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My name is Sarah Clark, and I work and reside in Milton, Vermont. I am the mother of five children, ages 3 to 16 years, and an employee at Milton Family Community Center as program staff and teen mentor program. Our after school program is based out of Milton Elementary School, where I support and work with kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and their families.

I am testifying today to Secure \$500k from the Tobacco Settlement Fund for the base funding of the Integrated Grant, to allow PCCs to consistently and comprehensively provide tobacco cessation referrals and support for pregnant people and families with young children, as well as education and support to ensure infants and young children are not exposed to second-hand smoke.

I remember how excited I was, as a young elementary schooler, to be a part of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E) program because I thought it could prepare me well against my father's anti-smoking refusals and retort. My pleadings, asks, and D.A.R.E statistical data were not enough for my father to quit smoking. Nor were my complaints of my clothing smelling bad or how much my nose hurt smelling second-hand smoke. In 2015, his heart had enough, and he suffered a massive stroke hospitalizing him, which has forever impacted his mobility and every area of his life; later, he was diagnosed with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

Vermont remains among the highest in the nation of adults, pregnant women, teens, and children affected by tobacco use. We see the multitude of individuals impacted and exposed daily to first and second-hand smoke, including young siblings and infant family members of our attending children. Our staff members play a key role in strengthening and supporting our communities' children and families and are aware of the serious and negative health consequences for all persons affected by smoking and vaping tobacco.

I hear our program's young children who have shared their perspectives, comments, and unsuccessful attempts in convincing their family member to quit. I hear our teens share stories of students caught vaping in school or of those who are vaping so young. Their perspectives resonate deeply with me. Of my experiences and recollection as a young child wishing and hoping for my father to quit smoking.

I can't help but wonder if my family had access to a PCC program or strategies that aim to reach families, offering smoking cessation, prevention, and education embedded within my community that my family member would have reached his fullest potential and reduced mine and my family's tobacco exposure; I certainly wish I had.

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I believe this can start through everyday connections made by empowered employees of Milton Family Community Center and with families and children. Employees who see Vermont's families and children daily and want them to have access to the knowledge and resources that will strengthen their families' health and well-being.

Every child, family, and individual in Vermont deserves the best possible start, and it is through the security of \$500,000 from the Tobacco Settlement Fund for the base funding of the Integrated Grant to allow PCCs to consistently and comprehensively provide tobacco cessation referrals and support for pregnant people and families with young children, as well as education and support to ensure infants and young children are not exposed to second-hand smoke. This can be made possible through Vermont's 15 Parent Child Centers, who build ongoing partnerships and trusting relationships with families. I know this work will be successful because of the connections and care for families and children that the Milton Family Community Center employees have for all the families we serve.