

**Testimony**  
**Senate Bill 2024**  
**House Appropriations, Human Resources Committee**  
**Wednesday, March 8, 2017**

Good morning Chairman Pollert and Members of the House Appropriations, Human Resources Committee. I am Kathleen Mangskau. I am retired and spent many years working on tobacco prevention in North Dakota. I am unable to attend the hearing today and have asked a colleague to read my testimony. I am providing information on some of the historical perspectives that may help to shape the future course of tobacco programming in the state. Progress in tobacco prevention in North Dakota has been a very slow and tedious process. It took more than 20 years to pass a strong comprehensive smoke-free law in the state.

In 2001 with the infusion of the Community Health Grant Program funding, we finally were able to put in place some programs that helped us reduce the youth smoking rates. We had a strong focus on Best Practices implementing what we knew was proven to work. With the strong commitment of local health departments we were able to pass numerous smoke-free policies in schools and communities and finally in 2005 an initial statewide smoke-free law. This law however was not comprehensive and it took another 7 years and a statewide initiated measure in 2012 to put a strong, comprehensive law on the books. With these efforts between 2001 and 2009 we saw youth smoking rates drop from 40.6 percent to 22.1 percent. During this period there were some significant components lacking. No funding had been appropriated for public education thus severely limiting the state program's ability to encourage policy and environmental change as well as drive people to quit. There was also limited funding for evaluation of the program, which is a critical component of implementing quality programs. By 2007 with only the limited Community Health Grant Program funds and some federal funding we were not able to continue our significant decline and we started to see youth smoking rates plateau. By 2009 the low hanging fruit in cessation had been picked and we needed further education and policy change to drive tobacco users to quit. When only extremely limited additional funding from the Strategic Contribution Funds were appropriated in 2007, tobacco control advocates felt the need to join forces to put forth an initiated measure to acquire the necessary funding for a comprehensive program to continue the tobacco prevention efforts to further reduce youth tobacco use rates and

help adults to quit. With the infusion of the Breathe ND tobacco settlement funds we were once again able to reduce youth smoking rates further from 22.4 percent in 2009 to 11.7 percent in 2015.

While significant progress has been made, our job is not done. Still far too many children and adults continue to use tobacco resulting in significant health costs and loss of lives. To cut these efforts now and reduce this to a maintenance program\* is not the time. We do not want to backslide and see these efforts in vain. SB 2024 needs to be supported and the tobacco tax needs to be increased before we should be thinking about a maintenance program only. If the North Dakota Legislature wants to fund only a maintenance program then they should significantly increase the tobacco tax so we have the necessary policies that we know work in place.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information. If you have questions, I can be reached at 701-214-7010.

\*A maintenance program tries to maintain current efforts but does not work on implementing additional policies, programs and services.