



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