

NJ Ranks Low in Anti-Smoking Programs

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The states this year will collect \$25.1 billion in revenue from the tobacco settlement and tobacco taxes, but are spending just 2.3 percent of it - \$567.5 million - on tobacco prevention and cessation programs. A new report shows New Jersey ranks very low...38th among the states in the funding of tobacco prevention programs.

The report, titled "A Broken Promise to our Children: The 1998 State Tobacco Settlement 11 years Later," assesses whether the states have kept their promise to use funds from the state tobacco settlements - estimated to total \$246 billion over the first 25 years - to fight tobacco use. The states also collect billions more each year from tobacco taxes.

New Jersey's spending on tobacco prevention amounts to 0.9% of the estimated \$968 million in tobacco-generated revenue the state collects each year from settlement payments and tobacco taxes. With such a tight budget, New Jersey like many other states have had to cut back. Vince Wilmore with The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids says though New Jersey has made lots of progress in reducing smoking we can't declare victory just yet.

New Jersey is receiving more tobacco-generated revenue than ever before as a result of a 12.5-cent cigarette tax increase, bringing it to \$2.70 a pack, which went into effect this year.

The CDC Recommends that New Jersey spend \$119.8 million a year to have an effective, comprehensive tobacco prevention program. New Jersey actually spends 7.4% of the CDC's recommendation.

By: Racquel Williams

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