



Ohio Chapter

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April 28, 2017

Chairman Smith, Vice chair Ryan, Ranking Member Cera, and Members of the House Finance Committee—

On behalf of the 2,900 members of the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I am writing today to express our opposition to proposed cuts to tobacco cessation funding that are included in the substitute bill for HB 49.

Ohio's tobacco cessation efforts are primarily funded through two line items—440473 (tobacco use, prevention, and cessation) and 440656 (tobacco use prevention). In State Fiscal Year 2017, these line items contributed \$11.6 million to tobacco cessation programming in Ohio. Governor Kasich's Budget proposal provided combined funding at \$11.1 million in each fiscal year. The source for ALI 440473 is GRF while ALI 440656 is funded by master tobacco settlement funds.

The HB 49 substitute bill reduces tobacco cessation funding by nearly \$6 million in each fiscal year, or \$11 million over the biennium. Specifically, ALI 440473 was reduced from \$4 million in each fiscal year to \$1 million in each fiscal year while ALI 440656 was reduced from \$7.1 million to \$4.5 million in each fiscal year.

According to the US Surgeon General's 2014 report, *The Health Consequences of Smoking – 50 Years of Progress*, more than one in five Ohio high school students smoke cigarettes and more than one in ten use smokeless tobacco or vapor products. These statistics are staggering and clearly show the need for tobacco prevention funding within the Ohio Department of Health (ODH). In addition to prevention, ODH's cessation programming is vital to protecting children from secondhand smoke and reducing maternal smoking, which is a leading factor in Ohio's infant mortality rate. 10% of Ohio children reside in a home with at least one regular tobacco user; this rate ranks Ohio 49th in the nation.

Simply put, these funds are vital to the health and safety of Ohio's children. I understand the budgetary challenges facing this committee and would point out that preventing or curbing smoking will have a direct financial impact on Ohio's Medicaid spending.

We strongly encourage the committee to restore funding levels and continue investing in tobacco cessation programming. Thank you for your efforts on behalf of Ohio's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa Wervev Arnold".

Melissa Wervev Arnold
Chief Executive Officer
Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics