



March 17, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 205150

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

As your Subcommittee moves forward with the FY 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to increase funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) by \$72.5 million, for a total of \$310 million. This increase is vitally important to respond to alarming e-cigarette usage rates among youth

and the devastating toll that tobacco continues to take on our nation's health during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in disproportionately affected communities.

Tobacco use has long been the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. Each year, it kills more than 480,000 Americans and is responsible for approximately \$170 billion in health care costs. Nearly one in three heart disease deaths, one in three cancer deaths, and nearly eight in 10 chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) deaths are caused by tobacco use. People who smoke are at greatest risk for complications if they contract COVID-19, and many of the conditions caused by smoking also increase the risk of severe complications from COVID-19.

Our nation is at a critical juncture in the fight against tobacco use. After making tremendous progress in reducing youth tobacco use over the past several decades, e-cigarettes are threatening to undermine declines in youth smoking and overall youth tobacco use. E-cigarettes have been the most commonly used tobacco product among youth since 2014, and youth use of e-cigarettes has reached what the FDA and the Surgeon General have called "epidemic" levels. The 2020 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) shows that 3.6 million kids used e-cigarettes in 2020, including nearly 1 in 5 high school students. The risks are also becoming clearer. In 2020, 38.9 percent of all high school e-cigarette users used e-cigarettes on 20 or more days a month, a sign that youth are addicted or at risk of addiction. Studies show that young people who use e-cigarettes are more likely to become smokers.

Tobacco use is also a significant contributor to health disparities. While smoking rates overall have declined, smoking has become more concentrated among certain groups and in particular regions of the country. People with lower incomes and lower levels of education, Native Americans, people with behavioral health conditions, and LGB Americans all have disproportionately higher rates of tobacco use, placing them at greater risk for tobacco-caused diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and respiratory disease. Black Americans die from smoking-caused diseases at far higher rates than other Americans despite starting to smoke at a later age, smoking fewer cigarettes per day, and being more likely to make a quit attempt.

OSH has a vital role to play in addressing this serious public health problem. It provides grants to states and territories to support tobacco prevention and cessation programs, runs a highly successful national media campaign called "Tips from Former Smokers" (Tips), conducts research and surveillance on tobacco use, and develops best practices for reducing it. Additional resources will allow OSH to address the threat to public health posed by alarmingly high rates of youth e-cigarette use while continuing to prevent and reduce other forms of tobacco use. With additional resources:

- CDC could better advance health equity by focusing on groups who are disproportionately harmed by tobacco products, including designing and implementing prevention and cessation programs that are tailored to address their specific needs.
- CDC could strengthen efforts to end youth and young adult tobacco use, including e-cigarette use, by providing more resources to state and local health departments; educating youth, parents, health professionals, communities, and others about tobacco products and the harms associated with their use; and identifying evidence-based strategies to protect youth and young adults from initiating tobacco use.

- CDC could expand a program that we know works: the Tips media campaign. From 2012 through 2018, CDC estimates that more than 16.4 million people who smoke attempted to quit and approximately one million smokers have quit for good because of the Tips campaign. As a result, the Tips campaign has helped prevent an estimated 129,100 smoking-related deaths and saved an estimated \$7.3 billion in health care costs. Increasing the number of weeks Tips is on the air each year, better targeting the ads into communities that experience a disproportionate impact, and increasing the frequency with which ads run will help even more smokers to quit.

We appreciate that the FY 2021 Omnibus and COVID Relief and Response Act (P.L. 116-260) increased funding for OSH by \$7.5 million in FY 2021 to \$237.5 million. Additional investments in tobacco prevention and cessation will save lives, reduce tobacco use among disparate populations, and reduce the cost of treating tobacco-caused disease. We urge you to increase funding for CDC's OSH to \$310 million, which will enable CDC to address the challenges posed by e-cigarettes while continuing to make progress reducing the death and disease caused by other tobacco products and strengthening efforts to assist groups disproportionately harmed by tobacco products.

Sincerely,

Academy of General Dentistry

Action on Smoking & Health

African American Tobacco Control
Leadership Council

Allergy & Asthma Network

American Academy of Dental Group
Practice

American Academy of Nursing

American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial
Pathology

American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial
Radiology

American Academy of Oral Medicine

American Academy of Otolaryngology –
Head and Neck Surgery

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association for Cancer Research

American Association for Dental Research

American Association for Respiratory Care

American Cancer Society Cancer Action
Network

American College Health Association

American College of Cardiology

American Federation of School
Administrators

American Heart Association

American Lung Association

American Medical Association

American Public Health Association

American Society of Addiction Medicine

American Society of Clinical Oncology

American Thoracic Society

Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights

Association for the Treatment of Tobacco
Use and Dependence

Association of Black Cardiologists

Association of Maternal & Child Health
Programs

Association of Schools and Programs of
Public Health

Association of State and Territorial Health
Officials

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

Coordinated Approach to Child Health
(CATCH)

Common Sense Media

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
(CADCA)

COPD Foundation

Eta Sigma Gamma - National Health
Education Honorary

First Focus Campaign for Children

Mesothelioma Applied Research
Foundation

National Association of Pediatric Nurse
Practitioners

National Association of School Nurses

National Association of Secondary School
Principals

National Association of Social Workers

National Hispanic Medical Association

National Network of Public Health Institutes

North American Quitline Consortium

Oncology Nursing Society

Parents Against Vaping e-cigarettes (PAVe)

Public Health Solutions

Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and
Interventions

Society for Public Health Education

Society for Research on Nicotine and
Tobacco

Students Against Destructive Decisions
(SADD)

The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

Trust for America's Health