



April 25, 2002

The Honorable Diana L. DeGette
United States House of Representatives
1530 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative DeGette:

Partners for Effective Tobacco Policy (PARTNERS), a coalition of more than 60 national organizations dedicated to reducing the death and disease caused by tobacco use, thanks you for sponsoring the bipartisan “Medicare, Medicaid and MCH Smoking Cessation Promotion Act of 2001” (H.R. 3676). We applaud your commitment to this important issue. We, too, share your goal of expanding access to safe and effective smoking cessation services through Medicare, Medicaid and state-based maternal and child health (MCH) programs and are pleased to lend our enthusiastic support to this legislation.

In 1982, then Surgeon General C. Everett Koop said “cigarette smoking is the chief, single, avoidable cause of death in our society and the most important public health issue of our time.” Unfortunately, that statement is as true today as it was 20 years ago. Approximately 50 million Americans remain addicted to tobacco products. The vast majority of them began smoking as children, and more than 70 percent would now like to break the addiction. If we as a nation are serious about reducing the burden of tobacco-related disease, disability, and death, we must ensure that effective smoking cessation services that include both counseling and medication are within reach of all those who need them. This bill is an important step toward that goal.

Through extensive clinical research, we know that a combination of counseling and medication therapy will double or triple a smoker’s chances for success in quitting. We also know that smoking cessation is cost effective in comparison to other disease prevention measures already reimbursed by Medicare, Medicaid and MCH programs. Therefore, your decision to promote coverage through federal health programs is soundly supported by health policy research. By reducing the many debilitating chronic diseases suffered by smokers, this bill will not only benefit taxpayers, but also extend life-saving treatment to those who need it.

We appreciate your on-going support on this issue. We stand ready to work with you to see this bill enacted into law as soon as possible.

1400 I Street NW Washington, DC 20005

Sincerely,

Allergy and Asthma Network - Mothers of Asthmatics, Inc.
Alliance for Lung Cancer Advocacy, Support, and Education
Alliance of Community Health Plans
American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry
American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Otolaryngology, Head & Neck Surgery, Inc.
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Respiratory Care
American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin
American Cancer Society
American College of Cardiology
American College of Chest Physicians
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Dental Association
American Heart Association
American Medical Association
American Psychological Association
American School Health Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
American Society of Clinical Oncology
Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment and Leadership
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc.
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Association of Schools of Public Health
Association of State & Territorial Health Officials
Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Children's Defense Fund
College on Problems of Drug Dependence
Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America
Council of State & Territorial Epidemiologists
Family Voices
Federation of Behavioral, Psychological and Cognitive Sciences
General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church
Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.
Hadassah
Interreligious Coalition on Smoking OR Health
Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco Prevention
National Association of Children's Hospitals
National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Association of Local Boards of Health
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of State and Drug Abuse Directors, Inc.
National Center for Health Education
National Center for Policy Research for Women & Families
National Education Association
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Mental Health Association
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Women's Law Center
Oncology Nursing Society
Oral Health America
Partnership for Prevention
Society for Public Health Education
Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco
Society of Behavioral Medicine
Society of Critical Care Medicine
Summit Health Coalition