

December 15, 2015

Stoptuitionhikes.com
17322 Can-Ada Rd.
Nampa, ID 83687

Re: CDHD Board of Health Endorsement of the Stoptuitionhikes.com Ballot Initiative Effort

Central District Health Department's Board of Health provides our endorsement of the Stoptuitionhikes.com ballot initiative – The College, Not Cancer Act – as a unique approach to improve public health in Idaho.


Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable illness and death in our country and our state. In fact, tobacco products take the lives of just under 500,000 Americans every year through cancer, cardiovascular, and pulmonary disease – 1,800 of those annual fatalities are our friends and neighbors in the great state of Idaho.

An evidenced-based public health policy strategy to reduce tobacco use is to increase the price of tobacco products. Idaho has one of the lowest tobacco tax rates in the United States and is the lowest in the western region. The College, Not Cancer Act is projected to save the lives of 6,000 Idahoans, prevent 12,500 youth from ever starting the habit, and help 7,800 Idaho adults to quit smoking while saving the state in excess of \$300 million in long-term healthcare costs.

A major social determinant of health is education. With the decline in state general fund support through the recession, tuition and fees increased making postsecondary education less affordable for many Idaho students. Idaho ranks 50th in the country for the percentage of high school seniors who attend a two- or four-year college or university. The College, Not Cancer Act will provide considerable funding to help Idaho students finance their college educations.

The College, Not Cancer Act will help Idaho's Local Public Health Districts achieve their vision Healthy People in Healthy Communities. Not only will the increased price of tobacco products have an immediate and dramatic positive impact on tobacco use, but better-educated individuals live longer, healthier lives than those with less education, and their children are more likely to thrive. CDHD fully supports this initiative.

Sincerely,



Steven F. Scanlin, Chair
Board of Health

Serving Valley, Elmore, Boise, and Ada Counties

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