

Master Settlement Agreement Campaign Internal Talking Points

Background

- I am concerned about reduced funding for tobacco prevention and cessation programs in Pennsylvania due to a bond that was issued against Master Settlement Agreement proceeds.
- Pennsylvania receives Master Settlement Agreement funds from the tobacco industry in order to compensate the state for the harm caused by tobacco use. While less than 5 percent of MSA funds support tobacco prevention and cessation programs, the MSA is the largest source of tobacco control funds in Pennsylvania.

Why Funding Matters

- Tobacco prevention and cessation programs are a smart investment for states that want to save lives and save money by reducing smoking-related healthcare costs. Tobacco use kills more than 22,000 adults in Pennsylvania every year and costs taxpayers over \$6 billion in health care costs annually.
- Every year, 6,700 new Pennsylvania youth become regular daily smokers, and one-third of them will die a premature death as a result. However, studies have shown that when states invest in tobacco prevention programs, they lower the youth smoking rates and overall tobacco use.
- Right now, tobacco prevention programs are making a difference in Pennsylvania. Since 2001, smoking rates, youth access to tobacco, and youth initiation of tobacco products have declined in Pennsylvania. Programs that receive MSA funding have contributed to this success by providing prevention education and conducting enforcement checks to prevent tobacco retailers from selling to minors.
- Pennsylvania also currently funds smoking cessation programs for people who want to quit, including the Pennsylvania Free Quitline and local, in-person group programs across the state. Last year, over 12,000 people used the Quitline, and over 7,000 individuals were served by local smoking cessation programs.
- In fact, most people who smoke want to quit, but the tobacco companies would rather they didn't, and they spend over \$400 million annually in Pennsylvania to market their addictive products to your constituents. These products are not becoming safer. A Harvard School of Public Health study found that the tobacco companies have secretly and significantly increased the levels of nicotine in cigarette smoke since 1998.

Conclusion

- It is only right that Pennsylvania use the money it receives from tobacco companies to counter the negative health and economic impacts that tobacco has on our communities. We need to continue funding programs that help smokers quit, prevent young people from ever starting to smoke, and protect Pennsylvanians from the health effects of secondhand smoke.