



# AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION.

Fighting for Air

American Lung Association  
of New England

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November 9, 2012

Testimony before the Appropriations and Public Health Committees

Michelle Marichal, Acting Director, Health Education and Public Policy

## **Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Recommended Disbursements**

Distinguished Chairpersons and Members of the Appropriations and Public Health Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Michelle Marichal and I serve as the Acting Director of Health Education and Public Policy at the American Lung Association (ALA) in Connecticut.

The American Lung Association in Connecticut supports the disbursements of over 6 million dollars of the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund toward tobacco prevention and cessation services. These funds are vital for the reduction of tobacco related illness such as cancer, heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) as well as mortality.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that Connecticut spend 43.9 million dollars per year for an effective comprehensive tobacco control program. Although the proposed amount is far less than what is recommended, 6 million dollars will have a significant impact on reducing the 1.63 billion dollars spent annually on health care costs in Connecticut due to tobacco use.

The 2011 Connecticut School Health Survey showed, 12% of middle school students and 40.8% of high school students have ever used any form of tobacco with approximately 20% of high school students currently use tobacco products. The data also shows some disparities in tobacco use in Connecticut. It is clear from the data that funding counter-marketing initiatives is necessary to prevent and delay tobacco use initiation among youth.

The CDC reports that 17% of adults in Connecticut currently smoke. Cessation services such as quit lines and counseling for the most

vulnerable populations must remain available. There are disproportionately high numbers of individuals with mental illness as well as Medicaid recipients that are current smokers and these populations need services available to them.

We value your commitment to address tobacco use in Connecticut and urge you to direct these funds for initiatives that will reduce healthcare costs, prevent youth initiation and promote the health of the individuals living in our state. We urge you to disburse these funds as a step toward ultimately reaching the CDC recommended funding of 43.9 million dollars which will yield optimal results in both reduced disease and health care costs for families and businesses.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Marichal".

Michelle Marichal  
Acting Director, Health Education and Public Policy  
American Lung Association in Connecticut