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## **Truth Initiative Board Chair Mike Moore announces CEO and President Robin Koval will retire after a decade of transformational leadership**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 21, 2023)** – Robin Koval, CEO and President of Truth Initiative, the nation’s largest public health organization dedicated to achieving a culture where all young people reject smoking, vaping and nicotine will retire in October 2023 after 10 years of transformational leadership. Koval became CEO and President in 2013, the second in the organization’s 24-year history. The Truth Initiative Board of Directors will now proceed with a formal search for a successor to build on Koval’s record of achievements and ambitious goals to continue to advance its lifesaving mission.

In making the announcement, Moore said, “Robin has done an outstanding job leading Truth Initiative through a transformative time in our history, driving down youth smoking rates to historic lows. She and the organization are repeating this success by expanding the public education **truth**<sup>®</sup> brand with proven products to combat the national youth e-cigarette epidemic and the tobacco industry’s relentless pursuit to hook a new generation. Under Robin’s leadership, peer-reviewed research has shown the national **truth** campaign is preventing millions of young people from vaping nicotine and slowing progression while helping those already using e-cigarettes to quit in record numbers.”

"It has been the profound honor of my life and highlight of my professional career to serve as your CEO and work alongside each and every one of you these past 10 years," Koval told staff in a meeting. "When I stepped into the role of CEO in November of 2013, I was already one of the biggest champions of the **truth** brand. I am so proud of this entire organization and all that we have accomplished together honoring our core values and in support of our lifesaving mission. I will always champion Truth Initiative’s groundbreaking work to make tobacco and nicotine addiction a thing of the past and celebrate your history-making public health victories.

During her CEO tenure, Koval provided the vision, creativity and leadership to relaunch the national award-winning **truth** youth tobacco prevention campaign to a new generation. In 2015, she rebranded the American Legacy Foundation as Truth Initiative to utilize the highly recognizable and successful **truth** public education campaign to tell a broader story about the organization’s inspiring work and expand its world-class research, youth activism and digital smoking and vaping cessation programs. Under her leadership, multiple peer-reviewed studies have shown that **truth** has prevented millions of young people from becoming tobacco users at risk of a lifetime of nicotine addiction. As youth vaping exploded, Koval led the organization to become a leader in the fight against the youth e-cigarette epidemic and all forms of youth nicotine addiction. Research now shows **truth** campaign awareness is significantly associated with lower likelihood of vaping among young people aged 15-24 years old. She led the expansion of



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the **truth** brand to include innovative quitting tools and resources designed to protect and empower young people to live nicotine-free lives, including the first-of-its kind quit vaping program for teens and young adults, **This is Quitting**, which has enrolled over 540,000 individuals since its launch in 2019; and a national youth vaping prevention digital curriculum **Vaping: Know the truth**, now reaching almost 7,000 schools across the country. Koval has also led Truth Initiative's efforts to translate its expertise to address our nation's opioid crisis. The Emmy® Award-winning **Truth About Opioids** campaign has been proven to increase knowledge of the risks of opioid misuse among youth and young adults and decrease attitudes around stigma.

Under Koval's leadership, **truth** has been voted one of the most influential campaigns of the 21st century by Advertising Age and named the most effective brand of the year by the American Marketing Association. Fast Company recognized Truth Initiative as one of the World's Most Innovative Companies and a top ten non-profit organization in 2021 and 2022.

"Robin's CEO tenure with us is the crowning achievement of a truly remarkable career. On behalf of the Truth Initiative Board of Directors, I wish to extend our sincere thanks and gratitude for her significant contributions and unwavering leadership. She has put Truth Initiative in the best possible position to advance our lifesaving mission and create the first tobacco-free generation," added Moore. "We are very fortunate Robin will continue to lead this organization until October as we embark on a comprehensive search for the next CEO to continue our legacy."

Prior to joining Truth Initiative, Koval was co-founder and CEO of the Kaplan Thaler Group, and grew the company from a fledgling start-up in 1997 to a billion-dollar advertising agency working with leading brands such as Procter & Gamble, Pfizer, Wendy's and Aflac. She was named CEO when her agency merged with Publicis to become Publicis Kaplan Thaler and led the 700-person agency to become the fifth largest in New York City. In addition, Koval is the co-author of several best-selling books, including "Grit to Great: How Perseverance, Passion and Pluck Take You from Ordinary to Extraordinary," "The Power of Nice," and "The Power of Small."

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