

# **Tobacco's Toll**

## **Essential Information**

How do you get people to understand the deadly statistics about tobacco? Creating a way to show the statistics for your state or your community is easy and makes it more than just some numbers.

**Age Group:** High School and College students, but can be adapted for any ages

**Number of Participants:** any

**Time:** 2 weeks for media coverage, days for actually event

**Resources:** Black Tape and poster board

**Cost:** \$5 to \$10

In the United States, one person dies every 72 seconds from a tobacco-related disease. That's 1,200 people a day! There is a way to make that statistic real so people stop and take notice. Find a part of your school or campus that has the most foot traffic throughout the day and (with permission) take a portion of the sidewalk. Have your group set up with as many people, posters and other props that they can. Every 72 seconds put another piece of black tape on the sidewalk or wall to make a tally of how many people have died so far that day.

Be creative and represent those lost through whatever methods will work for your school or organization. Others have had a specific number of students wear black for the day to represent the number of kids who are regular smokers and will eventually die from a tobacco-related disease. (You can find these statistics and other state-specific numbers at [tobaccofreekids.org](http://tobaccofreekids.org).) Another school got permission to line up empty chairs or desks in the main hallway to represent the dead. If your event is outside you can also do chalk drawings of bodies, have people lay on the ground pretending to be dead bodies, whatever it takes to show people 1,200 deaths per day is not just another number to be ignored.

Still searching for more ideas? Ask permission to use parking spots in the school lot. Block off a certain number with cones, chairs or tape and let people know this number represents those at your school (or in your town, depending on what numbers you use) who will die from tobacco-related diseases. You can do this one inside too- just block off desks in a classroom or chairs in a cafeteria or auditorium.

## **2 Weeks out**

- Start making posters for the event with tobacco statistics on them and include outrageous tobacco industry quotes as well.
- Start developing a media list, drafting press materials, and planning your pitch.

## **3 days out**

- Contact the media and distribute your press kits.

## **Representing the dead day:**

- Be sure that you have your materials: posters and tape.
- Set up in a high traffic area and start your death toll.

