

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Health and Welfare Committee Members

FROM: Harry Chen, MD, Commissioner 

RE: Testimony Follow-Up

DATE: January 29, 2014

As you requested, the following is provided in response to your request for additional information following testimony on January 10, 2014.

### Fluoride – CTG grant

Last year the CTG grant supported fluoride education and engagement in Hartford only. The plan had been for two communities; however there was insufficient funding to do so. The work is continuing this year in Hartford but through external partner funding (HRIA).

Tobacco Budget – What is the breakdown of the 3.86 million for the tobacco control program?  
See attached document

### Teen Suicide Update

Program efforts around teen suicide include participation in the Center for Health and Learning's Youth Suicide Prevention Coalition. As part of this initiative, the Center for Health and Learning has organized a statewide approach and is working with schools and communities on trainings for youth suicide prevention and post-vention. The Health Department also coordinates a suicide prevention data group that the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program and the Department of Mental health participate in. This group is using surveillance data and analysis to try and understand suicide and the associated public health issues for Vermont. The group is currently preparing a specific research proposal to participate in the Suicide Research Institute this May in Rochester, NY. Lastly, the Health Department is participating in the AHS planning work, led by Monica Hutt, to expand the Center for Health and Learning's work with youth to research and implement interventions for all ages, across the lifespan. This work is funded from the Department of Mental Health grant to the Center for Health and Learning that was appropriated during the 2013 legislative session.

From the data perspective, there are three Healthy Vermonters 2020 objectives specific to suicide. These are to reduce the suicide rate, reduce the of emergency department visits due to self-harm, and to decrease the percent of adolescents with a suicide attempt that requires medical attention. From 2000-2012, a total of 50 Vermont youth aged 10-19 committed suicide. In



2008-2012, the suicide rate among youth ages 10-19 was 4.5 per 100,000, down from 5.2 per 100,000 during 2007-2011. Firearms continue to be the primary method of suicide among youth. From 2000-2012, 29 or 58% of youth deaths were due to a firearm. An additional 16 deaths, or 32%, were the result of hanging (including strangulation and suffocation). Note that death information from 2011 and 2012 is preliminary. Please see the attached slide for death rates from 2000-2012.

Among Vermont youth, ages 10-19, emergency department rates for self-harm increased throughout the early to mid-2000's, before decreasing in 2008 and again in 2009. In 2009, the most recent year that data for all Vermont residents is available, 311.8 per 100,000 youth ages 10-19 visited an emergency room due to self-harm. Female youth consistently visit the emergency department due to self-harm at higher rates than do males. In 2009, the rate among females 10-19 was 440.5 per 100,000 and while among males it was 190.1 per 100,000. Please see the attached slide for emergency department data from 2002-2009.

YRBS data from 2009, the most recent year students were asked about suicide attempts that required medical attention, 2% of high school students said they had attempted suicide during the previous year and needed medical attention. In 2011 and 2013, high school students were asked if they made a plan to attempt suicide and whether they actually tried to kill themselves. The proportion of high school students who made a suicide plan in the last 12 months increased significantly from 9% in 2011 to 11% in 2013. Similarly, the percent of students who attempted suicide in the last 12 months also increased significantly, from 4% in 2011 to 5% in 2013. Among middle school students, 17% in 2013 said they had ever seriously thought about suicide. Eleven percent had ever made a suicide plan and five percent had ever attempted suicide. Results for each of these measures were similar to those from 2011.