

CAMPAIGN For TOBACCO-FREE Kids®

SOME POTENTIAL COST SAVINGS FROM REDUCING TOBACCO USE IN THE USA

Immediate Savings From Fewer Smoking-Caused Heart Attacks and Strokes

Most health care savings from reduced smoking do not begin to appear for several years and do not peak for a decade or more. However, a rigorous analysis published in the medical journal *Circulation* estimated that a one percentage point reduction in the percentage of adults smoking nationwide would result in 920 fewer hospitalizations for heart attacks and 530 fewer strokes in the very first year, and produce related health care savings of over \$40 million dollars.

Although these nationwide savings might seem modest, maintaining the one percentage point reduction over five years would result in more than 11,800 fewer heart attacks and 6,300 fewer strokes, with savings of roughly \$600 million. Reducing adult smoking rates by one percentage point per year in the USA for five years would result in over 30,000 fewer heart attacks, over 16,000 fewer strokes, and cumulative health care savings of over \$1.5 billion -- with rapidly growing annual savings in the following years. Conservatively translating the study's findings to the current situation in the USA produces the following savings estimates.

THE USA					
<u>Some Savings From a One-Time 1% Point Reduction to the Percentage of Adult Smokers</u>					
	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>	<u>Year 4</u>	<u>Year 5</u>
Fewer Heart Attacks	969	2,200	2,836	3,158	3,314
Fewer Strokes	564	1,202	1,528	1,671	1,736
Health Care Savings (millions)	\$46.1	\$107.0	\$142.6	\$160.5	\$170.9
<u>Some Savings From Reducing the Adult Smoking Rates By 1% Point Per Year For 5 Years</u>					
	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>	<u>Year 4</u>	<u>Year 5</u>
Fewer Heart Attacks	969	3169	6004	9162	12476
Fewer Strokes	564	1766	3294	4965	6701
Health Care Savings (millions)	\$46.1	\$153.1	\$295.8	\$456.2	\$627.2

Note: Table does not include other immediate savings from smoking reductions, such as those from reducing smoking by pregnant women. Nor does it reflect the enormous additional health care savings from reducing the amount of smoking-caused lung cancer, emphysema, chronic lung disease, and other medical problems, which would begin appearing several years after the adult-smoking declines. Similarly, this chart includes nothing on the massive future health savings from reducing youth smoking.

Sources: J.M. Lightwood & S.A. Glantz, "Short-Term Economic and Health Benefits of Smoking Cessation -- Myocardial Infarction and Stroke," *Circulation* 96(4): 1089-1096 (August 19, 1997). The article's savings calculations were translated to the USA based on the relative size of a 1% decline in the state's adult-smoking rate. Dollar amounts are in constant 1995 dollars (as in the study). U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows that medical care costs tend to rise faster than general inflation and have gone up by 13% since 1995; so actual the USA savings are likely to be even larger than the above amounts.

Could the USA reduce adult smoking rates by one percentage point per year to obtain these savings? From 1988 to 1996, California's anti-smoking program reduced the percentage of adults who smoked by about one percentage point per year, dropping from 26.7% to 18.1%.

Massachusetts has had similar success with its statewide tobacco control program; and early results from Oregon and Florida have been very positive. If enough states invest an adequate portion of their tobacco settlement proceeds in comprehensive new statewide efforts to reduce tobacco use, the USA, as a whole, could do at least as well as California did.