



## **Written Testimony**

### **Joint Senate and House Appropriations Hearing – Health**

### **Tuesday, February 28, 2023**

Senate Appropriations Chair Kitchel, House Appropriations Chair Lanpher, and distinguished members of the Vermont Senate and House Appropriations Committees.

The American Lung Association is the oldest voluntary health organization in the United States. For more than 115 years, the Lung Association has been working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy, and research. The Lung Association works on behalf of the 37 million Americans living with lung diseases, including over 85,000 patients with lung disease in Vermont.

The prioritization of lung health is more critical than ever, and we appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony today on need to provide additional resources to the state's Tobacco Control Program that can improve the lung health of all Vermonters and save lives.

Vermont's Tobacco Control Program (VTCP) has saved the state countless lives and dollars lost to tobacco-related health costs since its creation. Despite its many successes, however, tobacco-use remains high. More must be done to dedicate significant and sustained funding to the program to ensure all Vermonters have access to the cessation services necessary to quit and our children are receiving the most comprehensive education on the dangers posed by tobacco and other tobacco products.

Funding for VTCP needs to be sustained to address:

- Media to help change the norms around youth vaping and direct smokers, both adults and youth, to cessation programs. Data shows that media increases quit attempts as tobacco users become more aware of quit resources. The number of youth using the youth cessation program "MyLifeMyQuit" is currently low.
- Smoking rates remain high among several Vermont populations, including:
  - Less than HS education: 43%
  - Adults with disabilities: 32%
  - Uninsured: 28%
  - Less than 250% of FPL: 25%
  - Adults who use e-cigs: 36%
  - Youth tobacco use, including vaping: 28%

***Though the legislature allocated \$1 million in one-time funds last year to the Division of Substance Use to address youth vaping, it will not address***

***significant tobacco problems in Vermont and doesn't come close to addressing the chronic underfunding of VTCP. To achieve 75% of Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended levels, the Lung Association asks you to increase spending levels for VTCP by \$1.7 million annually.***

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the Lung Association's budget priorities for Fiscal Year 2024. Through smart investments we can improve the lung health of all Vermonters; especially those struggling with tobacco addiction and our next generation(s) of children from getting hooked in the first place.

If you would like more information or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Trevor Summerfield, the Lung Association's Director of Advocacy in Vermont, at [trevor.summerfield@lung.org](mailto:trevor.summerfield@lung.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trevor Summerfield". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Trevor Summerfield  
Director, Advocacy (NY, VT)  
American Lung Association