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Letter to the Editor

“Governor Tomblin, Are you Serious?”

Dear Editor,

I feel the need to educate our public regarding the current opposition Governor Tomblin has personally with raising the tax on tobacco products to at least \$1/pack. I was working with the poorly funded smoking cessation agency at W.V. Medicaid when I was told essentially, that the Governor himself smokes and that RJ Reynolds sponsors the yearly “Governor’s Ball”. It dawned on me that this Governor has no interest at all at curbing the state’s economic woes by adding at least \$1 to a pack of cigarettes and would rather continue “crippling” cigarette smokers by making it easier to buy cigarettes. I do not find any pride in my adopted state that it wants to be #1 in smoking, #1 in lung related illnesses, and #1 in higher medical costs secondary to unhealthy life styles.

Smoking is an addiction, plain and simple. Make it more costly to buy a pack of cigarettes and studies show that over time, we can get many more West Virginians to be healthier. The Governor’s own Public Health Commissioner Dr. Gupta has stated this himself. I personally deal with chronic pain patients who instead of joining health clubs and thinking healthy, find it easier to buy and smoke a cheap pack of cigarettes a day which is known to negatively impact their health.

How Governor, do you think I, or any of my medical colleagues is supposed to improve the health and welfare of this citizenry when you are coddled by the tobacco lobbyist?

Sincerely
Roland Chalifoux Jr., DO
Valley Pain Management
McMechen