



January 13, 2022

Dr. Megan Piper
President
Society for Research on Nicotine & Tobacco
2424 American Lane
Madison, WI 53704-3102
mep@ctri.wisc.edu

Dear Dr. Piper,

Thank you for raising this important issue. The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Center for Tobacco Products (CTP) has observed slowed or halted research as investigators working in the field of tobacco regulatory science grapple with the many facets of the on-going COVID global pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, we have worked closely with our federal partners at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), assisting tobacco regulatory scientists in identifying solutions to help move science forward despite COVID setbacks. As administrators of the grants, we look to our NIH colleagues for the best solutions. Our NIH colleagues have implemented several flexibilities for CTP-funded grants to navigate COVID setbacks including restructuring grants, review and approval of no-cost extension requests, and financially supplementing grants on a case-by-case basis. As we enter 2022, we will continue to engage our NIH colleagues in brainstorming options for CTP-funded grantees and review requests for COVID accommodations.

I appreciate the offer to facilitate conversations with CTP-funded grantees impacted by COVID setbacks. However, we encourage investigators to work directly with NIH program officials who are better acquainted with available options to keep their science moving forward. I would also add that CTP-funded research is technically not taxpayer-funded. Our dollars for research are part of a 100 percent user-fee funded budget where the money comes from the tobacco industry based on a market share assessment. Those user fees are used to fund grants through our partnership with the NIH Tobacco Regulatory Science Program.

I hope this letter begins to address your concerns. We look forward to continued discussions with SRNT leadership as we navigate the post-COVID era of tobacco regulatory science and research.

Sincerely,

Mitchell Zeller
Director, Center for Tobacco Products