

March 27, 2018

To: Senate Committee on Health and Welfare
From: Rebecca Ryan, Sr. Director, Health Education & Public Policy
Subj: Budget Memo

On behalf of the Coalition for a Tobacco Free Vermont and the American Lung Association, we are asking the Legislature to invest some of the additional \$28 million master settlement funding coming to the state this year in the state's tobacco control program in FY19 and reinvest in the Tobacco Trust Fund.

Tobacco is still the leading cause of preventable death and disease:

While Vermont has made great progress over the years to reduce the burden of tobacco use, we are now losing progress. And with 1,000¹ Vermonters dying each year due to tobacco, tobacco use remains the number one cause of preventable disease and early death.

- Vermont spends \$348 million in healthcare costs related to tobacco, of which \$87.2 million is Medicaid spending².
- **25% of Vermont youth** use some form of tobacco, including e-cigarettes³. The adult rate has not changed in several years and lags behind nation (**18% in VT compared to 15.5% nationwide⁴**).
- Nicotine, the highly addictive substance found in tobacco products, is the most common addiction in America. More than two-thirds of Americans who tried cigarettes or chewing tobacco report being dependent at some point during their lifetime.
- **85% of patients in treatment for opioid addiction also smoke⁵**. We have to address them both – or the health care dollars from chronic lung and chronic heart and cancer, asthma and diabetes complications will not decrease.

Funding for Vermont's Tobacco Control Program:

- Vermont's Tobacco Control Program (TCP) was designed to be comprehensive, to serve the entire state, and to meet the needs of our youth and our adult tobacco user with

¹ Lortet-Tieulent, J, et al., "State-Level Cancer Mortality Attributable to Cigarette Smoking in the United States," JAMA Internal Medicine, published online October 24, 2016

² "Medical Care Expenditures Attributable to Smoking—United States, 1993," MMWR 43(26):1-4, July 8, 1994 (updated to 2009 dollars)

³ Vermont Department of Health, Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2015.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Surveillance Survey 2016.

⁵ Zale, E. L., Dorfman, M. L., Hooten, M., Warner, D. O., Zvolensky, M. J., & Ditte, J. W. (2015). Tobacco Smoking, Nicotine Dependence, and Patterns of Prescription Opioid Misuse: Results From a Nationally Representative Sample. Nicotine & Tobacco Research

services that prevent and support successful quits. Due to funding cuts, it's no longer able to meet all these needs.

- \$3.5 million was appropriated in FY18 to the Departments of Health, Liquor Control and the Agency of Education for the state's tobacco control program. The Vermont Tobacco Evaluation and Review Board which used to oversee the independent evaluation of this program is no longer funded.
- Of the \$3.5 million, \$1.6 million is global commitment, not master settlement funds.
- The Tobacco Trust Fund, originally created as a sustainable source of funding for the state's tobacco control efforts, was once at over \$31 million and is now at zero. Only \$500,000 of it was ever appropriated to the TCP.
- The Vermont Tobacco Evaluation and Review Board recommends funding the state's TCP in FY19 at \$5,651,123.

Thank you for your work to improve the health of all Vermonters. If you have any questions, please contact me at rebecca.ryan@lung.org or 876-6862.

