

Tobacco Prevention Programs

Endorse \$7 million request for tobacco prevention.

Status

North Carolina appropriated \$17.3 million to the Health and Wellness Trust Fund for tobacco use prevention and cessation programs until 2011 when funding ended. The smoking rate in 2011, specifically among youth, was the lowest in our state's history. Once funding was cut, the smoking rate again began to rise. The loss of funding was compounded by the increase in electronic cigarette usage. Now almost 3 in every 10 (125,111) high school students in North Carolina are current tobacco users. Overall, tobacco use among North Carolina high school students increased from 25.8% to 27.5% from 2011 to 2015. Use of electronic cigarettes by North Carolina high school students increased 888% between 2011 and 2015, from 1.7% to 16.8%. Each year, 14,200 deaths in North Carolina are attributed to tobacco use and there are currently 180,000 youth alive in North Carolina who will die prematurely from smoking. Smoking directly causes \$3.81 billion in health care costs in North Carolina every year, and Medicaid costs caused by smoking in North Carolina are more than \$931 million yearly.

Funding

- \$6,400,000 to create ten regional teen tobacco use prevention programs through local health departments and collaborating partners, covering all 100 counties in North Carolina, and to create one full-time equivalent regional-level teen tobacco use prevention coordinator position and one state-level teen tobacco use prevention coordinator position in each of the ten regions. Program funds shall be used to develop teen tobacco use prevention teams in counties and school districts across the region; education and training of teen leaders to educate peers and community leaders in schools, faith communities, and organizations serving youth on evidence-based teen tobacco use prevention programs; and to reach a youth audience with effective tobacco use prevention messages through public education and media ads;
- \$200,000 to contract with organizations that have expertise in youth leadership and peer education training to collaborate with state and local agencies to provide training and expertise to peer-led, adult-supported tobacco use prevention programs;
- \$100,000 for a tobacco-free campus initiative to create one full-time equivalent tobacco-free state-level campus coordinator position; design an initiative to maintain 100% tobacco-free K-12 public schools, including all electronic nicotine delivery devices; and assist colleges and community colleges in becoming tobacco-free;
- \$100,000 for a smoke-free multi-unit housing initiative to protect children from secondhand smoke and create one full-time equivalent state-level coordinator position; provide program education and support to advance voluntary tobacco-free multi-unit housing; and promote tobacco-free homes to eliminate children's exposure to secondhand smoke;
- \$100,000 for education and enforcement of the state youth access tobacco law, including all electronic nicotine delivery devices; and
- \$100,000 for an extensive evaluation of the tobacco use prevention program; evaluation to be conducted by an independent university-based evaluator.

Every April North Carolina still receives approximately \$140 million from the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA), a 1998 settlement between the leading tobacco companies and 46 states. The intent of the settlement was that these funds would be used for tobacco use prevention and cessation programs. However, none of this funding is going toward prevention programs.