



MEMORANDUM

TO: Iowans for Wellness and Prevention
FROM: Eily Hayes, Global Strategy Group, LLC
RE: Recent polling results
Date: November 2, 2007

Summary:

Iowa smokers want to quit. Most are either trying to quit now, or plan to do so within the next year. The vast majority have tried unsuccessfully to quit smoking in the past, most more than once. Most former smokers attempted to quit at least once before succeeding.

Smokers who want to quit rank access to FDA-approved smoking cessation treatments at the top of a list of things that would make it easier for them to quit. Smokers and ex-smokers alike believe health insurance companies should cover FDA-approved smoking cessation treatments as a standard benefit.

Smokers and recent quitters agree that the cigarette tax increase enacted in March has reduced smoking. A majority of current smokers says the tax increase makes them more likely to try to quit or cut back on the number of cigarettes they smoke. More than half of former smokers cite the hike as a factor in their decision to quit.

While smokers are historically resistant to smoking bans and making work places smoke-free, nearly a third say such policies would make them more likely to try to quit smoking. A similar number of recent quitters say a smoke-free policy in their workplace made it easier for them to quit smoking.

Smoking behaviors and quit patterns:

Most Iowa smokers want to quit smoking. Two-thirds (65%) are currently trying to quit or are likely to try to quit in the next year. Lighter smokers, younger smokers, and those who have not smoked for very long are most likely to try to quit smoking. These smokers have fewer failed quit attempts in their past. On the other hand, heavier, older, and long-term smokers are less likely to try to quit now, but have a greater number of failed quit attempts.

Commitment to quitting and quitting history among various smoker groups							
	Quitting				Quit attempts		
	Currently trying to quit	Likely To try	Trying or likely	Neither	Never	1-2	3+
All smokers.....	40%	25	65%	35	18%	36	40
Cigarettes per day							
1-10.....	47%	21	67%	33	17%	37	41
10-20.....	39%	30	68%	32	16%	38	41
21-30.....	22%	30	52%	48	20%	32	44
31+.....	31%	14	45%	55	24%	38	38
Years smoking							
1-5.....	41%	25	67%	33	37%	31	29
5-10.....	44%	24	68%	32	29%	37	34
10-20.....	40%	30	70%	30	9%	38	51
20+.....	38%	22	60%	40	14%	37	41

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Most smokers find quitting difficult: few quit successfully on their first try. Two-thirds of former smokers who recently quit tried and failed to quit before eventually succeeding. Fully three-quarters (76%) of current smokers have tried to quit before – the majority (58%) have multiple failed quit attempts. It is indicative of the addictive nature of nicotine that newer smokers and lighter smokers have greater success in quitting than those in whom the habit is more ingrained.

Smokers most likely to attempt to quit “cold turkey” -- stopping smoking completely all at once -- are disproportionately smokers who have never before tried to quit. Eventually, many smokers seek help in quitting. Smokers attempting to quit or with previous failed quit attempts are more likely than others to speak to their physician about quitting. Smokers report their doctors overwhelmingly counsel them to quit. Majorities of doctors recommended an over-the-counter treatment (59%) or prescribed a smoking cessation medication (54%).

Have you ever asked your doctor about quitting?		
	Yes	No/(Don't know)
Daily smokers	48%	52
Occasional smokers	25%	75
Currently trying to quit.....	59%	41
Not trying	32%	68
Years smoking		
1 to 5.....	18%	82
6 to 10.....	29%	71
11 to 20.....	47%	53
21+.....	51%	49
Times attempted to quit		
Never	14%	86
1 to 2.....	37%	63
3+.....	59%	41
Likely quit method		
Cold turkey.....	31%	69
Gradual	33%	67
Prescription.....	73%	27
Over the counter	57%	43

The more frequently someone attempts to quit and the more one smokes, the more likely they are to use smoking cessation treatments. Only 12% of those who have never before attempted to quit intend to use a product in their next quit attempt, compared to 33% of those who have tried to quit three or more times previously. One-in-three (30%) daily smokers are likely to use a smoking cessation product in their next attempt, compared to just 16% of occasional smokers. Smokers with health insurance coverage for smoking cessation treatments are more likely to utilize these tools than those who would pay for treatment out-of-pocket.

Most likely method of quitting smoking			
	Cold turkey	Gradual reduction	Prescription or OTC product
All smokers	46%	17	27
Daily smokers	42%	18	30
Occasional smokers	60%	15	16
Recent quitters	73%	5	17
Currently trying to quit	36%	25	33
Not trying to quit	52%	12	23
Times attempted to quit			
Never	64%	12	12
1 to 2.....	49%	15	25
3+.....	43%	17	33

Access to FDA-approved smoking cessation treatment:

Smokers who want to quit rank access to health insurance coverage for FDA-approved smoking cessation treatments at the top of a list of things that would make quitting easier for them. Such coverage made it easier for one-in-five (21%) recent quitters to kick the habit.

Would that make it easier for you to quit smoking?				
	Smokers	Quitting	Likely to quit	2007 quitters
Health insurance coverage of FDA approved treatments..	48%	54%	62%	21%
Having a family member or friend who also tried to quit....	47%	52%	55%	52%
Encouragement from family and friends	45%	52%	49%	56%
Joining an organized support group.....	26%	33%	27%	13%
A smoke-free policy at your workplace	25%	32%	21%	32%
A statewide, smoke-free air law	24%	27%	28%	N/A
A toll-free quit line with smoking cessation counselors.....	18%	24%	14%	12%

Employed smokers say an employer-sponsored treatment program would make them more likely to quit smoking. The majority (53%) would be more likely to try to quit if their employer sponsored such a program. In particular, smokers who have previously tried to quit feel that a program at their place of employment would make quitting easier (61%). Current and former smokers agree that Iowa should offer incentives such as tax breaks to employers provide cessation treatment. This sentiment is stronger among daily smokers (55%) than occasional smokers (45%) , and strongest among successful quitters (63%).

44% of smokers on Medicaid are more likely to quit when they learn that smoking cessation treatment is covered by the program. Roughly one-in-five Iowa smokers and recent quitters are covered by Medicaid. However, just 15% of Medicaid smokers are aware that it covers smoking cessation. Increased awareness of the coverage will lead to an increase in quit attempts; success within Medicaid could be used to promote treatment coverage among private insurers.

Most (71%) smokers and ex-smokers believe health insurance companies should cover FDA-approved smoking cessation treatment as a standard benefit. Half (50%) **strongly agree** that treatment should be a standard health insurance benefit. In comparison, just 23% disagree (only 13% strongly disagree) that smoking cessation treatment should be covered by health insurance. Roughly two-thirds of every major demographic subgroup and smoking behavior agrees that insurance should cover treatment. Support is lower only among smokers who have never tried to quit (57%) and those who are “very unlikely” to quit in the next year (56%), but even in these groups, the majority favors coverage.

The cigarette tax increase:

The recent cigarette tax increase is reducing cigarette consumption among smokers and increasing the likelihood that smokers will attempt to quit altogether. More than four-in-five smokers (86%) and recent quitters (87%) are aware of the recent increase in the cigarette tax. Half (50%) recalled, unprompted, that the tax had gone up by one dollar a pack. Current and former smokers agree that the increase has worked to reduce smoking. The majority of current smokers say the tax increase makes them more likely to try to quit (41%) or cut back on the number of cigarettes they smoke (16%). More than half of recent quitters (51%) cite the hike as a factor in their decision to quit.

The cigarette tax increase is working		
	<u>Aware of increase</u>	<u>Likely quit/cut back</u>
Total	86%	57%
Daily smokers	88%	55%
Occasional smokers	80%	68%
Recent quitters	87%	n/a
Currently trying to quit	86%	72%
Not trying to quit	87%	47%
Age		
18-39	89%	59%
40-59	86%	60%
60+.....	84%	53%
Gender		
Male.....	87%	56%
Female.....	86%	58%
Income		
<30k.....	89%	52%
30-50k.....	90%	60%
50k+.....	85%	55%

The tax is particularly motivating to occasional smokers, nearly seven-in-ten of who say they will quit or cut back as a result. Smokers in all income brackets have similarly high levels of awareness of the tax increase, and the tax is as effective a motivator for both high and low income households.

Smoke-free policies:

Smokers are historically resistant to smoking bans and smoke-free workplace policies. However, one-in-three (32%) employed smokers admit such a policy would make them more likely to try to quit smoking. A similar number of recent quitters say a smoke-free policy in their workplace made it easier for them to quit smoking.

	Effect of smoke-free workplace on quitting		
		More likely	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Much</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>
All smokers	32%	18%	14
Daily smokers	26%	13%	13
Occasional smokers	52%	34%	18
Currently trying to quit	47%	26%	21
Not trying to quit	23%	13%	11
Cigarettes per day			
1-10	37%	22%	15
10-20	28%	15%	14
21-30	24%	12%	12
31+	36%	18%	18
Years smoking			
1-5	59%	37%	22
5-10	39%	17%	22
10-20	31%	19%	12
20+	19%	9%	10

While FDA-approved treatments are more appealing to heavier and longer-term smokers, smoke-free workplace policies are more attractive to occasional and short-term smokers. Majorities in both groups say they would be more likely to quit if there was a ban on smoking at their workplace; one-in-three (34%) of occasional smokers would be MUCH more likely to quit.

Conclusion:

While most Iowa smokers want to quit, dealing with addiction often proves more difficult than anticipated. Most smokers have tried and failed to quit in the past, and most former smokers attempted to quit at least once before succeeding. A number of new policy initiatives are motivating and helping smokers to quit. Though smokers are historically resistant to new taxes on their addiction, the recent cigarette tax increase has been and continues to be effective in motivating smokers to quit or cut back. Smokers are similarly resistant to smoking bans and smoke-free workplace policies, but, as with the tax increase, admit such policies would make them more likely to try to quit smoking. The clearest consensus is on the issue of health insurance coverage for standard health insurance coverage of FDA-approved smoking cessation treatments. Both smokers and recent quitters overwhelmingly favor coverage of treatment. Support for coverage is both deep and broad. In addition to smoking bans and smoke-free policies, increased access to treatment is the clearest course of action in the fight to reduce smoking.

TECHNICAL NOTE: *This memorandum summarizes results from a telephone poll of a randomly selected sample of 504 current smokers and smokers who quit in 2007 in the state of Iowa. Interviewing was conducted October 16th – 28th, 2007. The sample was selected in a manner to ensure that every household in the state of Iowa with a working telephone was equally likely to be included. Special care was taken to ensure that the geographic and demographic divisions of the actual smoking population are properly represented in the sample. The estimation error associated with a sample of 504 is 4.4 percent at the 95% confidence interval. This means that in 95 of 100 cases, the results of this poll are within 4.4 points, plus or minus, of the results that would have been obtained if all current smokers and all smokers who quit in 2007 voters in the state of Iowa had been interviewed.*