



**Appropriations and Public Health Joint Committees  
January 29, 2014  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Testimony**

**RE: Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board 2013 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 \$3 million:

- Statewide Tobacco Education Program (STEP): \$229,384
- Community Based TUC Programs - \$343,579
- Quitline - \$1,611,984
- Corrections Cessation Program - \$527,283
- Tobacco Enforcement Program - \$287,770

***Tobacco related diseases are the single most preventable cause of death in our society, yet according to DPH statistics, tobacco use kills more people in Connecticut each year than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, accidents and suicides combined.*** Currently, 17.1% of adults in Connecticut and 15.9% of high school aged kids smoke, spending on average \$3000 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 use.***

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 2013 we spent 6 million on TUC, however in 2014 that number has been cut in half. While the state continues to underfund programs with proven results, the annual health care costs associated with tobacco use continued to increase.

4700 people in Connecticut will die from tobacco use in 2014 and sadly, another 4300 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 tobacco use prevention and cessation 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.

Connecticut has never fully funded its tobacco control programs to the level recommended by the CDC. In fact, if all state spending over the twelve years since the Master Settlement is combined, the total doesn't amount to even one year's recommendation. CDC will be revising their recommendations and their updated Best Practices will be released later this week. With that in mind, while not nearly enough, the recommendations made today by the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board are appropriate and much needed.

We strongly urge adoption of these recommendations. More importantly, we urge the Governor and the legislature to restore the annual \$12 million deposit from the Master Settlement to the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund and the \$6 million disbursement allocation authority to the THTF Board that were both cut in half in last year's state budget. We can and must do more to improve Connecticut's tobacco prevention and cessation efforts.

Thank you

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