

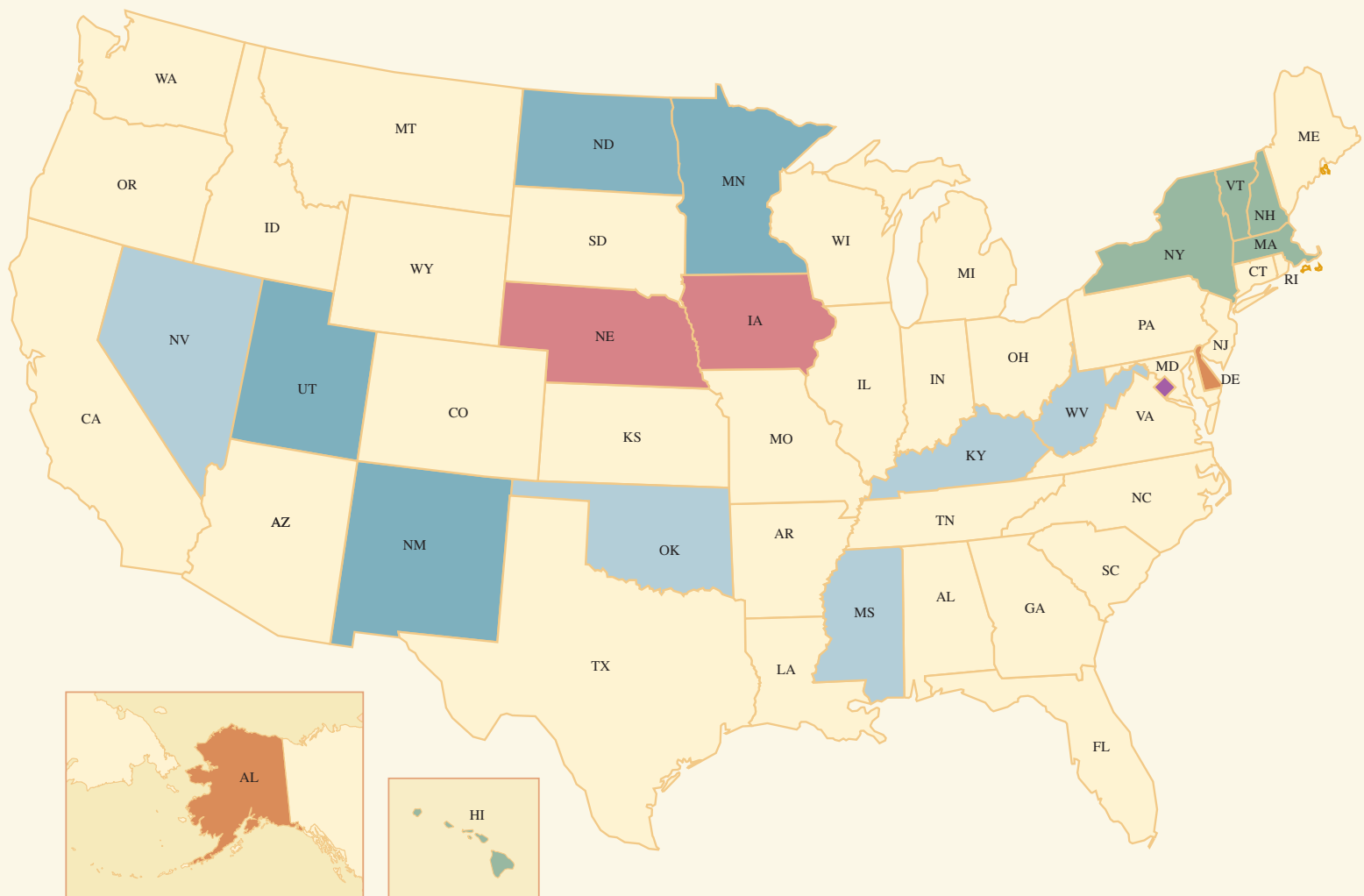
Anti-smoking efforts graded state-by-state

The American Lung Association State of Tobacco Control 2008 report graded the 50 states and District of Columbia on the level of their cigarette excise taxes, regulation of tobacco products by the FDA, federal coverage of cessation services, and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Added to this year's report are state-by-state updates to the tobacco control and prevention funding and the smoke free air sections, and the CDC's revised spending levels for tobacco control and prevention programs that were released in October 2007. Complete and interactive maps are online at: www.stateoftobaccocontrol.org.

FAST FACTS

Iowa and Nebraska joined the American Lung Association's Smokefree Air Challenge in 2008, compared to five states in 2007 and six states and the District of Columbia in 2006. The Challenge urged states and localities to pass comprehensive legislation prohibiting smoking in all public places and workplaces by Dec. 31, 2010. As of Jan. 1, 23 states and the District of Columbia have met that challenge.

Three states increased their state's excise tax on cigarettes in 2008, Massachusetts (\$1.00), New Hampshire (\$0.25) and New York (\$1.25), plus the District of Columbia (\$1.00); Hawaii and Vermont implemented scheduled increases that had been passed in previous years. This brings the national cigarette tax average to \$1.19 a pack. With its increase, New York has the largest tax in the nation at \$2.75 per pack, while South Carolina continues to have the lowest (\$0.07).



In October 2007, the CDC issued updated recommended spending levels for state tobacco prevention and cessation programs as part of its updated Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs. These new levels take into account each state's population, smoking prevalence and other demographics, including its media markets. Alaska and Delaware funded their tobacco programs at 80% or more of the CDC's recommended levels. Forty-one states and the District of Columbia fund their comprehensive tobacco control programs at less than half of the recommended level.

At the federal level, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the world's first tobacco control treaty, was approved by 161 nations, but not the U.S. Although the U.S. signed the treaty in May of 2004, the treaty continues to undergo "interagency review." Also in 2008, Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO) and Todd Platts (R-PA) introduced legislation that would require Medicare and Medicaid to offer comprehensive cessation benefits to its recipients.

Since the late 1990s, death rates from smoking fell in every state except Oklahoma, according to the CDC's MMWR. Median annual mortality per 100,000 people fell from 288 in 1996-1999 to 263 in 2000-2004. The states with the highest rates in 2000-2004 were Kentucky, West Virginia, Nevada, Mississippi and Oklahoma; the lowest rates were Utah, Hawaii, Minnesota, North Dakota and New Mexico.