

WEST VIRGINIA
Department of



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What a WV smoker spends on cigarettes in a lifetime

West Virginia cigarette smokers know buying a pack of cigarettes is not cheap. But do they know these costs, over time, can amount to tens of thousands of dollars? A new report released by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Health Statistics Center analyzes cigarette costs by going back 30 years and looking forward 30 years to illustrate the impact on a smoker's wallet.

According to survey and tax collection data, the average West Virginia adult smoker smoked approximately 572 packs of cigarettes in 2009, or about 1.5 packs each day. For mature smokers who were smoking from 1980 to 2009, the price of a pack of cigarettes in West Virginia increased from 64 cents per pack to about \$3.70 per pack. The total cost of these cigarettes for the year in 1980 was about \$364. The total increased to \$2,121 for the year 2009. Compiled over 30 years (1980-2009) the average smoker shelled out roughly \$31,000.

"From an historical perspective, if a West Virginia resident had invested that money in 1980 in a retirement fund at six percent interest (compounded annually and not including inflation), after 30 years its value would have been worth about \$64,000. If invested at eight percent its value would be worth \$85,000," stated Dan Christy, Director for the DHHR Health Statistics Center.

Forecasting 30 years into the future, the price of a pack of cigarettes is projected to be \$14.70 in 2039. Even including slight declines in the prevalence of cigarette smoking and the number of cigarettes the average smoker consumes, the average smoker will likely spend about \$119,000 on cigarettes over those 30 years. If invested at six percent, that would amount to over \$260,000; if invested at eight percent it would be valued at \$355,000.

Bruce Adkins, Director of the DHHR Division of Tobacco Prevention, said, "Each individual who quits will not only be healthier, but they also could have tens of thousands of dollars to spend on other things. If we can lower our state's prevalence of smoking and tobacco use, we can save thousands of lives and save billions of dollars in health and occupational expenses each year."

Full details of the report can be found at www.wvdhhr.org/bph/hsc or www.wvdtp.org.