

As you develop a final Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we urge you to adequately fund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and provide the Senate-approved funding level of \$246.5 million for its Office on Smoking and Health (OSH). We further urge you to ensure that specific funding levels for OSH and CDC's other chronic disease prevention and health promotion programs are incorporated into the bill text to ensure that the Administration spends those funds as Congress intends.

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, responsible for nearly 500,000 deaths and costing the nation more than \$600 billion each year, including \$241 billion in health care costs. More than 60 percent of these health care costs are paid for by government programs like Medicare and Medicaid. Preventing youth from starting to use tobacco products and helping adults who use tobacco to quit improves health, saves lives, and reduces the financial burden that tobacco use imposes on families, employers, and governments.

At a time when there is renewed focus on preventing chronic disease and protecting children's health, it is essential that Congress provide CDC with resources to reduce the death and disease caused by tobacco use. Cigarette smoking is a major contributor to chronic disease, including cancer, heart disease, stroke, COPD, and diabetes. Any comprehensive effort to prevent chronic disease must address the use of tobacco products.

Youth use of tobacco products remains a serious public health concern. CDC and the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) most recent National Youth Tobacco Survey showed that more than 2.25 million youth, including 10.1 percent of high schoolers, reported using a tobacco product last year. E-cigarettes have been the most popular tobacco product among youth since 2014. Alarming, nearly 2 in 5 youth e-cigarette users reported use on 20 days or more a month, including 1 in 4 who reported daily use, a sign that youth are becoming addicted. According to the CDC, e-cigarettes can expose users to nicotine and other potentially harmful substances like nickel, lead and formaldehyde, and are not safe. A more robust public health response is needed to prevent tobacco products from placing a new generation at risk for nicotine addiction and the serious and costly chronic diseases caused by tobacco use.

We strongly support the Senate's bill, which maintains current funding for CDC's OSH and includes guardrails to help ensure that the Administration would spend the funds as Congress intended, such as by specifying that funds "shall be for the purposes and in the amounts specified as appropriations in table under this heading in the report accompanying this Act." This is in contrast to the House's bill that would significantly cut funding for CDC and would fail to restore the critical function of OSH. If these funds were eliminated, as proposed by the House:

- CDC would no longer be able to provide funding and technical assistance to states to implement evidence-based programs to prevent youth use of e-cigarettes and other tobacco products. Most state tobacco control programs are significantly underfunded compared to recommended funding levels. If OSH funding and technical assistance are eliminated, states will lose approximately \$70 million in tobacco control program funding, and 13 states would lose 30 percent or more of their total tobacco control program budget.
- States would no longer receive federal support for state quitlines, which help people who use tobacco to quit. Five states and territories rely on CDC funding for at least 75 percent of their quitline budget and likely would be unable to continue operations if OSH funding

is eliminated. Many other quitlines likely would need to reduce the level and type of services they can provide, including the availability of free nicotine replacement therapy.

- CDC would not have the resources to continue its highly effective national public awareness campaign, *Tips from Former Smokers*, which helped approximately one million people who smoke to quit, prevented 129,100 smoking-related deaths, and saved an estimated \$7.3 billion in health care costs from 2012 through 2018.

As you work to finalize the FY 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we urge you to ensure that CDC's OSH is funded at the Senate's \$246.5 million funding level and that the Administration spends the full amount for this purpose. Adequately funding OSH is necessary, not only to sustain state programs, the Tips campaign and the quitlines, but also to rebuild the staff capacity that has been diminished and is essential to carrying out these responsibilities.

Sincerely,

Academy of General Dentistry

Action on Smoking & Health

African American Tobacco Control
Leadership Council

AME Church Social Action Commission

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Nursing

American Academy of Otolaryngology -
Head and Neck Surgery

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association for Cancer Research

American Association for Dental, Oral, and
Craniofacial Research

American Association for Respiratory Care

American Association of Child and
Adolescent Psychiatry

American Association of Nurse Practitioners
(AANP)

American Cancer Society Cancer Action
Network

American College Health Association

American College of Cardiology

American College of Chest Physicians

American College of Physicians

American Dental Association

American Heart Association

American Indian Cancer Foundation

American Lung Association

American Medical Association

American Public Health Association

American Society of Addiction Medicine

American Thoracic Society

Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights

Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment,
Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL)

Association for Clinical Oncology (ASCO)

Association for the Treatment of Tobacco
Use & Dependence

Association of Black Women Physicians

Association of Maternal & Child Health
Programs

Association of State and Territorial Health
Officials

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Big Cities Health Coalition
Black Women's Health Imperative
Breathe Southern California
CADCA
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
CATCH Global Foundation
Catholic Health Association of the United States
COPD Foundation
Counter Tools
Families USA
First Focus Campaign for Children
IntelliQuit
LUNGevery Foundation
MomsRising
NAACP
National Association of Black Oncologists
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of Social Workers
National Center for Health Research
National Coalition for LGBTQ Health
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation/Black Women's Roundtable
National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN)
National Council for Mental Wellbeing
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians

National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention
National Hispanic Health Foundation
National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA)
National League for Nursing
National Medical Association
National Network of Public Health Institutes
National PTA
National Tongan American Society
NCNW
North American Quitline Consortium
Oncology Nursing Society
Parents Against Vaping
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Preventing Tobacco Addiction Foundation/Tobacco 21
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Respiratory Health Association
Save A Girl, Save A World
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions
Society for Public Health Education
Society for Research on Nicotine & Tobacco
The Cancer Network
The Center for Black Health & Equity
The Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons
Tobacco Free Portfolios
Trust for America's Health
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease