



April 23, 2020

ACTION ITEM

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA SMOKERS' HELPLINE CONTRACT

Strategic Plan Priority Area: Child Health

Goal: All children thrive by achieving optimal health prenatal through age 5.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

First 5 California's (F5CA) funding of the Helpline provides essential cessation services for pregnant women, parents, and caregivers of children ages 0 to 5. This request is for approval to add 12 months to the existing California Smokers' Helpline contract (No. CFF 7401), at no additional cost through no later than June 30, 2021. Without an extension, helpline services are scheduled to end on June 30, 2020 for F5CA's funded populations.

The extension will allow F5CA to meet the statutory requirement to fund tobacco control and treatment (Health and Safety Code Section 130125 A, 130125 C), and remain in compliance with the governing statute. Funding of the Helpline is F5CA's sole commitment to meet the statutory requirement to address tobacco use. The extension also will maintain continuity of services for F5CA's target population while providing the time needed to evolve the Helpline contract and services to align with the priorities and emergent research of the California Tobacco Control Program (CTCP) at the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) that include addressing the dangers of vaping.

RECOMMENDATION

F5CA staff recommends the Commission approve a no-cost, time-only extension for up to 12 months to continue tobacco cessation services provided by the California Smokers' Helpline. If approved, the amended contract term would begin July 1, 2020, and end on or before June 30, 2021.

BACKGROUND OF KEY ISSUES

Funding for the Helpline has been a collaborative effort between CTCP and F5CA since 2001, where CTCP funds 80% and F5CA funds 20%. F5CA's funding specifically focuses on serving the F5 target population and protecting young children from the ill effects of tobacco smoke and electronic cigarette vapor.

The Helpline has achieved cost savings as a result of a steady decline in the number of smokers calling for cessation services over the past several years. This trend has been true for similar telephone-based smoking cessation services nationally. The decrease can be attributed, in part, to the steady decline in the number of adult smokers, and the associated increased difficulty in reaching them. This cost savings will be used to increase and diversify outreach efforts to engage pregnant smokers, and parents and caregivers who smoke.

California has seen a dramatic change in the landscape of tobacco use with the advent of electronic cigarettes (vaping). To address vaping and the health risks linked to its use, in 2019, the Governor signed an executive order providing funding for social media public awareness to educate youth, young adults, and parents about the health risks of vaping nicotine and cannabis products. It also directed CDPH to develop recommendations to reduce smoking among young adults. The Governor and the legislature are committed to working with stakeholders to build on the executive order and put forward a strong tobacco reform package in 2020 (<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2019/09/16/governor-gavin-newsom-signs-executive-order-to-confront-youth-vaping-epidemic/>). However, with the unprecedented emergence of COVID-19 during winter and spring 2020, this effort has been disrupted.

The extension will allow F5CA to align the scope of the Helpline contract with the emerging strategies developed by leaders in the tobacco cessation field and with the Administration's plan for reducing tobacco use and vaping in California. Prior to the onset of COVID-19, CTCP was planning a Tobacco Cessation Summit that would bring together health care, public health, and marketing experts, as well as policy makers and leaders in tobacco cessation service delivery to identify policy strategies, prioritize cessation efforts, and create an evidence-based plan to guide efforts to increase tobacco cessation. It is imperative that the Helpline contract support priority cessation efforts identified by the Administration and key stakeholders in tobacco cessation.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Previous funding for the California Smokers' Helpline was authorized by the Commission on January 28, 2016. At that meeting, \$5.6 million was authorized over four years to provide cessation services and support, with the core service being proactive telephone counseling to individuals wanting to quit smoking and/or using other tobacco products, including vapes.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

This is a time only extension. There is no additional fiscal impact.

ATTACHMENTS

None.