

CONTINUE TOBACCO PREVENTION AND EDUCATION IN WEST VIRGINIA

To My Elected Representatives:

Tobacco is the leading public health problem in West Virginia. With some of the highest use rates in the nation, tobacco causes 4,300 deaths each year. Ultimately, 47,000 kids alive today will die due to tobacco use. In addition to the cost in lives, tobacco is a drain on our economy.

Annual health care expenditures in West Virginia directly caused by tobacco use are \$1 billion and the cost to the State Medicaid program alone is \$277.3 million. These numbers can be changed only through sustained prevention, education and cessation efforts. West Virginia can not afford to cut back on funding to fight this public health menace.

The future of tobacco prevention and education is in your hands as you consider the FY2018 Budget. I strongly urge you to support the continued state funding for tobacco prevention and education at no less than the FY2017 level and to oppose any effort to reduce or weaken this vital programming.

Printed Name	Signature	Address	City, Zip	Date