

DATE

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair DeLauro, Chair Murray, Ranking Member Cole, and Ranking Member Blunt:

We are pleased that funding increases for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) were included in both the House and Senate fiscal year 2022 Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bills. As you negotiate final appropriations bills, we urge you to fund OSH at the House-passed funding level of \$250 million. This \$12.5 million increase would help OSH respond to high rates of e-cigarette use among youth and the devastating toll that tobacco continues to take on our nation's health. We urge Congress to move quickly when finalizing the FY 2022 appropriations bills to avoid long-term continuing resolutions which cause uncertainty for the agency.

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. Each year, it kills more than 480,000 Americans and is responsible for approximately \$226 billion in health care costs. Nearly one in three heart disease deaths and cancer deaths and nearly eight in 10 chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) deaths are caused by tobacco use. Smoking is a major cause of health disparities and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found that smoking increases risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Youth continue to use e-cigarettes at alarming levels. CDC and the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) most recent National Youth Tobacco Survey showed that more than 2 million middle and high school students reported using e-cigarettes in the first half of this year, even when many schools were closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, 43.6 percent of all high school e-cigarette users used e-cigarettes on 20 or more days a month and 27.6 percent reported daily use, a sign that youth are addicted or at risk of addiction. A more robust public health response is needed to prevent e-cigarettes from placing a new generation at risk for nicotine and tobacco use.

OSH has a vital role to play in addressing tobacco use. OSH provides grants to states and territories to support tobacco prevention and cessation programs, runs a highly successful national media campaign called Tips from Former Smokers (Tips), conducts research on tobacco use, and develops best practices for reducing it. Additional resources will allow OSH to address the threat to public health posed by high rates of youth e-cigarette use while continuing to prevent and reduce other forms of tobacco use. With additional resources:

- CDC could better advance health equity by strengthening efforts to assist groups who are disproportionately harmed by tobacco products, including by designing and implementing prevention and cessation programs that are tailored to address their specific needs.
- CDC could enhance efforts to end youth and young adult tobacco use, including e-cigarette use, by providing more resources to state and local health departments; educating youth, parents, health professionals, communities, and others about tobacco products and the harms associated with their use; and identifying evidence-based strategies to protect youth and young adults from initiating tobacco use.
- CDC could expand a program that we know works to reduce tobacco use: the Tips media campaign. From 2012 through 2018, CDC estimates that more than 16.4 million people who smoke attempted to quit and approximately one million smokers have quit for good because of the Tips campaign. As a result, the Tips campaign has helped prevent an estimated 129,100 smoking-related deaths and saved an estimated \$7.3 billion in health care costs.

As you finalize appropriations legislation for fiscal year 2022, we urge you to fund OSH at the House-passed funding level of \$250 million.

Sincerely,