



March 20, 2012

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
 Hubert H. Humphrey Building  
 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 120F  
 Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

We are writing to applaud you for launching the federal government's first nationwide paid media campaign to educate the public about the dangers of tobacco use and its terrible toll of disease and death. This campaign will help prevent young people from starting to smoke and encourage tobacco users to quit. This pioneering initiative will help drive down the rate of tobacco use in the United States, which will prevent disease, save lives, and reduce tobacco-related health care costs.

As you know, the 45 million Americans who currently smoke are at heightened risk for a variety of cancers, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and other serious medical conditions. The vast majority of today's regular adult smokers began to use tobacco products during adolescence and became addicted by the time they were young adults.

The evidence clearly demonstrates that well-designed and well-funded public education campaigns reduce the number of youth who start smoking, increase the number of smokers who quit, and make tobacco industry marketing less effective. The U.S. Surgeon General's Report released earlier this month surveyed the scientific evidence and concluded, "Evidence indicates that mass media campaigns can be one of the most effective strategies in changing social norms and preventing youth smoking." This report also concluded, "There is also strong evidence that media ads designed for adults also decrease the prevalence of smoking among youth." The national public education campaign, "truth," has succeeded in preventing thousands of teens from smoking, and media campaigns have been an integral part of successful tobacco prevention and cessation programs in many states, including California, Florida, New York, and Washington.

This media campaign is a wise investment of Prevention and Public Health Fund resources and has great potential to help save money by reducing tobacco-related health care costs, which total \$96 billion a year in the United States. There is growing evidence from states around the country that tobacco prevention and cessation programs, including mass media campaigns, have a significant return on investment. For example, a December 2011 study published by the American Journal of Public Health found that in the first 10 years of its tobacco prevention program, Washington State saved \$5 in tobacco-related hospitalization costs for every \$1 spent.

The "Tips from Former Smokers" media campaign sends a powerful message about the consequences of tobacco use from particularly compelling messengers: people who are suffering from a tobacco-caused disease. This approach has proven to be highly effective in the past. A recent systematic review of the literature on the impact of mass media campaigns found that messages that used graphic images or testimonials to portray the negative health consequences of smoking were found to be most effective at generating increased knowledge about the health effects of smoking, positive beliefs about quitting, and quitting behavior.

This media campaign will strengthen our nation's efforts to reduce the toll that tobacco use takes on our families, health care system, and government. It was a key element of your Department's strategic plan for ending the tobacco epidemic and builds on successes such as enactment of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, the 61-cent increase in the federal cigarette tax, and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which created the Prevention and Public Health Fund and expanded coverage of tobacco cessation services in Medicaid and private health plans.

As the recent Surgeon General's Report confirmed, we know which interventions work to prevent young people from starting to use tobacco products and to help current users to quit. Media campaigns are

one of the most effective steps the federal government can take. We appreciate your leadership in launching this media campaign and thank you for your commitment to reducing the death and disease caused by tobacco use.

Sincerely,

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American Heart Association  
American Lung Association  
Legacy  
Academy of General Dentistry  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners  
American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Academy of Periodontology  
American Association for Cancer Research  
American Association for Community Dental Programs  
American Association for Dental Research  
American Association for Respiratory Care  
American Association Public Health Dentistry  
American College of Dentists  
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American Dental Association  
American Dental Hygienists' Association  
American Medical Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
American Thoracic Society  
Association of Black Cardiologists  
Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
LIVESTRONG  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of Local Boards of Health  
National Latino Tobacco Control Network  
National Physicians Alliance  
North American Quitline Consortium  
Partnership for Prevention  
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions  
Society for Public Health Education  
United Church of Christ