

1/11/17 Testimony - North Dakota Senate Appropriations Committee

SB2024

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Good afternoon, Chairman Holmberg and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

My name is Theresa Will, I am the Director at City-County Health District, the Local Public Health Unit for Barnes County, located in Valley City. I am here to voice my support for SB2024. This bill supports the vote of the people and their decision to invest a small portion of tobacco settlement dollars for tobacco prevention - *not only for 7 years, but through its entirety*. With this program, we have made remarkable progress in decreasing the tobacco use rates. The partnership between public health and the Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control Policy is helping North Dakotans live healthier lives:

- a local ordinance that protects our youth from the dangers of electronic cigarettes;
- smoke free parks;
- tobacco free County and City grounds and vehicles;
- model school policies in all schools within our county;
- and we assist apartment managers with the tools to help their buildings become smoke-free so all tenants can have healthier, smoke-free homes.

This local policy work could not be achieved without the local policy grant, and technical assistance from the Center, which has supported approximately 1.3 FTE in Barnes County over the past many years.

Before the vote of the people, before we had our comprehensive program, outcomes were limited. With the leadership of the Center we now see consistent results across the state.

Each year, the tobacco industry spends \$10.5 billion shrewdly marketing its products in the US, But, we can overcome that challenge IF we fully sustain this level of successful, statewide work. As Governor Burgum noted in his address last week, change is not linear, change is **exponential**. Without a strong tobacco prevention and control program, which is fully based in irrefutable science, the toll of tobacco use will increase **exponentially**.