

**Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board of Trustees**

**April 23, 2025**

**Via Microsoft Teams**

**The meeting was recorded and can be viewed in its entirety at this link**

<https://youtu.be/DsJu5RxpJo4>

**Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board of Trustees - Members in Attendance:** Claudio Gaultieri (Chair), Robert Boris, Ayesha Clarke, Anne Foley, Samuel Hahn, Cindy Harrison, Steven Hernandez, Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin, Mathew Jasinski, Manisha Juthani, Christopher Moran, Andrew Salner.

**Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board of Trustees - Members Excused:** Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin, Toni Harp, Michael Rell, Tricia Orozco.

**Board of Trustees Staff:** Melissa Morton, Office of Policy and Management (OPM) and Sharica Rose (OPM)

Meeting called to order by Chair Claudio Gaultieri at 10:32 A.M.

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Minutes</b>
<b>Welcome and introductions</b>	Chair Claudio Gaultieri, (OPM) called the meeting to order at 10:32 A.M. and made the following announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction of new OPM team member: (1) Sharica Rose, Fiscal Administrative Officer. Ms. Rose currently assists with managing the Nonprofit Grant Program. She has expressed interest in learning more about the state's tobacco/nicotine prevention and cessation efforts and is willing to assist the Board with administrative support.</li></ul> Melissa Morton, (OPM) called the roll.
<b>Adopt Minutes from January 22, 2025 Meeting</b>	Chair Gaultieri called for a motion to adopt the minutes from the January 22, 2025, meeting. Andrew Salner made a motion to adopt. Cindy Harrison seconded. No discussion. Twelve (12) members voted in favor, zero opposed, and zero abstained. Motion approved. Minutes adopted.
<b>Stated Goal of Today's Meeting</b>	Chair Gaultieri reminded members of the meeting objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide standing updates on the current THTF account balance and interest earned;</li><li>• Receive current status of contract development for projects funded with FY 23 THTF dollars and the RFP process for the FY 24 allocation;</li><li>• Learn the key findings from the most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data; and Outline the next steps and action items.</li></ul>
<b>Trust Fund Account Update</b>	Melissa Morton, Board of Trustees Staff, presented the current THTF account balance report including allocated and encumbered funds, interest earned and the available balances. The report can be found on the <a href="#">Tobacco and Health Trust Fund website</a> .

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<b>Trust Fund Account Update</b>	<p>The following are highlights of the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$12 million was allocated and encumbered for FY 2023.</li> <li>• \$12 million was allocated for FY 2024, and with an inclusion of interest and unencumbered funds, the total available and encumbered amount increased to \$14,394,776.16</li> <li>• As of March 31, 2025, the total encumbered funds for FY 2023 and FY 2024 is \$26,394,776.16.</li> <li>• As of March 31, 2025, the total unallocated balance is \$556,920.20.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>A question-and-answer period followed the presentation. Below are the highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair Gaultieri further clarified that since the funds are encumbered but not yet expended, these funds will continue to earn interest.</li> <li>• Anne Foley asked for an update on the status of Tobacco and Health Trust Fund deposits for FY 2026 and FY 2027. Chair Gaultieri responded that the governor's budget proposed maintaining the \$12 million deposits for both FY 2026 and FY 2027. Ultimately, the funding will be subject to final budget negotiations with the legislature before the end of the legislative session in early June.</li> <li>• It was further noted that to catch up and expend the FY 2023 and FY 2024 funds, the April 2025 allocation deposit was suspended. Therefore, the next deposit would be anticipated in April 2026 (FY 2026).</li> </ul>
<b>Update on FY 2023 Contracts and FY 2024 RFP Process</b>	<p>Chair Gaultieri introduced DPH Commissioner Juthani to provide an update on the FY 2023 contracts and FY 2024 RFPs.</p> <p>Commissioner Juthani presented an overview and recap of the two allocation plans. The full presentation can be found on the <a href="#">Tobacco and Health Trust Fund website</a>.</p> <p>The following are highlights of the presentation:</p> <p><b>FY 2023 RFP Recap &amp; Contract Status</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RFP process for all five (5) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Best Practice Components that comprised the Board's allocation categories, concluded on 1/2/2025 and the full \$12 million was awarded.</li> <li>• The awarded programs are now in the contracting phase.</li> <li>• The total anticipated timeline for contract execution is 8 months.</li> </ul>

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<b>Update on FY 2023 Contracts and FY 2024 RFP Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Of the 7 awarded vendors, 3 vendors are currently working on contract drafts, and 4 vendors have completed contract drafts and are awaiting Contract Support Unit review and/or awaiting DPH Legal approval of language.</li> <li>It is anticipated that the earliest project start date will be September 1, 2025, and the remaining contracts will be approved thereafter on a month-to-month basis.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>FY 2024 RFP Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The funding for all five (5) CDC Best Practice Components that comprised the Board's allocation categories, was fully allocated in the amount of \$14,394,776.</li> <li>Following the January 22, 2025, meeting and prior to the release of the FY 2024 RFP, anticipated changes were shared with the THTF Board to include (1) proposals to be either focused on Component 1 or Component 3 (not both) with multiple proposals not allowed and (2) recommend projects to fill gaps in service areas not included in FY2023 selected projects.</li> <li>Revisions to the RFP review process include, (1) intent that all review panelists review and score every eligible proposal and (2) intent that all review panelists attend all scheduled review meetings.</li> <li>RFP 2026-0905 was released on March 3, 2025, for Component 1, State and Community Interventions, and Component 3, Cessation Interventions. The proposal deadline was April 3, 2025.</li> <li>Twelve (12) proposals met the minimum requirement to move forward for review by the screening committee panel. Eight (8) proposals for Component 1 and four (4) proposals for Component 3.</li> <li>Evaluation committee convened on April 15, 2025, to score proposals and make recommendations.</li> <li>Goal to make award selections by May 5, 2025.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Discussion</u></b></p> <p>A question-and-answer period followed the presentation. Below are the highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin asked in follow up to the FY 2024 allocation, whether the \$2 million that was put towards the vendor QuitLine, comes from the overall \$6 million that was allotted for the cessation component. Commissioner Juthani confirmed that is correct.</li> </ul>

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<b>Youth Risk Behavior Survey and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System BRFSS data Presentation</b>	<p>Commissioner Juthani introduced the DPH staff that oversees this specific work and survey data, whom are Branch Chief Julie Vigil, Allison Sullivan who supervises the tobacco work and Shruti Abrapudi, the Epidemiologist who will present the analysis that was conducted on the two surveys. The full presentation can be found on the <a href="#">Tobacco and Health Trust Fund website</a>.</p> <p>The following are highlights of the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 2 major surveys for tobacco data and trends, which are Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System (YRBSS).</li> <li>• BRFSS is an annual health related survey that completes 400,000 adult interviews nationwide.</li> <li>• YRBSS measures health related behaviors among high school students in grades 9-12.</li> <li>• The four main tobacco usage patterns that are presented are, (1) tobacco data, (2) cigarette smoking, (3) cigar use, and (4) e-cigarette or other electronic vapor product use.</li> <li>• <b>Tobacco use data:</b> The current overall rate of adult tobacco use is 17.1% representing approximately 465,400 adults. The current overall rate of youth tobacco use is 12.7% representing approximately 19,800 students.</li> <li>• <b>Cigarette use data:</b> The current overall rate of adult cigarette smoking is 8.4% representing approximately 226,800 adults. The current overall rate of youth cigarette smoking is 3.0% representing approximately 4,700 high school students.</li> <li>• <b>Cigar use data:</b> The current overall rate of adult cigar smoking is 4.6% representing approximately 120,400 adults. The current overall rate of youth cigar smoking is 2.6% representing approximately 3,900 high school students.</li> <li>• <b>E-Cigarette or other electronic vapor product use data:</b> The current overall rate of adult e-cigarette use is 6.2% representing approximately 166,600 adults. The current overall rate of youth e-cigarette us is 11.5% representing approximately 16,600 high school students.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>A question-and-answer period followed the presentation. Below are the highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Andrew Salner asked if data was collected on individuals who use more than one type of tobacco and if such individuals were counted once or twice. Sruthi Abrapudi advised that the tobacco component encompasses data for more than one form of tobacco use and it was confirmed that some people may have been counted twice.</li> </ul>

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<b>Youth Risk Behavior Survey and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System BRFSS data Presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steven Hernandez asked if there are more details on how the tobacco usage switches from youth into adulthood and shares further interest into what caused dips in usage. Sruthi Abrapudi responds that COVID may have had an impact as well as a co-use of cannabis usage. Commissioner Juthani also shared that due to COVID, YRBSS data was delayed, surveys were not administered at several schools and there were challenges getting surveys completed.</li> <li>• Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin asked if nicotine pouch use was accessed by the YRBSS in the year 2023. Sruthi Abrapudi confirmed yes; nicotine pouches were accessed in both BRFSS and YRBSS, and the data is available on <a href="#">DPH website</a>.</li> <li>• Cindy Harrison shared her preference for targeting and educating youth on tobacco prevention prior to starting. Commissioner Juthani agreed and acknowledges that primary prevention is at the forefront of DPH's efforts.</li> <li>• Dr. Samual Hahn asked about the shift in usage rather than the actual numbers and whether tobacco users simply switched to vaping or if the data represents new e-cigarettes users. Sruthi Abrapudi shared that the decrease in conventional cigarette and cigar use is changing to trend with e-vapor products which has become more common after COVID. Suchitra Krishnan-Sarin further shared that the switch from cigarettes usage doesn't typically apply to youth. Based on national data, it shows that most youth start off using vape products, while the switch from cigarette smoking to vape products occurs more with adults.</li> </ul> <p>Following discussion, Commissioner Juthani introduced new DPH staff member Amanda Fata, Health Program Associate who will focus on contracting and programmatic work to administer the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund dollars.</p> <p>Chair Gaultieri shared that as the session concludes and it is determined what funding the THTF has moving forward for the next biennium, and due to challenges happening at the federal level, Mr. Gaultieri suggests that the Board may wish to fortify existing DPH program and staff that work on collecting critical data that's informing us within our available resources in addition to granting out RFP awards for new projects.</p>
<b>Discussion of Next Steps</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Standing Agenda Items &amp; Updates</b></li> <li><b>Outcome of State Budget</b></li> <li><b>Next Allocation Plan</b></li> </ol>	Chair Gaultieri shared the following highlights: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DPH will continue to provide updates on the existing allocation plans, contract development and share how the funds are getting to the community. Also, there are plans for awarded vendors to provide a presentation on their direct services, their work progress and the goals they hope to achieve.</li> </ol>

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<b>Discussion of Next Steps</b>	<p>b) The legislative session is set to conclude on June 4<sup>th</sup>, and it is anticipated that the budget process will also conclude on or before that date.</p> <p>c) Initiate and discuss the timeline of the next allocation plan.</p> <p>Dr. Andrew Salner asked as a topic for the next meeting if the Board can have an update on where the federal support is for the tobacco control program.</p>
<b>Public Comment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On behalf of the House Public Health Committee, Chair Rep. Cristin McCarthy Vahey (unable to attend today's meeting) asked that Mr. Gualtieri share a brief update on <a href="#">H.B.7275</a> An Act Concerning The Regulation Of Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems And Vapor Products, that was heard for public hearing in the Finance Committee.</li> <li>A legislative item that was put forward at the suggestion of the Board to include language that would allow THTF additional flexibility to adjust allocation plans, was not approved in the human service implementer bill. However, it is still a topic of discussion and may be revisited in the future.</li> </ul>
<b>Adjourn</b>	<p><b>VOTE:</b> Chair Claudio Gualtieri called for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Andrew Salner made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Anne Foley. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 11:37 A.M</p>