

Testimony in Support of Tobacco Tax Increase (HB 2315)

16 February 2017

Mr. Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Lougene Marsh, and I am the Director of the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE).

Our department is committed to promoting health and preventing disease in our community. For many years JCDHE has worked with the community to prevent youth initiation of smoking and supported those who wish to stop using tobacco or vaping products. An increase in the tobacco tax is an evidence based action that can make a significant impact in reducing the burden of tobacco on the health of Kansans. The Governor's proposed cigarette tax increase of \$1.00 per pack will have significant health benefits and increasing the tax beyond his proposal to \$1.50 per pack would further enhance the benefits as described below:

Saving lives and improving health:

- 16,200 youth prevented from becoming adult smokers
- 20,000 adults prevented from continuing to use tobacco
- 10,200 premature smoking-caused deaths prevented
- 3,500 smoking-affected pregnancies and births prevented in the next five years

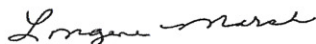
Savings projected over the next five years from reduced smoking rates:

- \$3.62 million – fewer lung cancer cases
- \$8.72 million – fewer smoking-affected pregnancies
- \$7.65 million – fewer smoking-caused heart attacks and strokes
- \$3.00 million – KanCare savings
- Long term health care costs savings - \$740.24 million.

Each year 4,400 Kansans die from smoking related illness, and it continues to be the leading preventable cause of death in our state. There is a large science base that correlates increased tobacco pricing with reduced youth smoking rates and higher rates of smoking cessation.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important health promotion measure.

Respectfully submitted



Lougene Marsh, MPA

