

Increase State Funding for Tobacco Prevention and Cessation

PROBLEM

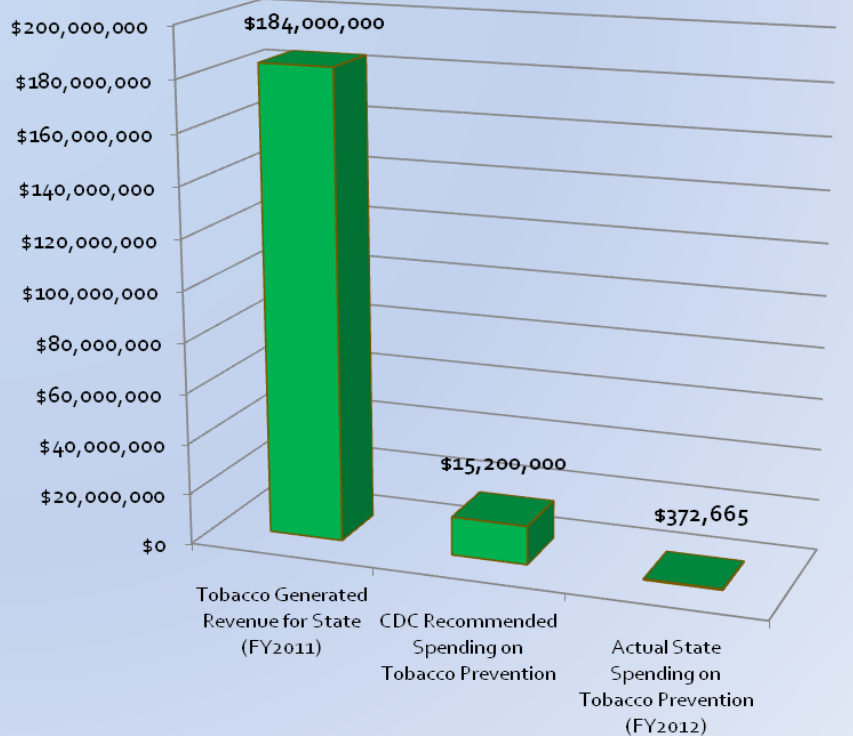
While Rhode Island received \$184 million in tobacco generated revenue in FY2011, the state budgeted only \$735,095 on tobacco prevention and cessation activities that same year. This figure is a mere 0.4 percent of Rhode Island's tobacco earnings, and only 4.8 percent of the \$15.2 million the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends be spent on tobacco prevention in the state.¹ Not surprisingly, Rhode Island's tobacco prevention funding (as a percentage of the CDC goal) is ranked 38th among states – alongside states like Kansas, Texas and Kentucky.² The American Lung Association's *State of Tobacco Control 2010* report gives Rhode Island's tobacco control and prevention spending an F and its cessation spending a D.³ By all measures, Rhode Island is failing to provide the necessary tobacco prevention and cessation programs to its residents. **Even worse, the General Assembly further slashed funding for the program in FY 2012, cutting state funding to a mere \$372,665.**

In the meantime, the tobacco industry spends an estimated \$27.3 million annually to market its products in Rhode Island – which is nearly 40 times the amount Rhode Island spends to prevent tobacco use. This

is a disturbing inequality, especially as research has found that children are particularly sensitive to marketing; tobacco advertising is more powerful than peer pressure in influencing kids to smoke.⁴

Even though the 2002 securitization of Rhode Island's future settlement payments has left its tobacco control program dependent on the state's general fund, Rhode Island is still responsible for the promise it made to fund strong tobacco control programs with its tobacco revenue.⁵

Despite decreasing rates of smoking in Rhode Island, the



¹ See CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS, *Spending on Tobacco Prevention: Rhode Island*, available at http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what_we_do/state_local/tobacco_settlement/rhode_island.

² See CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS, *TOBACCO-PREVENTION SPENDING vs. STATE TOBACCO REVENUES*, available at <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0219.pdf>.

³ See AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION, *State of Tobacco Control 2010, State Summary – Rhode Island* available at <http://www.stateoftobaccocontrol.org/state-grades/rhode-island/state-summary.html#cessation>.

⁴ See CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS, *The Toll of Tobacco in Rhode Island (April 2011)* available at http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/rhode_island.

⁵ See CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS, *Spending on Tobacco Prevention: Rhode Island*, available at http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what_we_do/state_local/tobacco_settlement/rhode_island.

cost of tobacco related illness in Rhode Island is still an exorbitant \$506 million.⁶ The tobacco industry continues to target Rhode Island's children in new and insidious ways – such as with candy-like dissolvable tobacco – in an effort to addict new customers. Approximately 1,600 adults in Rhode Island die from smoking-related causes each year, and 23,000 Rhode Island children currently under the age of 18 will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.⁷ Rhode Island's problems from smoking are far from solved.

SOLUTION

There is an empirically-proven way to save lives and money: a well-funded comprehensive state tobacco control program. Landmark studies published in the last several years have shown that states with tobacco control programs sustained at levels recommended by the CDC see significant decreases in youth and adult smoking rates.⁸ Convincingly, these studies found that the effect of strong tobacco control programs is still significant when other factors that might reduce smoking (such as increased tobacco taxes) are controlled for.⁹

In addition, a 2006 study found that “quit rates in communities that experienced both policy and programmatic interventions were higher than quit rates in communities that had only experienced policy interventions (excise tax increases or secondhand smoke regulations).”¹⁰ These findings reinforce the need for comprehensive tobacco control programs in addition to policy interventions.

Reductions in smoking as a result of tobacco control programs translate into immediate and long-term savings for the state. Well-funded tobacco control programs immediately reduce the number of births adversely impacted by smoking and decrease second-hand smoke induced respiratory problems in children.¹¹ In addition, according to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, “for every thousand kids kept from smoking by a state program, future healthcare costs in the state decline by roughly \$16 million (in current dollars), and for every thousand adults prompted to quit future health costs drop by roughly \$8.5 million.”¹²

WHAT RITCN IS FIGHTING FOR

RITCN calls on Governor Chafee and the Rhode Island General Assembly to increase the Rhode Island Department of Health (DOH) Tobacco Control Program budget to \$3.1 million for the FY2013 calendar year.

Additional funding for the DOH Tobacco Control Program will:

- Improve the Tobacco Control Program's ability to prevent and reduce smoking in Rhode Island;
- Take a step toward the CDC Best Practices recommended minimum of \$15.2 million in annual funding; and
- Establish Rhode Island as a leader in restoring its Tobacco Control Program to its highest historic level.

⁶ See CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS, *The Toll of Tobacco in Rhode Island* (April 2011), available at http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/rhode_island.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ See CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS, *COMPREHENSIVE TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAMS EFFECTIVELY REDUCE TOBACCO USE* (July 2011), available at <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0045.pdf>.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ See CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS, *COMPREHENSIVE TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAMS EFFECTIVELY REDUCE TOBACCO USE* (July 2011), available at <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0045.pdf>.

¹¹ See CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS, *COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE TOBACCO PREVENTION PROGRAMS SAVE MONEY*, p. 3 (January 2011), available at <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0168.pdf>

¹² *Ibid.*