



February 23, 2016

The Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President:

We commend you for launching the Administration's new initiative to accelerate progress in preventing, treating, and curing cancer. The toll that cancer takes on American families is truly devastating, but there are steps the Administration can take to reduce cancer incidence and mortality. As the work of the White House Cancer Moonshot Task Force begins, we urge you to make the prevention and reduction of tobacco use a high priority.

We cannot win the fight against cancer without winning the fight against tobacco. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, smoking causes one in every three cancer deaths in the U.S. Smoking causes at least 15 types of cancer throughout the body and is responsible for 87 percent of deaths from lung cancer, the leading cause of cancer deaths in both men and women. According to the American Association for Cancer Research, "Not using tobacco is the single best way a person can prevent cancer from developing."

Fortunately, we have achieved important progress reducing tobacco's impact on death and disease, including cancer. Due to the tobacco control community's tireless work against the tobacco industry, cigarette smoking rates declined from 42 percent in 1965 to just 15 percent in 2015. We know what works, and the tobacco control community has been unified and coordinated in its efforts in support of these policies and programs:

- Increasing tobacco taxes to make the products more expensive and less appealing to youth;
- Instituting smoke-free air laws, which prevent second-hand smoke exposure and de-normalize tobacco use;
- Creating effective and well-funded mass media campaigns to further de-normalize tobacco use and counteract tobacco industry advertising and marketing;
- Establishing consistently well-funded state and local tobacco control programs to help reach every sector of the population;

- Insuring that the FDA fully exercises its authority and supporting the CDC's Office on Smoking and Health, including the Tips from Former Smokers media campaign; and
- Urging that all smokers be given access to full and effective smoking cessation tools.

Reductions in smoking have already contributed greatly to declines in cancer deaths in the U.S. The American Cancer Society cites smoking declines as a key reason why cancer death rates dropped by 23 percent from 1991 to 2012. Recent data suggest that tobacco control efforts, including major public education and policy initiatives, prevented an estimated 800,000 lung cancer deaths between 1975 and 2000.

While the important work of searching for new treatments and cures continues, the Administration can use what we already know about tobacco and how to reduce tobacco use to make significant advances in preventing cancer. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your staff to discuss how policies and programs to reduce tobacco use can be incorporated into the Task Force's work. Matthew Myers' assistant, Shankari Bastiampillai (202-296-5469), would be happy to work with the appropriate person on your staff to arrange a time to meet.

Sincerely,



Matthew L. Myers
President
Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids



Robin Koval
CEO and President
Truth Initiative