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Jeffrey M. Zirger
Information Collection Review Office
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road, N.E., MS H21-8
Atlanta, GA 30329

**RE: Extended Evaluation of the National Tobacco Prevention and Control Public Education Campaign (OMB Control No. 0920-1083) – Reinstatement – National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Docket No. CDC-2026-0628**

Dear Dr. Zirger:

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Extended Evaluation of the National Tobacco Prevention and Control Public Education Campaign. The undersigned public health and medical organizations write to emphasize not only the importance of evaluating the *Tips From Former Smokers campaign* but also the importance of the *Tips campaign* itself. We are deeply concerned about the changes to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that effectively dismantled CDC's Office on Smoking and Health (OSH), which works to protect the public's health from the harmful effects of tobacco use. At this time, the *Tips campaign* has been off the air for approximately nine months.¹ We urge CDC to prioritize the continuance of the *Tips campaign*, or a similar national public education cessation campaign that is based on independent evidence, independent of tobacco industry influence, focused on helping people completely quit commercial tobacco use, and that does not promote tobacco products as cessation therapies unless they have received appropriate FDA approval for that purpose, into the future.

Tobacco prevention and cessation are essential to meeting the Administration's goal to reduce chronic disease. Therefore, it is deeply troubling that the Administration effectively eliminated the lead federal agency for comprehensive tobacco prevention and control, CDC OSH, and the *Tips From Former Smokers campaign*, which encouraged people who smoke to quit by featuring real people living with serious long-term health effects from smoking and secondhand smoke exposure. This action moves us in the opposite direction, potentially reversing years of progress and placing additional strain on families, our health system, and taxpayers.

High Return on Investment and Public Health Impact of the *Tips From Former Smokers Campaign*

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death, disease, and disability in the United States, killing more than 490,000 Americans each year and costing the U.S. more than \$241 billion annually in health care expenses, of which more than 60 percent are paid for by government programs like Medicare and Medicaid.²⁻⁴ The largest cigarette, smokeless tobacco, and e-cigarette manufacturers spent almost \$9.5 billion marketing their products in 2021, the most recent year with data for all three categories.⁵⁻⁷ Given the ongoing threat posed by commercial tobacco and nicotine products, it is critical to continue a national cessation campaign, independent of tobacco industry influence, that remains one of the most effective

ways to reach millions of adult tobacco users and connect them with the support they need to live healthier lives free from addiction.⁸⁻¹⁰

Furthermore, investment in the *Tips campaign* is incredibly cost-effective. In its first six years, the *Tips campaign* saved \$7.3 billion in health care costs – a 15:1 return on investment.¹¹ Factoring in smoking relapse, inflation, and advertising and evaluation costs, a cost-effectiveness study found that every \$3,800 spent on the *Tips campaign* prevented an early death.^{8,12} The elimination of the *Tips campaign* will lead to higher rates of tobacco use and more people dying from chronic diseases caused by tobacco. Not only does the *Tips campaign* increase smoking cessation, reducing death and chronic disease, but studies have also found that higher exposure to the campaign is associated with sustained smoking abstinence.⁹ Because most people who attempt to quit smoking relapse, cessation maintenance has been identified as an important step in remaining tobacco-free.^{13,14} When the *Tips campaign* is off the air, not only do hundreds of thousands of people who smoke have a lower chance of attempting to quit, but the estimated 55 million adults in the U.S. who have quit smoking face much higher rates of relapse.¹⁵⁻¹⁷ Continued investments in a national public education cessation campaign, independent of tobacco industry influence, are needed to maintain the progress our nation has made in reducing youth use of tobacco products and the harm caused by tobacco.

Ensuring Continued Evaluation of a Proven Cessation Intervention

Given the critical role the *Tips From Former Smokers campaign* plays in cessation efforts across the country, it is essential that CDC continues to collect data and evidence to inform its efforts and ensure that the *Tips campaign* is evidence-based and having an impact on reducing commercial tobacco and nicotine product use. Evaluation has always been a core part of the *Tips campaign* and is one of the factors that has contributed to the campaign's success. Evaluation of the campaign is needed to provide evidence to ensure that the *Tips campaign* is working to provide people who use tobacco with cessation services.

Previous evaluations have already shown that the *Tips From Former Smokers campaign*, the first national campaign sponsored and funded by the federal government with the goal of educating the public about the harmful effects of smoking and encouraging quitting, has been extremely successful in counteracting smoking-related death and disease, demonstrating significant impact as a population-based intervention for smoking cessation.^{18,19} CDC estimates that from 2012 to 2018, more than 16.4 million people who smoked attempted to quit and approximately one million successfully quit because of the *Tips campaign*.^{8,9} A 2024 study estimated that the *Tips campaign* generated over two million additional calls to tobacco quitlines between 2012 and 2023.¹⁰ When the *Tips campaign* began in 2012, 18.1% of the adult population smoked.²⁰ In 2024, that number had substantially dropped to 9.9%, reflecting substantial progress in reducing adult smoking rates, with the *Tips campaign* serving as an important component of a comprehensive tobacco control and prevention strategy.²¹ In total, the *Tips campaign* has prevented an estimated 129,100 early deaths, demonstrating the incredible impact the *Tips campaign* has had on public health.^{8,22} The campaign has also been highly successful in educating the public about the health benefits of quitting. A 2013 study of the *Tips campaign* found that the campaign reached 7 out of 10 people who smoked and increased knowledge of lesser-known health effects and awareness of tobacco cessation resources.^{23,24} Between 2012 to 2018, the *Tips From Former Smokers* campaign was associated with cost savings per lifetime quit of \$11,400, per life gained of \$9,100, per premature deaths avoided of \$56,800, and per quality-adjusted life year gained of \$5,300.²² However, without sustained strong federal cessation efforts independent of tobacco industry influence, this progress could be undone.

The goals of the *Tips From Former Smokers campaign* were to encourage people who smoke to quit, to encourage people who don't smoke to communicate with people who smoke about the dangers of smoking, and to increase the audience's knowledge of smoking-related diseases, intentions to quit, and other related outcomes. The *Tips campaign* has been highly successful at achieving these goals for many years, and an evaluation of the campaign is needed to ensure that it continues to effectively reach target audiences, including populations most vulnerable to tobacco use, and positively impact outcomes among people who smoke and those that don't in the U.S. An evaluation of the *Tips campaign* will also provide insights on tobacco use and ways to strengthen the campaign's capability to encourage people who smoke to quit.

Rapid Growth of Oral Nicotine Pouch Use Requires Inclusion in Evaluation

As CDC develops the survey instruments to conduct the evaluation of the *Tips campaign*, we urge CDC to ask respondents about nicotine pouch use in its evaluation. This will help ensure as strong an evaluation as possible. In the proposed survey instruments for this evaluation, the question "When you last tried to quit smoking, did you do any of the following?" (C4 in the smoker survey and NB4 in the non-smoker survey) does not have an option for the survey participant to indicate that they used oral nicotine pouches (such as Zyn, On!, or Velo). This is a glaring omission given the surge in nicotine pouch use and popularity in recent years. Oral nicotine pouches are one of the fastest-growing nicotine product categories, and are quickly outpacing other nicotine products.²⁵ Monthly nicotine pouch sales increased by 269.2% between January 2023 and December 2025.²⁶ In terms of nicotine weight, oral nicotine pouches surpassed disposable e-cigarettes in nicotine sales in 2024.²⁷ In 2022, an estimated 980,500 U.S. adults reported current use of oral nicotine pouches.²⁸ Given the rapid rise in popularity and market share of oral nicotine pouches, along with the industry's claims that these products can help a substantial number of adults who smoke quit smoking, we urge CDC to add a survey answer option that allows participants to indicate if they partially or fully switched to oral nicotine pouches when attempting to quit smoking.^{29,30}

Conclusion

While an evaluation of the *Tips From Former Smokers campaign* will surely demonstrate the immense positive impact of the campaign, as well as its necessity, we are deeply concerned that cuts to OSH funding and staff have put the *Tips from Former Smokers campaign* at significant risk. We urge CDC to recognize the enormous positive impact of the *Tips campaign* and other public education media campaigns and to invest continued funding and resources into these national programs.

Again, evaluation of the *Tips From Former Smokers campaign* is necessary to ensure that the campaign is meeting its intended goal to reduce smoking-related death and disease by encouraging adults to quit. However, the campaign itself is a critical investment in the health and well-being of our communities. By continuing to fund the campaign, and other national, evidence-based public education cessation campaigns that are based on independent evidence, independent of tobacco industry influence, focused on helping people completely quit commercial tobacco use, and that do not promote tobacco products as cessation therapies unless they have received appropriate FDA approval for that purpose, CDC can ensure sustained progress in reducing tobacco use, preventing chronic disease, and saving billions in healthcare costs nationwide. We urge CDC to maintain robust support for these public

education campaigns, safeguarding the health of all Americans and securing a healthier, tobacco-free future for generations to come.

Respectfully submitted,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Truth Initiative

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