

# American Cancer Society: Twenty-five diverse organizations support closing the little cigar tax loophole

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**MADISON, Wisc. - May 19, 2017** – The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network and 24 other Wisconsin organizations joined together to ask lawmakers to close a tax loophole that allows cigarette-sized cigars, so-called “little cigars,” to be taxed significantly less than traditional cigarettes.

State Rep. Dale Kooyenga recently introduced the Assembly Republicans’ tax package, which includes a proposal to close the loophole and tax little cigars at the same rate as cigarettes. Over the last week, the 25 organizations distributed a memo (attached) urging members of the Joint Committee on Finance to support the proposal.

These [little cigars](#) are nearly identical to traditional cigarettes, except they are wrapped in brown paper. They contain the same cancer-causing substances, are sold in packs of 20 and have a filter. The tax loophole means a pack of 20 little cigars may be purchased for as low as \$1.99, with an average tax of just 78 cents. Meanwhile, a pack of 20 cigarettes costs more than \$7, with a tax \$2.52.

“The diversity of these organizations shows broad support for this initiative,” said Sara Sahli, ACS CAN Wisconsin government relations director. “This is such a common-sense solution. We know that price is a big factor for new users and

particularly children.”

The organizations that signed on to the memo supporting the proposal are:

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American Family Children’s Hospital

American Heart Association

American Lung Association

Anthem

Ascension

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

Children’s Health Alliance of Wisconsin

Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin

Gunderson Health System

Humana

Marshfield Clinic Health System

Medical College of Wisconsin

Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers

SSM Health

UW Health

Wisconsin Allergy Society

Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards

Wisconsin Asthma Coalition

Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Wisconsin Medical Society

Wisconsin Nurses Association

Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association

Wisconsin Public Health Association

Wisconsin Society of Respiratory Care

Tobacco use is the most preventable cause of death in Wisconsin. Nearly 8,000 Wisconsinites will lose their lives this year to a tobacco-related illness.