



December 20, 2013

To: Health Care Oversight Committee

From: Rebecca Ryan, on behalf of the Coalition for a Tobacco Free Vermont

Subject: Tobacco Control Program and Tobacco Trust Fund Follow Up

Thank you for the opportunity this week to discuss the state's tobacco control program and the trust fund. To follow up to your discussion about looking at the larger picture of Vermont's tobacco prevention and cessation efforts, I wanted to provide you with information that may help with future discussions.

Senator Kitchel asked how often the CDC updates best practices for tobacco control and prevention. The last revision was in 2007, and Vermont's tobacco program made adjustments based on the updated best practices. The new update is expected early in 2014. According to the CDC, there will be several important changes, one of which is the recommended amount of funding levels for each state will be smaller (as you know since 2007, the CDC has recommended \$10.4 million for VT). This is due to several changes in the intervention-specific formulas. For example, it will remove youth access enforcement and school programs from the state and community interventions to allow for more focus on those with greater evidence of effectiveness.

As Rhonda Williams testified, the Blueprint for Health is playing a key role now in providing face-to-face tobacco treatment and soon Medicaid will cover provider counseling for smokers. The gradual integration of tobacco cessation into the blueprint and Medicaid are not accidental. The health department has worked for years on these efforts, and we in the coalition have played a role in this effort - both through advocacy and facilitation. However, if we are to continue to reduce tobacco use in Vermont, while this integration is important; it cannot replace the core services of the components of the tobacco control program. Among those core services are community coalitions that collaborate with schools, healthcare providers and other partners to implement evidence-based community interventions and media (health communications) that has been shown to reduce youth smoking rates and increase adult quit attempts.

Thank you for all the work you do to improve the healthcare system and the health of Vermonters. We look forward to continued discussion about the crucial role of Vermont's tobacco control program.