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National Report: Hawaii Ranks 5th in Protecting Kids from Tobacco

Washington, DC – Fifteen years after the 1998 state tobacco settlement, Hawaii ranks 5th 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.

Hawaii currently spends \$7.9 million a year on tobacco prevention and cessation programs, which is 51.7 percent of the \$15.2 million recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Other key findings for Hawaii include:

- Hawaii this year will collect \$182.4 million in revenue from the 1998 tobacco settlement and tobacco taxes, but will spend just 4.3 percent of it on tobacco prevention programs. This means Hawaii is spending less than 5 cents of every dollar in tobacco revenue to fight tobacco use.
- Hawaii in the past two years has cut funding for tobacco prevention by 26 percent, from \$10.7 to \$7.9 million.
- The tobacco companies spend \$26.9 million a year to market their products in Hawaii. This is 3 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 15 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.

The report assesses whether the states have kept their promise to use a significant portion of their settlement funds – estimated to total \$246 billion over the first 25 years – to fight tobacco use. The states also collect billions more each year from tobacco taxes.

Hawaii has been a leader in the fight against tobacco with a high cigarette tax (\$3.20 per pack), a strong smoke-free workplace law and its tobacco prevention and cessation program. As a result, Hawaii has one of the lowest high school smoking rates in the nation at 10.1 percent, compared to 18.1 percent who smoke nationally. However, Hawaii has cut funding for tobacco prevention by 26 percent in the past two years.

"Hawaii has been a leader in the fight against tobacco, but the state's progress is at risk unless it restores funding for tobacco prevention programs," said Matthew L. Myers, President of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. "Tobacco prevention is a smart investment that protects kids, saves lives and saves money by reducing tobacco-related health care costs."

In Hawaii, 10.1 percent of high school students smoke, and 1,000 more kids become regular

smokers each year. Tobacco annually claims 1,100 lives and costs the state \$336 million in health care bills.

Nationally, the report finds that most states are failing to adequately fund tobacco prevention and cessation programs. Key national findings of the report include:

- The states this year will collect \$25 billion from the tobacco settlement and tobacco taxes, but will spend just 1.9 percent of it – \$481.2 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 are falling woefully short of the CDC’s recommended funding levels for tobacco prevention programs. Altogether, the states have budgeted just 13 percent of the \$3.7 billion the CDC recommends.
- Only two states – Alaska and North Dakota – currently fund tobacco prevention programs at the CDC-recommended level.

There is more evidence than ever before that tobacco prevention and cessation programs work to reduce smoking, save lives and save money. Florida, which has a well-funded, sustained tobacco prevention program, reduced its high school smoking rate to just 8.6 percent in 2013, far below the national rate. One study found that during the first 10 years of its tobacco prevention program, Washington state saved more than \$5 in tobacco-related hospitalization costs for every \$1 spent on the program.

Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable death in the U.S., killing more than 400,000 people and costing \$96 billion in health care bills each year. Nationally, about 18 percent of adults and 18.1 percent of high school students smoke.

More information, including the full report and state-specific information, can be obtained at www.tobaccofreekids.org/reports/settlements.