

Cutting smoking programs will increase costs

March 24, 2010

I do not agree with our governor's elimination of New Jersey's tobacco control programs. The QuitCenters, QuitLine and QuitNet overseen by the Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program (CTCP) in New Jersey have helped many New Jerseyans quit smoking successfully.

Although the increase in cigarette taxes to \$2.70 a pack last year has been a successful deterrent to smoking, tax increases alone will not eradicate smoking in New Jersey. Smokers will find a way to afford a pack or cigarettes, whether they purchase the generic brands of cigarettes, cigars, or roll their own, they will manage to smoke.

Smoking is not only an expense to smokers, but it's also very expensive to non-smokers in New Jersey. Tobacco use costs our state more than \$3 billion in health-care expenditures each year, with nearly a billion dollars paid by New Jersey State Medicaid.

The estimate for our state's cigarette tax revenue is \$750 million going into the New Jersey State Treasury. Wouldn't it be wise to spend 1 percent of the cigarette tax revenue to keep these important programs intact?

By cutting our QuitCenters, QuitNet and QuitLines, I fear the governor's budget will ultimately worsen the financial burden to all New Jersey residents.

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Mom Dilemma #36:
Your daughter insists on wearing her princess costume to the grocery store. Allow it or not?

YES, at least she's dressed!

NO, I have some rules!

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