



December 2, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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 Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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 Chairwoman DeLauro, Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Cole, and Ranking Member Murray:

As negotiations continue on the fiscal year 2021 appropriations bills, we urge you to fund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) at the House-passed funding level of \$240 million. The House-passed level provides a \$10 million increase for OSH and 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.

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. Smoking is a major cause of health disparities as well as underlying health conditions that increase the risk of severe complications from COVID-19.

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 electronic cigarettes has skyrocketed in the United States, reaching what the FDA Commissioner and the U.S. Surgeon General have called “epidemic” levels.

The 2020 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) shows that e-cigarette use remains unacceptably high with nearly 1 in 5 high school students and 3.6 million kids altogether using e-cigarettes. While e-cigarette use declined from a record high in 2019, youth use has been a significant public health concern since 2014, when e-cigarettes became the most popular tobacco product among youth. The risks are also becoming more clear. 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.

OSH has a vital role to play in addressing this serious public health problem. OSH 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 alarmingly high 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 youth e-cigarette epidemic, including providing more resources to state and local health departments; educating youth, parents, health professionals and others 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.

As you finalize appropriations legislation for fiscal year 2021, we urge you to fund OSH at the House-passed funding level of \$240 million.

Sincerely,

Academy of General Dentistry

Action on Smoking & Health

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 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 of Chest Physicians (CHEST)
American College of Physicians
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
American Public Health Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights
Association for Clinical Oncology
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
CATCH Global Foundation
Catholic Health Association of the United States
ClearWay Minnesota
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)
COPD Foundation
Eta Sigma Gamma - National Health Education Honorary
First Focus Campaign for Children
GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer
March of Dimes
NAACP
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of Social Workers
National Medical Association
National Network of Public Health Institutes
North American Quitline Consortium
Oncology Nursing Society
Parents Against Vaping e-cigs
Prevention Institute
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