



# MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

*Every physician matters, each patient counts.*

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.1848/H.2763  
AN ACT PROTECTING YOUTH FROM NICOTINE ADDICTION  
BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON REVENUE  
SEPTEMBER 6, 2023**

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) is a professional association of over 25,000 physicians, residents, and medical students across all clinical disciplines, organizations, and practice settings. The Medical Society is committed to advocating on behalf of patients, to provide them a better health care system, and on behalf of physicians, to help them provide the best care possible. The Massachusetts Medical Society strongly supports comprehensive prevention, education, cessation, and efforts to prevent morbidity and mortality associated with tobacco use. In pursuing those aims, the MMS strives for health equity. As such, MMS wishes to be recorded in **support of S.1848/H.2763, *An Act protecting youth from nicotine addiction***, which would increase the tax on cigarettes by \$1.00 to \$4.51 and increase the tax on cigars from 40% of wholesale to 80% of wholesale. Increasing the price of tobacco products through taxation is a proven strategy for reducing youth tobacco use.

Massachusetts' low youth cigarette smoking rate is due in part to its pattern of consistently raising cigarette taxes every few years, which has not been done since 2013. It is time to do so again. Tobacco product use is started and established primarily during adolescence. Nearly ninety percent of adult smokers started using tobacco before they were eighteen years old.<sup>1</sup> Eighty percent of youth smokers will become adult smokers and one-half of adult smokers will die prematurely from tobacco-related diseases.<sup>2</sup> Without strong prevention policies, 103,000 Massachusetts kids alive today will die from smoking. Tobacco and nicotine use costs Massachusetts more than \$4 billion annually in health care costs. Cigars, currently taxed at just

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (US) Office on Smoking and Health. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: [A Report of the Surgeon General, Atlanta \(GA\): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(US\)](#); 2012. PMID: 22876391.

40% of wholesale, are often cheaper than cigarettes and sold at corner stores, which make them more accessible to youth. Taxing these relatively inexpensive cigars at the more appropriate rate of 80% wholesale will help make them less attractive to price-sensitive populations, including young people. Price increases on tobacco products are one of the most effective ways to protect youth from becoming addicted to tobacco and nicotine. Tobacco taxes are a key strategy in the fight to make sure that young people in the Commonwealth grow up without the burden of tobacco and nicotine addiction.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and for your work on this important issue. The Medical Society respectfully urges a favorable report on S.1848/H.2763, *An Act protecting youth from nicotine addiction*.