

February 27, 2019

The Honorable Lou Ann Linehan  
Chairwoman, Revenue Committee  
Nebraska Legislature  
P.O. Box 94604  
Lincoln, NE 68509

Re: AMA Support for L.B. 710

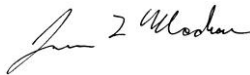
Dear Chairwoman Linehan:

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 (L.B.) 710, legislation to increase tobacco taxes and dedicate funding to vital health care programs and services.

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.<sup>1</sup> If current smoking rates persist, 38,000 children now alive in Nebraska will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.<sup>2</sup> These deaths are preventable. Research shows that cigarette and tobacco excise taxes are one of the most effective ways to reduce the initiation, prevalence and intensity of tobacco use, especially among children.<sup>3</sup> With passage of this legislation, Nebraska will see 12,300 current smokers quit and stop 12,100 young people from becoming smokers.<sup>4</sup>

This legislation will save lives. The AMA urges you to support L.B. 710 and thanks you for your consideration of our position. If we can be of assistance, please contact Annalia Michelman, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, AMA Advocacy Resource Center, at [annalia.michelman@ama-assn.org](mailto:annalia.michelman@ama-assn.org) or (312) 464-4788.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD

cc: Nebraska Medical Association

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

<sup>2</sup> Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, *The Toll of Tobacco in Nebraska* (2018).

<sup>3</sup> *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).

<sup>4</sup> Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, *A \$1.50 Cigarette Tax Increase in Nebraska Generates Greater Revenue, Public Health Benefits, And Cost Savings Than A \$1.35 Increase* (2018).