

Keep the Promise to Protect NC Youth Continue \$17.3 million for NC's Successful Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Efforts

Last year's state budget eliminated the Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), which for nearly 10 years had used Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) dollars to fund the majority of NC's tobacco prevention and cessation programs. The budget transferred \$22 million of the remaining HWTF dollars as one-time funding to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for public health programs, including tobacco use prevention. DHHS allocated \$17.3 million to tobacco prevention and cessation in FY2012, but this funding is currently non-recurring. All programs will end June 30, 2012 unless the General Assembly acts to continue these successful programs.

North Carolina has an **OBLIGATION** to spend significant state dollars on tobacco use prevention and cessation programs. Why?

- **Every year the state receives MSA funds which are specifically intended to help states address the health and financial toll of tobacco use.** North Carolina received a total of \$138 million in MSA funds in FY 2011-12. Of this, DHHS spent \$17.3 million on tobacco prevention.
- **According to a recent report by the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, NC spends just a fraction of our tobacco revenue (from tobacco taxes and MSA dollars) on tobacco prevention programs – an abysmal four percent of \$431 million.** This pales in comparison to the \$396 million spent annually by tobacco companies to market their products in our state.¹
- **Legislators must not let NC's historically low youth smoking rates go back up as they have in other states that reduced funding for tobacco use prevention.** The establishment of the HWTF nearly 10 years ago represented a promise by the NC General Assembly to protect NC youth from the harm caused by tobacco use. Without the dedicated funding from the HWTF, it is the General Assembly's responsibility to ensure the continuation of the successful tobacco prevention programs in our state.

Tobacco-Use Prevention WORKS – NC Needs to Sustain the Effort.

- **NC has the LOWEST teen smoking rate in history!** Thanks to the tobacco prevention programs initiated in 2003, the middle school smoking rate in North Carolina has been cut by more than half (from 9.3% to 4.3%), and the high school smoking rate has dropped by a third (from 27.3% to 16.7%).²
- **The evidence is clear: tobacco prevention *reduces smoking, saves lives and saves money.***
 - Evidence shows when states have cut funding for tobacco prevention programs, progress has stalled and even reversed. For example, Indiana legislators cut funding for their highly effective tobacco prevention program by nearly 70% in 2004, and by 2006, smoking among high school students increased from 21.6% to 23.9%. This followed a decline in youth smoking rates of 32.5% between 2000-2004.³
 - A recent study from Washington State shows that for every dollar invested in tobacco prevention in the last ten years, the state saved \$5 in reduced hospitalization costs. Tobacco price increases and the state's indoor smoking law also played a role in improving health.⁴ And in California, the investment in tobacco prevention and control was estimated to save \$86 billion in health care costs between 1989 and 2004.⁵

- **MSA dollars spent on tobacco prevention are having a positive health impact.** According to the latest issue of America's Health Rankings, obesity rates and tobacco use among North Carolinians continue to be the state's most significant health challenges. Despite this, NC is making progress, now ranked 32nd in the nation for overall health, up from 35th last year and from 37th in 2008.⁶ *We cannot afford to stop these efforts now.*

Dangerous Health Impacts If Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Funding is Eliminated.

According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, if tobacco prevention funding is eliminated in NC (currently at \$17.3 million annually):⁷

- The youth smoking rate will increase by 2.8%;
- 17,500 more North Carolina kids will grow up to become addicted adult smokers;
- 5,600 more kids will grow up to die prematurely from smoking; and,
- **Future healthcare expenditures in the state will increase by \$306.2 million. State Medicaid healthcare spending ALONE will increase by \$32.4 million.**

**Don't risk reversing NC's historically low youth smoking rates.
Maintain the momentum of NC's
tobacco use prevention and cessation programs.**

Support Recurring Funding

For more information, go to www.ncallianceforhealth.org or contact pam@ncallianceforhealth.org.

¹ Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, *A Broken Promise to Our Children: The 1998 State Tobacco Settlement Thirteen Years Late*, November 30th, 2011, http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/content/what_we_do/state_local_issues/settlement/FY2012/2011Broken_Promise_Report.pdf.

² NC Department of Health and Human Services, *2009 North Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey*, 2009, <http://www.tobaccopreventionandcontrol.ncdhs.gov/data/yts/yts09/ncytsummarytablesstatewide2009.pdf>.

³ The Campaign For Tobacco Free Kids, *The Impact of Reductions to State Tobacco Control Program Funding*, March 31, 2011, <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0270.pdf>.

⁴ Washington State Department of Health. March 2011 Progress Report Tobacco Prevention and Control Program DOH Publication 340-165. <http://www.doh.wa.gov/tobacco/program/reports/2011ProgReport.pdf>

⁵ Lightwood JM, Dinno A, Glantz SA (2008) Effect of the California Tobacco Control Program on personal health care expenditures. *PLoS Med* 5(8): e178. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.0050178

⁶ United Health Foundation, *America's Health Rankings 2011 North Carolina*, December 2011, <http://www.americashealthrankings.org/SiteFiles/Statesummary/NC.pdf>.

⁷ Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, *Impact on Youth Smoking, Deaths & Related Health Costs from Changes to North Carolina Tobacco Prevention Funding*, December 12, 2011, http://issuu.com/ncadmin/docs/nc_funding_level_zero_out_12-12-11.