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Karen Saylor, MD, President | Jeffrey S. Barkin, MD, President-Elect | Erik N. Steele, DO, FAAFP, Chair, Board of Directors  
Andrew B. MacLean, JD, CEO | Dan Morin, Director of Communications & Government Affairs

TO: The Honorable Ben Chipman, Chair  
The Honorable Maureen Terry, Chair  
Members, Joint Standing Committee On Taxation

FM: Dan Morin, Director of Communications and Government Affairs

DATE: May 13, 2021

RE: **Support**

LD 1423, An Act To Prevent and Reduce Tobacco Use by Ensuring Adequate Funding for Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Programs and by Raising the Tax on Tobacco Products and To Provide Funding To Reduce Disparities in Health Outcomes Based on Certain Factors

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The [Maine Medical Association](#) is the state's largest professional physician organization representing more than 4300 physicians, residents, and [medical students](#) across all clinical specialties, organizations, and practice settings.

We come before you today to submit testimony in support of [LD 1423, An Act To Prevent and Reduce Tobacco Use by Ensuring Adequate Funding for Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Programs and by Raising the Tax on Tobacco Products and To Provide Funding To Reduce Disparities in Health Outcomes Based on Certain Factors](#).

- Both cancer incidence and our overall health care costs in Maine are clearly related to the use of tobacco products by our residents.
- The tobacco habit resulting from the nicotine frequently begins in youth where price is especially important.
- Both increasing the tobacco tax and increased funding for tobacco use prevention programs will dissuade young adults from initiating the use of tobacco products.
- Smoking is the [leading cause of preventable death in the United States](#).

- According to the American Lung Association, the economic cost due to smoking in Maine alone is over [\\$811 million per year](#).
- There are 2,390 smoking attributable deaths per year in Maine.
- On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than nonsmokers.
- Recent research shows smokers are at an increased risk for severe COVID-19 cases.
- If smoking continues at the current rate among U.S. youth, 5.6 million of today's Americans younger than 18 years of age are expected to die prematurely from a smoking-related illness. Maine, Vermont & Connecticut. This represents about one in every 13 Americans aged 17 years or younger who are alive today.

The Maine Medical Association strongly supports this significant tobacco tax increase as a measure to reduce tobacco use in our population. The MMA supports the bill also because it provides funding for tobacco use prevention and cessation, and as importantly, will initiate research to identify and reduce health care disparities in health care outcomes based on underrepresented demographics in Maine.

Passing LD 1423 will help prevent young people from becoming smokers and reflect a strong commitment by Maine's leaders to reducing tobacco use and the associated health consequences. Seventy-five percent of chronic illness is preventable, and tobacco is primary driver. Strong tobacco policy is the key to strong health care system The MMA urges a vote of Ought to Pass. Thank you for your public service.

For more information call/text/email:

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