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March 17, 2025

9:00am – 12:00pm CDT

Senate Appropriations – Human Resources Division Committee for the 69<sup>th</sup> ND Legislative Assembly

Chairman Dever, and members of the Senate Appropriations – Human Resources Division Committee hello, my name is Heather Austin, and I am the Executive Director for Tobacco Free North Dakota. The mission of Tobacco Free North Dakota is to improve and protect the public health of all North Dakotans by reducing the serious health and economic consequences of tobacco use, the state's number one cause of preventable disease and death. We work to facilitate coalitions and to promote policy discussions across North Dakota, along with providing education and resources that are used to help prevent kids from ever starting the dangerous addiction to tobacco and nicotine. Thank you so much for your time today.

I am here to encourage continued, sustainable, and sufficient funding for the State Tobacco Prevention and Control Program in HB 1012, the bill relating to Department of Health and Human Services Budget and its Tobacco Prevention and Control Program.

Since the tobacco control program, with reduced funding, was restructured under the Department of Health back in 2017, TFND, ND Local Public Health Units, health system partners, and other DHHS grantees, continue to collaborate to accomplish the goals outlined in our State Plan for Tobacco Prevention and Control. The program has dealt remarkably well with doing the same work, or in some cases even more work, with less resources and funds. We have made great strides in what we accomplish for our citizens. Today we encourage a continued advancement of funding to address targeted issues facing our citizens, such as were identified by this body in 2023 to address youth prevention engagement and pharmacological access in rural communities.

To support these efforts, TFND is taking a lead alongside several partners fulfilling work in our communities and schools educating and advocating for policy that would reduce e-cigarettes and vaping (ENDS) among our youth while also highlighting the dangers of these products. With the additional funding allocated to this effort in last biennium's budget, we have continued to address the "vaping epidemic" announced by the FDA in 2018. TFND launched a "Train the Trainer" program in addition to our regular webinar series for continuing prevention education and our online resource hub. Combining efforts to empower local experts we can exponentially affect needs across ND. We hope to continue these efforts in the next biennium because we know that there is still more work to be done to save the newest generation from the serious health and economic consequences of a lifelong addiction to tobacco.

An area of concern for TFND is that the Tobacco Prevention media funding would be decreased by \$493,302 in the current budget proposal. This would affect the health communications the Tobacco Prevention and Control Program (TCP) has leveraged to help North Dakotans quit tobacco by impacting the successful statewide promotion of "Quit Week." The TCP has promoted Quit Week for the past five years with the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Quit Week planned for June 8-14, 2025. TFND is a partner in

this media outreach along with Local Public Health and other TPCP grantees. The TPCP evaluation of this event demonstrates the importance of media funding to drive North Dakotans to NDQuits, our state's quitline. The number of calls to NDQuits has peaked during each of the Quit Week events, and we want to make sure that trend continues.

Again, I am encouraged to see funding for both youth prevention and cessation treatment in the recommended budget for this biennium. I hope this committee approves those recommendations and continues to look for further ways to advance good investments in tobacco prevention and control in our state. I would also encourage the committee not to allow the proposed cut to the TCPC media line item. Educating North Dakotans about the dangers of nicotine for all citizens is still vital to reducing overall use. It would be a shame to lose the momentum gained in this area over the past several years, as new products continue to come out at a lightning pace to entice new users.

I hope my time in front of you today highlights that there is much being done for tobacco prevention and cessation policy in North Dakota, but that there is still so much more to do, and I think our combined efforts and collaborations are so important to continue to support with our time, talent, and treasure. Just think of the health impacts and potential for lives saved any increase in funding could provide for our state.

Along with my testimony, you are also receiving a copy of our Resolution of Support for a fully Funded Tobacco Prevention and Control Program for ND. The following organizations/entities signed TFND's resolution. (Attached): Bismarck Tobacco Free Coalition, Blue Zones Projects Grand Forks, Cavalier County Commission, C+K Counseling, Grand Forks Tobacco Free Coalition, Legacy High Stop the Cloud, Nelson-Griggs Board of Health, North Dakota Medical Association, Upper Missouri District Health Unit, Walsh County Board of Health, Walsh County Tobacco Free Coalition, Walsh County District Health, Walsh County Substance Use Prevention Coalition, and Western Plains Board of Health.

Again, thank you for this time in front of you, Chairman Dever, and the Committee. It is very appreciated. Please vote Do Pass with continued funding for Tobacco Prevention and Control included in HB 1012.

May I take any questions?

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs—2014. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014.

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## Resolution to Support a Fully Funded Tobacco Control Program

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*Adopted by the Tobacco Free North Dakota Board of Directors August 26, 2024*

**Whereas** the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends North Dakota spends \$9.8 million per year for a tobacco control program<sup>i</sup>; and

**Whereas** North Dakota currently spends \$7.11 million per year for its tobacco control program<sup>ii</sup>; and

**Whereas** North Dakota's General Fund earned \$47.5 million in tobacco tax collections from 2021-2023, as well as \$70.9 million as part of the Master Settlement Agreement during the same timeframe<sup>iii</sup>; and

**Whereas** North Dakota's program provides tobacco cessation counseling and services to nearly 2,000 adults each year<sup>iv</sup>; and

**Whereas** states that make larger investments into tobacco control programs see a reduction in tobacco sales<sup>v</sup>; and

**Whereas** having a robust media campaign has a direct effect on decreasing tobacco related medical expenses, usage rates, increasing utilization and awareness of cessation services, and decreased youth initiation rates<sup>vi</sup>; and

**Whereas** Quit Week has become an established, annual cessation campaign in June to highlight the availability of resources in North Dakota to treat people with nicotine dependence; and

**Whereas** 75 percent of North Dakota adults believe commercial tobacco use in youth is a moderate or serious problem<sup>vii</sup>; and

**Whereas** nearly 9 in 10 people that smoke started before the age of 18<sup>viii</sup>; and

**Whereas** 21.2% of high school students (grades 9-12) in the North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey used electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) in the past 30 days, of whom many will develop a lifelong addiction to nicotine/tobacco products<sup>ix</sup>; and

**Whereas** according to the American College Health Association – National College Health Assessment, 33.1 percent of North Dakota college students who reported using tobacco and nicotine products used them daily or almost daily in the past 3 months<sup>x</sup>; and

**Whereas** tobacco use in North Dakota imposes economic burden, with direct healthcare costs amounting to \$379 million each year, productivity losses approximating \$715 million annually, and each household paying \$970 per year in state and federal taxes from smoking-caused government expenditures<sup>xi</sup>; and

**Whereas** this resolution addresses commercial tobacco, which is different from traditional tobacco used in American Indian spiritual and ceremonial practices; and

**Whereas** the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advocates for a multi-tiered approach to tobacco control, including increasing tobacco taxes, fully funding a tobacco control program and maintaining a strong indoor smoke-free air law;

**Now therefore be it resolved**, Tobacco Free North Dakota supports funding a comprehensive tobacco control program at the CDC recommended levels to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use in North Dakota. Further, Tobacco Free North Dakota supports using money from the Master Settlement Agreement, tobacco taxes and any other relevant sources to fund the program.

Heather Austin

Heather Austin

8-26-2024

Name of Organization Representative

Signature of Organization Representative

Date

Sources:

- <sup>i</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs*.
- <sup>ii</sup> Current funding: <https://ndlegis.gov/assembly/68-2023/regular/documents/23-0233-04000.pdf>
- <sup>iii</sup> Tax collections: <https://www.tax.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/news-center/publications/56th-biennial-report.pdf>
- <sup>iv</sup> PDA, Inc. (2023), *The State of Tobacco Control in North Dakota: 2021 -2023*
- <sup>v</sup> <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2023/03/424991/californias-anti-smoking-push-spurs-big-savings-health-costs>
- <sup>vi</sup> [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK99237/pdf/Bookshelf\\_NBK99237.pdf](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK99237/pdf/Bookshelf_NBK99237.pdf)
- <sup>vii</sup> WYSAC (2022), *North Dakota Community Readiness Survey, 2022*.
- <sup>viii</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/youth\\_data/tobacco\\_use/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/index.htm)
- <sup>ix</sup> <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/health/community/tobacco/surveillance-data>
- <sup>x</sup> [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.acha.org/wp-content/uploads/NCHA-IIIb\\_SPRING\\_2024\\_REFERENCE\\_GROUP\\_DATA\\_REPORT.pdf](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.acha.org/wp-content/uploads/NCHA-IIIb_SPRING_2024_REFERENCE_GROUP_DATA_REPORT.pdf)
- <sup>xi</sup> [https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/north\\_dakota](https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/north_dakota)

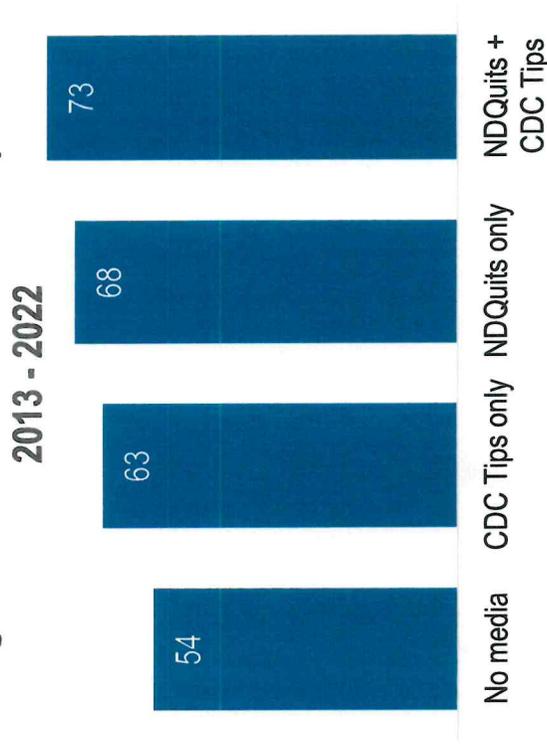
# EFFECTIVE USE OF MEDIA TO SHARE NDQUITS RESOURCES

Health communications – broadcast, cable, digital, social, and earned media – is an essential and evidence-based component of helping people quit tobacco.

PDA examined the relationship between health communications and calls to NDQuits from July 2013 – December 2022. **When NDQuits television ads are running, there is an average of 14 more calls per week** than when no television ads are running. There are an **average of 19 more calls per week when both NDQuits and CDC Tips ads run**. Media, particularly television, remains essential to driving North Dakotans to NDQuits.

Quit Week is a coordinated media campaign that educates on cessation resources available to North Dakotans and encourages those that use tobacco to make a quit attempt. Messages are coordinated and shared via social media (Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube), broadcast TV, radio, digital media, billboards, newspapers, and earned media. From 2020 to 2024, the “It’s Quitting Time” brand was established, and engagement per post has improved. **Annually, for the past five years, the number of calls to NDQuits has peaked during Quit Week.**

Average number of calls to NDQuits per week, 2013 - 2022



Number of calls to NDQuits before and during the Quit Week campaign – Quit Week has consistently high calls to NDQuits.

