



**Public Health Committee and Appropriations Committee
November 9, 2012
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Testimony**

RE: Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board 2012 Report and Recommendations

The American cancer Society Cancer Action Network strongly supports the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board recommendations for allocations of available funds via the Trust Fund. These recommendations include the following totaling \$6.01 million:

- Countermarketing - \$2 million
- Community Based TUC Programs - \$1.481 million
- Quitline - \$1.6 million
- Corrections Cessation - \$447,000
- Evaluation - \$468,000

Smoking related diseases are the single most preventable cause of death in our society, yet it is estimated that 4,700 Connecticut residents will die from smoking related illnesses in 2012 alone. Currently, 15.4% of adults in Connecticut and 15.3% of high school aged kids smoke, spending on average \$2225 per year on the habit. Connecticut incurs \$1.63 billion in annual health care costs and another \$1 billion in lost productivity directly caused by tobacco.

Connecticut receives over \$500 million annually between the MSA funds and tobacco tax revenue. Over the years, however, less than 1% of the cumulative total has been spent in support of smoking cessation services. In 2008 and again in 2011, Connecticut spent \$0 dollars and was ranked last, 51 out of 50 states and Washington D.C. in allocating funds to tobacco cessation programs. While the state did nothing, the annual health care costs associated with tobacco use continued to increase.

4700 people in Connecticut will die from tobacco use in 2012 and sadly, another 4700 will start the habit this year. 70% of Connecticut's smokers indicate they want to quit while 40% attempt to quit each year, however only about 5% are successful. Many fail because, in part, of a lack of access to successful cessation programs. Funding prevention programs that alleviate this burden on our citizens and economy are not only consistent with our shared goal of insuring access to care to those in need, it is also the only fiscally responsible approach we can take.

Evidence-based tobacco use cessation methods have been proven to be effective in a variety of populations. Currently TUC services in Connecticut are sparse and under advertised. Programs that do exist at some Community Health Centers, local health departments/ districts, and hospitals, are supported by specific grants from the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund, Federal Block Grants or other funding that is not sustainable. Many of these programs cease when these special funds are gone.

The Center for Disease Control recommends that Connecticut spend \$43 million per year on tobacco prevention and cessation efforts. We haven't spent that much in the last decade *combined*. With that figure in mind, while not nearly enough, the recommendations made by the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board are appropriate and much needed. We strongly urge adoption of these recommendations and look forward to working with you to continually improve Connecticut's tobacco prevention and cessation efforts.

Thank you

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American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network