



March 16, 2004

The Honorable Tommy Thompson  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Thompson:

We are writing in response to your announcement establishing a national network of smoking cessation telephone quitlines. We appreciate your decision to launch this effort and want to offer our support and cooperation, as quitlines are a proven and effective tool in helping smokers break their addiction. Research consistently shows that tobacco cessation saves lives, reduces tobacco-caused health care costs, and is one of the most cost-effective health interventions available. We believe that this program has the ability to reduce the deadly toll of tobacco if it is adequately funded and sustained over time.

While we are supportive of this initiative, we believe that any federal effort to create a national cessation network must be sufficiently funded and must not come at the expense of existing tobacco control programs. We are concerned about the funding for this program in Fiscal Year 2004, as there are no new funds with which to begin the network. Moreover, the Administration's recent budget request for FY05 does not include the quitline proposal. We are anxious to know where the Administration intends to find funds to undertake this new initiative in FY04 and subsequent years.

We look forward to your response and for the opportunity to work with you to reduce the deadly toll of tobacco.

Sincerely,

Action on Smoking and Health  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery  
American Cancer Society  
American College of Cardiology  
American College of Physicians  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American Dental Association

American Heart Association  
American Legacy Foundation  
American Lung Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
American Thoracic Society  
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids  
Center for Tobacco Cessation  
General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church  
Interreligious Coalition on Smoking OR Health  
Mautner Project  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Center for Policy Research on Women & Families  
National Women's Law Center  
Society for Public Health Education

Cc: Julie Gerberding, M.D. M.P.H., Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D., Director, National Institutes of Health  
Andrew C. Von Eschenbach, M.D., Director, National Cancer Institute