

Allison Welsh  
1415 9<sup>th</sup> Ave E  
Langdon, ND 58249  
awelsh@rivier.edu  
February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Representative Zachary Ista  
Finance and Taxation Committee  
North Dakota House of Representatives  
600 E Boulevard Ave  
Bismarck, ND 58505

Subject: Support for House Bill 1570 – Tobacco Tax Increase

Dear Representative Zachary Ista,

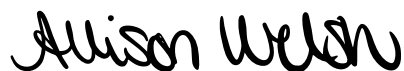
As a pharmacist and supporter of population health, I am writing to express my strong support for HB 1570, which increases North Dakota's tobacco tax. With one of the lowest tobacco taxes in the nation at only \$0.44 per pack, our state fall behind other states in adopting strategies that deter tobacco use. Studies have demonstrated that increased tobacco taxes decrease smoking rates, particularly among youth, young adults, and low-income individuals. Increased tobacco taxes can also reduce the prevalence of tobacco-related diseases like cancer and heart disease.

With HB 1570 delivering 50% of the tax revenue to the Tax Distribution Health Fund, much needed resources for mental health services can be supported for the nearly 29% of adults in North Dakota who report symptoms of anxiety or depression. Increased funding for mental health services is both necessary and timely and this bill provides a solution to this relevant health concern of more than a quarter of North Dakota's population. Additionally, aligning North Dakota's tobacco tax with neighboring states would create an aligned economic landscape while discouraging across border cigarette purchases

While arguments exist about the economic impacts that increased taxation may have on small businesses, the long-term health benefits far outweigh the short-term sales declines. The increased revenue can be reinvested in public health initiatives, ultimately reducing healthcare costs and improving overall wellbeing.

For these reasons, I urge you to support HB 1570. This bill is a crucial step toward a healthier and stronger North Dakota.

Sincerely,



Allison Welsh, PharmD, MBA  
Rivier University MPH Student