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February 22, 2017

The Honorable Jim Smith
Chair
Revenue Committee
Nebraska Legislature
P.O. Box 94604, Room 1116
Lincoln, NE 68509

Re: American Medical Association support for LB 438

Dear Chairman Smith:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I am writing to express our support for Legislative Bill (LB) 438, legislation to increase cigarette and tobacco taxes and dedicate funding to vital health care programs and services. The AMA applauds the willingness of Nebraska's policymakers to address tobacco prevention and cessation efforts and invest in public health.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States. In Nebraska alone, 2,500 people die prematurely each year and 75,000 have a serious illness due to exposure to tobacco.¹ Cigarette and tobacco tax increases are one of the most effective ways to discourage smoking and other tobacco use, especially among children. Research has demonstrated that increasing the price of tobacco products via excise tax reduces the initiation, prevalence, and intensity of tobacco use.² For these reasons, this legislation will have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of Nebraska's residents and save thousands of lives.

The AMA thanks you for your efforts on this important public health issue and encourages you to support LB 438. If you have any questions, please contact Annalia Michelman, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at annalia.michelman@ama-assn.org or (312) 464-4788.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Nebraska Medical Association

¹ STATE System State Highlights, Office on Smoking and Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016).
² *The Health Consequences of Smoking: 50 Years of Progress. A Report of the Surgeon General*, US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General (2014).