

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 30, 2011**  
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### **National Report: New York Ranks 20th in Protecting Kids from Tobacco**

**Washington, DC (November 30, 2011)** – New York ranks 20th in the nation in funding programs to prevent kids from smoking and help smokers quit, according to a national report released today by a coalition of public health organizations.

New York currently spends \$41.4 million a year on tobacco prevention and cessation programs, which is 16 percent of the \$254.3 million recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Other key findings for New York include:

- New York this year will collect \$2.3 billion in revenue from the 1998 tobacco settlement and tobacco taxes, but will spend just 1.8 percent of it on tobacco prevention programs. This means New York is spending less than 2 cents of every dollar in tobacco revenue to fight tobacco use.
- In the past four years, New York has cut funding for tobacco prevention programs by 52 percent, from \$85.5 million to \$41.4 million.
- The tobacco companies spend \$360.3 million a year to market their products in New York. This is 8 times what the state spends on tobacco prevention.

The annual report on states' funding of tobacco prevention programs, titled "A Broken Promise to Our Children: The 1998 State Tobacco Settlement 13 Years Later," was released by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Lung Association, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights.

For years New York has been a pioneer in the fight against tobacco. It has the highest cigarette tax in the country at \$4.35 per pack, has been a leader in the smoke-free movement, and has had an effective, well-funded tobacco prevention program. As a result, it has reduced the adult smoking rate to 15.5 percent and the high school smoking rate to 12.6 percent, both well below the national average (nationally, 19.3 percent of adults and 19.5 percent of high school students smoke).

However, the recent cuts to New York's tobacco prevention and cessation programs have put the state's progress at risk.

"New York has been a real leader in the fight against tobacco and has shown that tobacco prevention works with its very successful program. However, it has taken a big step backward by cutting tobacco prevention funding in half," said Matthew L. Myers, President of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. "To continue making progress, New York must restore funding for tobacco prevention. Even in these difficult budget times, tobacco prevention is a smart investment for New York that protects kids, saves lives and saves money by reducing tobacco-related health care costs."

Despite the state's progress, 22,500 New York kids still become regular smokers each year. Tobacco annually claims 25,400 lives and costs the state \$8.2 billion in health care bills.

Nationally, the report finds that most states are failing to adequately fund tobacco prevention and cessation programs. Altogether, the states have cut funding for these programs to the lowest level since 1999, when they first started receiving tobacco settlement payments. Key national findings of the report include:

- The states this year will collect \$25.6 billion from the tobacco settlement and tobacco taxes, but will spend just 1.8 percent of it – \$456.7 million – on tobacco prevention programs. This means the states are spending less than two cents of every dollar in tobacco revenue to fight tobacco use.
- States have cut funding for tobacco prevention programs by 12 percent (\$61.2 million) in the past year and by 36 percent (\$260.5 million) in the past four years.
- Only two states – Alaska and North Dakota – currently fund tobacco prevention programs at the CDC-recommended level.

The report warns that the nation's progress in reducing smoking is at risk unless states increase funding for programs to prevent kids from smoking and help smokers quit. Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S., killing more than 400,000 people and costing \$96 billion in health care bills each year.

More information, including the full report and state-specific information, can be obtained at [www.tobaccofreekids.org/reports/settlements](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/reports/settlements).