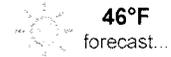


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News

Why the legislature should not take the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program money away from the program.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011 5:21 PM CDT

This article comes at the request of Dr. Galdys Young, the County Board of Health and Lynda Van deSandt of the Tobacco Use Prevention Program. The reason for writing another article on the evils of tobacco is the fact that the legislature is, at this time, considering divesting all but a small amount of this money to remedy a budget shortfall for the next two years.

The Tobacco use prevention program has actually been a rather dramatic success to dat, and it should be continued. The multiple good studies dealing with various methods of getting people to stop using tobacco are agree that continually reminding people of the importance of stopping tobacco works. But it works much better if those using whatever method to quit are willing to never given up their efforts.

In the year 2002 the voters of Montana passed a directive that 32% of Montana's share of the Master Settlement Agreement income from the Tobacco companies go to the Tobacco Use Prevention Program. This money is to be used only to fund the Tobacco Use Prevention Program. Whatever gives the legislature the idea that they can take the money to help balance the budget? The voters of this state passed Initiative I146 which states that the money from the tobacco companies be used solely for Tobacco Use Prevention.

The writer has never forgotten an experience during the years when he was a real doctor. Two patients experienced severe heart attacks from which, with considerable intensive care, they made a fairly good recovery. They were both carefully instructed in the importance of stopping smoking cigarettes. Both agreed they would stop and in subsequent visits assured their doctor they had quit. All went well for over a year when both rather suddenly suffered heart attacks which killed them. Having been called to attend each case, the pockets of the deceased were chedked as part of collecting the valuables and securing them (part of the usual routine when someone dies). In the shirt pocked of each patient was an opened pack of cigarettes partly empty. This was a powerful message to their doctor than when it

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came out getting people to stop smoking, that he was considerably less than a success.

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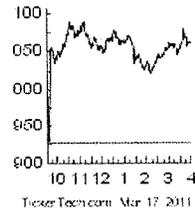
The efforts of Montana's Tobacco Use Prevention Program has been far more effective than what one physician ever achieved. The statistics of the result of the effort of that program are quite encouraging and in the opinion of the writer, should be continued; especially when the program can be funded by money which does not depend on taxation.

Richard S. Buker, Jr., M.D.

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Lora Wier

From: Barbara Maus [wchd@midrivers.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 3:33 PM
To: health@3rivers.net
Subject: Budget Cuts

Hi Lora,
Thank-you for representing the small, frontier Health Departments. It is difficult to get away when you're the only in the office. I really appreciate your efforts.
Please share my concerns:

Dear Legislators,
We are a very small Health Department in Eastern Montana in an underserved and low income area. My community members depend on the services the Public Health provides. The Tobacco education outreach program has worked with our local school and businesses. We see people coming over from North Dakota to our businesses because they want to come to a place which is smoke free. It has helped not hindered business.
Family Planning provides follow-up for STD's, cervical cancer screening, HIV testing and contraceptive services and more. It is affordable to women who have no or limited health insurance. And, prevents unwanted pregnancies, pregnancies which would end up costing the state many times over-in many ways.
The WIC farmer's market voucher would be a reinvestment in our own communities. We have great local produce here during the summer-I can't understand why you would consider refusing those dollars when it helps the very people who put you into office.
Thank-you,
Barbara Maus

Wibaux County Health Department
203 Wibaux St. South
P.O. Box 117
Wibaux, MT 59353
Phone: (406) 796-2485
Cell: (406) 951-2681
Fax: (406) 796-7685
wchd@midrivers.com

Testimony – Senate Finance and Claims Committee

March 18, 2011

Dear Senators

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to you today. I would be with you in person today were it not for the distance, threat of local flooding and our annual health fair. Dawson County Health Department is a relatively large health department for eastern MT and yet the proposed cuts to Public Health funding will be devastating to our department and community.

Our Title X Family Planning program provides services to over 600 clients annually. We operate a clinic in Glendive and satellite clinics in Baker and Sidney. We employ 2.5 FTE in Family Planning and rely on the Title X funding we receive – this year \$65,130 – for over 50% of our funding. The remaining funding comes primarily from fees and donations. We are the only public clinics in our communities and do not have any community health centers or clinics for low income and uninsured clients. The majority of our clients are adult women who utilize our family planning clinics as their main source of medical care. We provide physical exams, pregnancy testing, sexually transmitted disease testing, HIV testing and contraceptives that enable women to have children when they are ready to take on that responsibility.

While I appreciate the need to address our out of control federal spending rejecting federal Title X funding will not help. What it will do is make that funding available to another state who values prevention and realizes the wisdom in spending \$1 to prevent spending \$4 later. Rejecting this funding will merely shift the cost of healthcare for women and babies to another agency, most likely Medicaid, who almost certainly cannot provide care for \$233/woman per year as family planning does. It will also mean that our clinics will likely close as we will not be able to operate without the provisions allowed us under the Title X guidelines.

While the most devastating cut to us is in Title X I also have concerns about our WIC program and rejection of federal funding to fund the Farmer's Market component of WIC which not only provides funding to 115 Montana farmers but also helps our WIC participants to take advantage of fresh fruits and vegetables during the summer season.

The Tobacco program has also suffered devastating cuts in this session. We have had a tobacco prevention program for over a decade and have made remarkable progress in reducing youth tobacco use by 35%. A significant accomplishment was implementation of the Clean Indoor Air Act. Elimination of tobacco prevention funding jeopardizes these accomplishments as evidenced by states that have reduced tobacco funding and experienced increased rates of tobacco use by youth. Loss of this funding in our county would mean a loss of 1 FTE and a shift of responsibility for enforcement of the Clean Indoor Air Law to other staff who are already overburdened. It will also reduce the ability of our residents to access prevention services such as the Montana Tobacco Quitline and undermine our prevention efforts with youth. Tobacco use continues to be one of the leading costs of preventable disease in our communities and eliminating this funding will not make the problem go away but merely shift the cost.

In closing thank you for your service to Montana. Your job is not an easy one and I know there are difficult decisions to be made. My hope is that as our elected representatives you will really look at the need, cost/benefit in providing these prevention programs and what the ramifications of unfunded programs will be not only to our citizens but also in terms of the financial burden on other sectors of our government and health care system.

Thank you.

Jeanne Seifert, Health Department Director
Dawson County Health Department
207 West Bell
Glendive, MT 59330

406-377-5213
dchealth@midrivers.com

Lora Wier

From: Barbara Maus [wchd@midrivers.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 3:33 PM
To: health@3rivers.net
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Thank-you,

Barbara Maus

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Wibaux, MT 59353
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Cell: (406) 951-2681
Fax: (406) 796-7685
wchd@midrivers.com

Lora Wier

From: Daniels County Public Health [danielsph@nemont.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 12:12 PM
To: 'Lora Wier'
Subject: Restoring funding for public health funding

Lora, I am unable to come to Helena for the hearing on HB2 on Friday because of distance and previous obligations. Here are my thoughts on the budget in regards to public health programs.

I'm sure that people who would be affected by cuts in health and human services are all unable to come to the hearing because of the distance between Scobey and Helena and the money for travel. I am sorry they are not there.

Even though Daniels County does not have a family planning program, I get several calls per year from women who are in need the program and they are referred to the family planning clinic at Glasgow. It seems to me that when you compare the small amount of money used for contraception vs the money that will be used when these women and their babies enroll in Medicaid, it becomes a no brainer that family planning should be funded.

Many families in Daniels County use the WIC program. WIC helps keep children healthier. The nice thing about the WIC program is that the staff comes to Scobey once per month so mom doesn't have to take time off work to use the program.

Finally I want to say that prevention is a big part of public health and the most cost effective program the state has now is tobacco use prevention. When you see all the people in Daniels County walking around town using oxygen because they have chronic respiratory disease caused by smoking or second hand smoke and think of all the money that is being used to treat a preventable illness you wonder why anyone smokes and why we would not have a program to fight big tobacco companies from coaxing our youth into to trying tobacco and becoming addicted to nicotine.

Thank You for your time.

Mary Nyhus
Scobey, MT 59263
406-783-7554

March 16, 2011

Dear Decision Makers,

I am unable to attend today's session due to previous inflexible commitment. I wish to urge you to honor the vote and mandate of the people of Montana. Restore full funding for the Montana Tobacco Prevention Program. Full funding will save even more lives and money. It has proven to be a very successful program in the short time it has been in existence. I truly enjoy smoke free establishments. I have recently, in January) lost my younger brother, he was only 62 to the ravages of smoking cigarettes. He had COPD and emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and had wasted away to 96 pounds. He was over 6 feet tall. I lost a husband at the age of 34 to Oat cell carcinoma caused by smoking leaving me a widow with 4 small children. Also my favorite aunt died to the exact same thing a few years later. These are not pleasant to watch and can be avoided. I therefore urge you again to reinstate this critical funding.

Sincerely,

Linda Best
2021 Quinlan Road
Deer Lodge Mt. 59722

Lora Wier

From: Deborah French [tcph@rangeweb.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 6:04 PM
To: health@3rivers.net
Subject: Another voice from Rosebud, Treasure, and Custer counties

With the proposed obliteration of MTUPP funding, not only is my job being cut, but more importantly, the entire State of Montana is losing a successful, proven program that works. The program benefits not only current tobacco users but in our area, is changing the societal norm for today's youth that tobacco use is not cool.

Youth in Rosebud, Treasure, and Custer counties are actively participating in the Southeastern Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program. Youth are being taught the health effects from tobacco use which has reduced the numbers of youth using tobacco and preventing many of them from ever starting. We are at a point in our service area, where the youth are actually out "educating" other youth. Statewide programs such as reACT which educate how "Corporate Tobacco" companies target youth will no longer be available. Local tobacco prevention youth groups or school youth groups will no longer be available to educate and bring awareness to communities and the adults in those communities. Big Tobacco companies have been and will continue to target youth with their new products. Local tobacco prevention contractors currently work with businesses to educate and assist with compliance issues on the Clean Indoor Air Act. Secondhand smoke issues will rise with the lack of education & compliance. Ultimately, the death toll will increase from tobacco related diseases, the cost of health care will go up and all the hard work and progress that the MTUPP program has made will have been for nothing. If MTUPP is cut, this also means that the Quitline will no longer be available to assist those who desire to quit tobacco (many of who are low-income and cannot afford the cessation aids the Quitline provides). I want our representatives to take a long hard look at what they are cutting. They say it is to cut costs, but **will they** be saving money in the long run? I don't think so! What are they thinking?

Jane Lamb
P.O. Box 555
Forsyth, MT 59327

Lora Wier

From: Deborah French [tcph@rangeweb.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 5:47 PM
To: health@3rivers.net
Subject: Please speak for Treasure County

Lora,
Thank you for taking the time to speak with our legislators. Treasure County Health Department's funding is skeletal. An RN provides clinic services, home visiting services, immunizations, and serves in a limited manner as the school nurse based on a gross salary of less than \$500 per month (22 hours per month). The funding cuts to public health are devastating to Treasure County Health Department. Currently, we utilize an MTUPP grant to provide tobacco prevention education and resources to Treasure, Rosebud, and Custer counties. This funding currently provides employment for a .75 FTE and a .5 FTE which will no longer exist should the funding be obliterated. In addition, Treasure County Health Department serves a small group of WIC clientele bi monthly. We are hearing rumors (cuts) that perhaps our clients may need to travel to a larger town to receive services. That is unfortunate as 75% of our clientele does not have the means to travel even 30 miles one way to utilize the WIC program. WIC does not provide any direct funds to our county health department (rather it is staffed by a volunteer RN & the health board chairperson). We chose to volunteer our time assisting with WIC clinics to gain access to keep our Treasure County children immunized and well. We also do not receive family planning funds within the county, but are our legislators thinking about that? What happens if you no longer are able to provide free to low-cost contraceptives to low-income folks? If it's a choice between contraception or groceries, the groceries win every time. Please tell our legislators that public health does a lot of excellent work with very little. Public health programs are highly effective. The difference that we see locally due to the MTUPP grant is astonishing. Tobacco is no longer cool amongst our youth, quite the opposite. We are changing this society norm. As a public health nurse working in one of Montana's most frontier counties, please tell the legislators that these cuts to public health programs will have far-reaching negative consequences sure to be detrimental to the individuals they supposedly represent.

Deborah French, RN
Treasure County Health Department
P.O. Box 201
Hysham, MT 59038-0201
Phone: 406-342-5886
Fax: 406-342-5951
tcph@rangeweb.net

Dear Legislators:

We are unable to attend the hearing for HB2 and restoring Public Health funding. We are very concerned about the budget cuts that we feel will be very damaging to our residents of Glacier County. One of the most concerning is the "defunding" of the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program. This would mean that approximately 56 county contractors would lose their jobs, there would be no more Quit Line, and MORE cancer and health related problems and costs for MONTANA. It is disconcerting that our elected Montana legislators would vote to overturn the will of 65% of Montana voters who overwhelmingly approve the work of MTUPP. These voters are YOUR constituents.

The cost to the state and taxpayers if just 1% of Montana people start smoking each year is an additional \$27.2 million dollars. This is in addition to the \$277 million tobacco related healthcare costs each year that the state and taxpayers are already paying.

The choice to fund MTUPP only on Montana Reservations ignores that 45% of the children attending schools adjacent to the reservation are also Native American. All Montanans, especially all children, deserve tobacco prevention.

The cost in lives and dollars is too much for the State of Montana to bear. Reinststate 100% of Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Funding!!!!

Thank you for your yes vote to restore MTUPP funding,

Glacier County Health Department