

Tobacco-free State Properties

Creating tobacco-free state properties will improve the health, wellness and productivity of employees, clients, volunteers and visitors. Tobacco use remains the No. 1 preventable cause of death in Oregon. More than 22 percent of all deaths can be attributed to tobacco use.

Death and disability resulting from tobacco use costs Oregon lives, and dollars. In 2009, tobacco cost Oregonians nearly \$2.4 billion, with \$1.25 billion in direct medical costs and almost \$1.15 billion in lost productivity due to early death. Costs to Medicaid top \$287 million every year.

Conservative estimates find that the 9 percent of state employees who smoke cost the state more than **\$13 million** each year. Because taxpayers foot the bill for state employees' medical benefits, state agencies bear some responsibility for assisting those employees in being as healthy as possible. Implementing a smokefree campus and property policy could save approximately \$1 million per year in medical and economic costs. Over time, the savings would be substantial.

Tobacco-free campuses and property not only encourage tobacco users to quit, they also protect employees, clients and visitors from exposure to the toxins in secondhand smoke. The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that there is **no** safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke contains more than 50 known carcinogens as well as other chemicals that damage DNA such as cyanide and carbon monoxide.

While exposure to secondhand smoke in entryways is not safe for anyone, it is particularly dangerous for sensitive groups such as people with asthma and/or upper respiratory disease, children and seniors.

According to a 2007 survey, 92 percent of State of Oregon employees, including 69 percent of smokers, agreed that state buildings and grounds should be tobacco free. The tobacco-free state property policy makes Oregon a model for health.*

Sources:

* BRFSS of State Employees: 1,675 non-Oregon University System respondents as of Nov. 29, 2007. These data are not weighted.

Calculation 1:

32,795 state employees (as per DAS facilities worksheet) x 9% (smoking prevalence in PEBB population, BSSE 2010) = 2,952 adult smokers working for the state.

2,952 smokers x \$4,650 ([CDC estimate](#)) for how much each smoker costs employers annually - lost productivity + direct medical expenditures, in 2012 dollars) = \$13,726,800 each year.

Calculation 2:

32,795 state employees (as per DAS facilities worksheet) x 9% (smoking prevalence in PEBB population, BSSE 2010) = 2,952 adult smokers working for the state.

2,952 smokers x \$4,430 (annual cost of smokers to employers, estimate used in the [2010 Cessation ROI study from Penn State](#), slightly different model than the CDC estimate) = \$13,077,360 each year.