



March 9, 2020

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

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

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As your Subcommittee moves forward with the FY 2021 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 \$80 million, for a total of \$310 million. This increase is needed to respond to soaring e-cigarette usage rates among youth and the devastating toll that tobacco continues to take on our nation’s health.

Tobacco use remains 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 and cancer deaths and nearly eight in 10 chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) deaths are caused by tobacco use.

We are 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. Youth use of e-cigarettes has skyrocketed in the United States, reaching what the FDA and the Surgeon General have called “epidemic” levels.

Between 2017 and 2019, use of e-cigarettes more than doubled among high school students (from 11.7% to 27.5%) and tripled among middle school students (from 3.3% to 10.5%). More than 5 million youth were current e-cigarette users in 2019 – an increase of more than 3 million over two years. Driven by this surge in e-cigarette use, 31.2 percent of high school students reported current use of at least one tobacco product in 2019 – the highest rate since 2000.

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 on tobacco use, and develops best practices for reducing it. Additional resources will allow OSH to address the new threat to public health posed by skyrocketing rates of youth e-cigarette use while continuing to prevent and reduce other forms of tobacco use. With additional resources:

- CDC could effectively respond to the new youth e-cigarette epidemic, including providing more resources to state and local health departments; educating youth, parents, health professionals and other about these products and the harms associated with their use; and identifying evidence-based strategies to protect kids.
- 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 quit for good because of the Tips campaign. Increasing the number of weeks Tips is on the air each year and the frequency with which ads are run will help even more smokers to quit.
- CDC could strengthen efforts to assist groups disproportionately harmed by tobacco products. Despite the progress made in reducing tobacco use, certain populations and regions of the country continue to suffer substantially higher rates of tobacco use and tobacco-related disease and premature death. Targeted assistance would help address these disparities.

We appreciate that the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-94) increased funding for OSH by \$20 million in FY 2020 to \$230 million. Additional investments in tobacco prevention and cessation will save lives and reduce the cost of treating tobacco-caused disease. While mindful of the constraints placed upon you by the FY 2021 cap on non-defense discretionary spending, we urge you to increase funding for CDC's OSH to \$310 million, which will enable CDC to address the new challenges posed by e-cigarettes while continuing to make progress reducing the death and disease caused by other tobacco products.

Sincerely,

Action on Smoking & Health  
Allergy & Asthma Network  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Nursing  
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology  
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology  
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 of Cardiology  
American College Health Association  
American College of Physicians  
American Federation of School Administrators  
American Heart Association  
American Lung Association  
American Medical Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Thoracic Society  
Americans for Nonsmokers Rights  
Association for Clinical Oncology  
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  
Catholic Health Association of the United States  
Children's Hospital Association

College on Problems of Drug Dependence  
Common Sense  
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)  
COPD Foundation  
Eta Sigma Gamma – National Health Education Honorary  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
National African American Tobacco Prevention Network  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of School Nurses  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Education Association  
National Network of Public Health Institutes  
National PTA  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Parents Against Vaping e-cigarettes (PAVe)  
Public Health Solutions  
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions  
Society for Public Health Education  
Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)  
The Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education  
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons  
Trust for America's Health