



## STATE OF OKLAHOMA

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### **TOBACCO SETTLEMENT TRUST BOARD ELECTS OFFICERS AND AUTHORIZES USE OF EARNINGS**

During a two-day strategic planning retreat November 7 and 8, the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) Board of Directors elected a new slate of officers, established meeting dates for 2004 and authorized funding for four major initiatives in tobacco use prevention and cessation.

Robert McCaffree, M.D. was honored for his two terms as the founding Chair of the Board of Directors, having served in that capacity since August 2001. Oklahoma laws limit the service of the Board Chair to no more than two consecutive one-year terms.

Susan Walters Bizé (Edmond), an Assistant Professor of Accounting at the University of Central Oklahoma and Of Counsel to the law firm of Lester, Loving & Davies, was elected to serve as the new Chair. Brian Maddy (Oklahoma City), Chief Executive Officer of OU Physicians and Associate Dean for Administration and Institutional Development for the University of Oklahoma, College of Medicine, was elected to serve as Vice-Chair. Marvin Apple (Tahlequah), former Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors, was elected to serve as Secretary.

The Board of Directors had previously agreed that the earnings from the Trust Fund should be allocated to effective tobacco use prevention and cessation programs for at least the next three to five years. During the planning retreat, the Board of Directors authorized the use of available earnings for four major initiatives, including the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline, comprehensive community-based programs to reduce tobacco use, counter-marketing prevention campaigns that target youth, and public education on effective policies to reduce tobacco use in Oklahoma. The Board based their decisions in part on recommendations from the Oklahoma Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Advisory Committee.

The Board of Directors authorized up to \$1 million for the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline, a free telephone-based counseling service that assists Oklahomans with quitting tobacco. Based on an overwhelming early demand for the service which was launched in August of this year, the Board committed additional funding to assure that Oklahomans with a desire to quit smoking or using other tobacco products will continue to have access to this service. The Board will also maintain its previous funding commitment to media promotion and evaluation of the Helpline at up to \$250,000 and \$100,000, respectively.

Up to \$500,000 will soon be made available for new community-based planning and implementation grants. Increasing amounts will be made available for this community-based initiative as Trust Fund earnings grow over time. According to nationally-recognized "best practices," comprehensive community-based programs are essential to help achieve changes in

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individual behavior and social norms to effectively reduce tobacco use. Effective local programs involve all sectors of the community including businesses, health systems, schools, places of worship, civic organizations, and other community partners.

The Board of Directors will also fund counter-marketing prevention campaigns to counter pro-tobacco influences and increase pro-health messages through television, radio, print, and other marketing channels at up to \$900,000. The Board will partner with the American Legacy Foundation at the national level to achieve an additional dollar-for-dollar match on these campaigns, proven effective in preventing youth from starting to use tobacco products and in reinforcing local level community-based programs.

Up to \$500,000 was authorized for a public education initiative on effective state and local policies to reduce tobacco use in Oklahoma. Activities will include training and technical assistance at the local level and statewide public education related to emerging policy issues.

Requests For Proposals (RFP's) will be developed for the community-based programs and the public education initiative over the next several months. "It takes time to properly develop an RFP," said Tracey Strader, Executive Director of the TSET, "but we will do our best to get the funding into these important programs as soon as possible."

Counties and tribal nations in Oklahoma will be eligible to submit proposals in response to the RFP for community programs. "The Board's strategic plan emphasizes bringing diverse groups together to improve the health of Oklahoma," said Strader. "In that spirit, we will be requesting only one application per county or tribal nation, and evidence that the community has come together to collectively determine their lead fiscal agency."

During a planning phase, training and technical assistance will be provided to counties and tribal nations to prepare them to effectively address tobacco use prevention and cessation, conduct a self-assessment for their community, and develop a strategic plan.

The counter-marketing campaign will be conducted by Brothers & Company of Tulsa, selected through a competitive bid earlier this year, and in partnership with the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

Oklahoma's health is ranked among the lowest in the nation, due in large part to tobacco use. Although the earnings from the Trust Fund are expected to increase slowly over time, the Board intends to use the fund's limited resources, in addition to the resources of other funding partners and other leveraging opportunities, to help fulfill the Oklahoma State Plan for Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation.

"It is an honor to work with the Board of Directors and the many organizations and individuals that have had a hand in the creation of the Trust Fund," said Strader. "Their efforts will place Oklahoma in the elite group of states that are doing the right thing with the tobacco settlement dollars, and will ultimately result in significantly improved health for all Oklahomans."

The Board of Directors will hold regular quarterly meetings on the following Fridays in 2004: February 13<sup>th</sup>, May 14<sup>th</sup>, August 27<sup>th</sup>, and November 12<sup>th</sup>. For additional information, visit the TSET website at [www.tobaccosettlement.state.ok.us](http://www.tobaccosettlement.state.ok.us).