March 18, 2026

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We appreciate that the final Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 appropriations legislation included level funding for tobacco cessation and prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As your subcommittee moves forward with the FY 2027 House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) Appropriations bill, we urge you to continue to recognize the important role that the CDC plays in protecting Americans from a wide array of health threats and to provide $310 million for tobacco prevention and cessation at the CDC. 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 necessary resources to reduce the death and disease caused by tobacco use and other risks to public health.

As you know, the CDC helps Americans live longer, healthier lives by collecting health data, providing funding and support to state and local health programs, conducting public education campaigns, and developing best practices. The agency works to reduce chronic diseases, which are some of the leading causes of death in the United States and are a significant driver of health care costs. Its programs to reduce tobacco use help to prevent youth nicotine addiction and aid tobacco users who want to quit, saving lives and money.

Tobacco use has long been the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. **Each year, our nation loses nearly 500,000 people to tobacco use and spends $241 billion treating tobacco-related disease**, with more than 60 percent of these costs paid for by government programs like Medicare and Medicaid. At least one in four cardiovascular disease deaths, nearly one in three cancer deaths and nearly eight in 10 chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) deaths are caused by tobacco use. Most adults who smoke want to quit, but overcoming an addiction to nicotine is difficult and often requires multiple quit attempts.

Tobacco use almost always begins during adolescence, and therefore youth use of e-cigarettes is a serious public health concern. CDC and the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) most recent National Youth Tobacco Survey showed that more than 1.6 million youth, including 7.8 percent of high schoolers, reported using e-cigarettes in 2024. Alarmingly, 42.1 percent of high school e-cigarette users reported use on 20 days or more a month, including nearly 30 percent who reported daily use, a sign that youth are becoming addicted. According to the CDC, e-cigarettes expose users to nicotine and other potentially harmful substances and are not safe. A more robust public health response is needed to prevent e-cigarettes and other new tobacco products from placing a new generation at risk for nicotine addiction and tobacco use.

While smoking rates overall have declined, more than 26 million people in the United States currently smoke, and more than 16 million people are living with a tobacco-caused disease. Progress in reducing smoking has been uneven. For example, smoking rates are higher in the South and Midwest than other parts of the country and higher among people with lower levels of income than those with higher incomes. There is a need to enhance tobacco prevention and cessation programs where the need is greatest so that every person has an opportunity to avoid nicotine addiction and the health consequences of tobacco use.

CDC's tobacco prevention and cessation work has a profoundly positive impact on our nation's efforts to reduce the death and disease caused by tobacco. Increasing efforts to prevent kids from using tobacco products and help adult tobacco users to quit will save additional lives and decrease healthcare expenditures.

- CDC has historically provided tobacco prevention and cessation grants to all 50 states and territories to support tobacco prevention and cessation programs. Comprehensive state and local tobacco control programs are effective at preventing youth tobacco use and helping adults to quit, but they are typically underfunded. Funding from CDC helps states and territories to enhance their programs. Fourteen states (Alabama, Delaware, Kansas, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming) would lose at least 30 percent of their funding for tobacco control programs if CDC funding is eliminated.

- CDC has run a highly successful national media campaign called Tips from Former Smokers (Tips). The campaign features stories of people living with a tobacco-caused disease and shares information about where to receive tobacco cessation services. CDC estimates that more than 16.4 million people attempted to quit and approximately one million people quit for good from 2012 through 2018 because of the Tips campaign. Over this period, Tips has prevented an estimated 129,100 smoking-related deaths and saved an estimated $7.3 billion in health care costs.

- CDC provides funding to state quitlines, which provide telephone-based counseling services and, in most states, tobacco cessation medications to help people who would like to quit. Tobacco users who use state quitlines are two to three times more likely to quit than those who try to quit on their own. Five states and two territorial quitline programs (Connecticut, Guam, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia) relied on CDC for at least 75 percent of their funding in FY 2024. These quitlines would likely be unable to continue operating without the funding they receive from CDC.

CDC's focus on public education, data collection, and state, tribal, and national programs to reduce tobacco use is uniquely important. Additional funding for tobacco cessation and prevention programs at CDC, including the Office on Smoking and Health, will enable states to strengthen tobacco control efforts, expand quitline services, and will enhance the Tips media campaign, ensuring better support and protection for children and adults against the harms of tobacco use.

Investments in tobacco prevention and cessation will protect kids, save lives, and reduce the cost of treating tobacco-caused disease. With $310 million, CDC will be able to address the challenges posed by e-cigarettes and continue to make progress reducing the death and disease caused by other tobacco products, especially those most at risk for tobacco-caused disease.

Sincerely,

100 Black Men of America, Inc.

Action on Smoking and Health

African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council

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 Psychiatric Pharmacists

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American College of Cardiology

American College of Chest Physicians

American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists

American College of Physicians

American College of Preventive Medicine

American Dental Association

American Heart Association

American Lung Association

American Medical Association

American Medical Women's Association

American Public Health Association

American Society of Addiction Medicine

American Thoracic Society

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 Cardiologists

Association of Black Women Physicians

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)

Big Cities Health Coalition

Breathe Southern California

CADCA

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

Cancer Prevention and Treatment Fund

Catholic Health Association of the United States

Community Education Group

COPD Foundation

Corporate Accountability

Counter Tools

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

DC Tobacco Free Coalition

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, Inc. (FCCLA)

First Focus Campaign for Children

HealthHIV

IntelliQuit

Leadership Council for Healthy Communities

LUNGevity Foundation

March of Dimes

NAACP

National Network of Public Health Institutes

National Association of Black Oncologists

National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association of Hispanic Nurses

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Association of School Nurses

National Association of Social Workers

National Black Nurses Association, Inc

National Coalition for LGBTQ Health

National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN)

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

National Education Association

National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention

National Hispanic Health Foundation

National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA)

National Tongan American Society

North American Quitline Consortium

Oncology Nursing Society

Parents Against Vaping

Preventing Tobacco Addiction Foundation/Tobacco 21

Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association

Public Health Institute

Respiratory Health Association

Save A Girl Save A World

Social Action Commission-African Methodist Episcopal Church

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 and Equity

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health

The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

Tobacco Free Portfolios

Trinity Health

Trust for America's Health

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease