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North Carolina Cigarette Tax Remains One of the Lowest in the Nation

RALEIGH - "We're disappointed that our legislature had an historic opportunity to do something meaningful for the health of our children, but instead just passed a tax without any real health benefit," said Pam Seamans, Executive Director of the North Carolina Alliance for Health, a coalition of organizations that has been working to increase the state's cigarette tax by 75 cents in order to keep children from beginning to smoke.

Seamans was responding to the North Carolina General Assembly's inability to increase the cigarette tax beyond 25 cents per pack even after many months of debate and numerous public opinion polls showing support for a more substantive tax hike.

"One of the best ways to reduce smoking-caused harms and costs in North Carolina is to raise the state's cigarette tax rate, which will immediately help to reduce existing smoking rates and prevent new youths from becoming addicted smokers," said Seamans. "At the very minimum, North Carolina should increase its cigarette tax rate to the nationwide state average. That means quickly raising its cigarette tax rate by 85 cents per pack to establish a new state cigarette tax of 90 cents per pack – and then quickly starting to enjoy all the many related benefits. The people, businesses, and taxpayers of North Carolina deserve no less."

North Carolina continues to have one of the lowest cigarette taxes in the nation. The current national average cigarette tax is 91.2 cents. Currently, South Carolina has the lowest tax at seven cents per pack followed by Missouri at 17 cents, Mississippi at 18 cents, Tennessee at 20 cents, and North Carolina at 30 cents a pack.

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