use within school buildings or on school grounds at any time. Tobacco use would be prohibited at school functions, such as football games, no matter where they were held. Students would not be allowed to wear clothing with tobacco advertising.

**COLLEGES:** Eleven North Dakota colleges would have tobacco-free policies. Eight already do, according to Kathleen Mangskau, chairwoman of the anti-tobacco advisory board.

**HELP IN QUITTING:** Increase the usage of a toll-free North Dakota "tobacco quitline" from 0.7 percent of the state's smokers to 2 percent. Encourage large employers to cover tobacco cessation treatments with their health insurance policies.

**PLAN DETAILS:** The anti-tobacco plan is to be posted on the Web site of Action for a Tobacco-Free North Dakota, <http://www.atfnd.org/>