



Pennsylvania Society for Respiratory Care, Inc.

Auditor General Jack Wagner
229 Finance Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018

June 6, 2011

Dear Mr. Wagner,

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the Pennsylvania Society for Respiratory Care (PSRC), I'd like to commend your work in issuing two special reports on the use, or misuse, of payments from the Tobacco Settlement Fund. We believe the work you have done as Auditor General has done a tremendous service for the millions of people living in our state. Citizens of the Commonwealth deserve to know where these funds are being spent. You note in your report that the General Assembly diverted 30% of the Tobacco Settlement payments received since 1999 without public input on how those funds should be spent. Since the state is expected to receive billions more in Tobacco Settlement Funding over the next 15 years, we applaud your efforts to bring the public back into the discussion on how these funds are allocated.

The PSRC fully supports the effort to stop the pilfering of the Tobacco Settlement Fund to help pay the state's other bills. The fund was the result of a hard fought legal battle against the tobacco companies that ultimately forced those companies to pay for the damaged health their products has caused and continues to cause across the country. These funds should be used ONLY to reduce the negative health effects of smoking. A 75% reduction in funding of tobacco cessation and prevention programs from 2002 to 2010 indicates that this is not the case.

Therefore, the PSRC fully supports your efforts to educate the public on the actions of Pennsylvania's General Assembly and their plan to continue diverting these funds away from the very programs they were awarded to pay for back in 2001. We will ask the over 7,000 Respiratory Therapists in the Commonwealth and the patients we serve to contact their legislators and Governor Corbett to voice opposition to using these funds for anything other than programs that prevent or help reduce smoking in the state or to help pay for the healthcare of those individuals whose health has been damaged by smoking.

On behalf of the PSRC, the Respiratory Therapists in the Commonwealth and most especially, the patients we serve, thank you for bringing this issue to the attention of all! If you should need anything further from me, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Respectfully,

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Cc: Members of PA House & Senate
Governor Tom Corbett