

Policy Statement: Research Funding from the Tobacco Industry

Tobacco use is the leading cause of death in the United States, with more than 440,000 lives claimed each year, including more than 6,400 in Louisiana. Tobacco use takes an economic toll of more than \$150 billion in health care costs and lost productivity, including \$2.8 billion in Louisiana. Cigarettes are addictive, and kill half of all chronic users. Tobacco use is increasingly a problem for the underserved, lower-income segments of our population, and the tobacco industry is deliberately targeting this community.

The tobacco industry for decades sponsored its own “research” institutes to give the impression that it was internally investigating tobacco’s potential to cause illness, while denying at the same time that tobacco use was linked with disease. It has a long history of manipulating research findings from research that it sponsors, using grants and contracts for public relations purposes rather than meaningful advances in science and health. The tobacco industry has overtly opposed reputable scientific findings showing the relationships between tobacco use and ill health, and has acted in many ways to undermine public health. Its history of public deception and activities creating doubt and confusion about the health risks of tobacco use are well documented.

The mission of the LSU School of Public Health is “to improve the health of the people of Louisiana and their families and communities through education, research and community service with a special emphasis on the health and healthcare of underserved people and their communities...and to inspire and support people-centered health and healthcare where people actively pursue and take responsibility for health...and where public policies support healthy people and communities.”

The LSU School of Public Health is actively engaged in a variety of efforts in tobacco use prevention and control, including initiatives in public hospital based smoking cessation interventions, as well as comprehensive statewide prevention, education, and public policy programs. Our faculty have a long history of research, education, and policy interventions designed to protect the public from the hazards imposed by tobacco use.

Therefore, it is incompatible with our mission and activity for the LSU School of Public Health to engage in research or other scholarly activity funded by grants, contracts, or other mechanisms from the tobacco industry. The School of Public Health and its faculty will not apply for, administer, or participate in projects funded by tobacco manufacturers, distributors, or organizations that are political or “scientific” surrogates for the tobacco industry. This policy does not apply to funds from the Master Settlement Agreement, tobacco excise taxes, or funds made available from litigation against the tobacco industry.