

Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust Board of Directors: Resolution on TSET's 25th Anniversary.

August 2025

WHEREAS, in 2025, the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) is celebrating its 25 years since its creation by Oklahoma voters and the agency's quarter-century of work to improve health across Oklahoma. A new book titled "The Battle Against Big Tobacco and the Birth of TSET" by Bob Burke, Marshall Snipes and Julie Bisbee was published in April and documents the legal fight against the tobacco industry and the visionary creation of TSET; and

WHEREAS, Oklahoma voters created TSET with overwhelming support in 2000 after Oklahoma and 45 other states reached the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) with the tobacco industry; and

WHEREAS, voters in 2020 reaffirmed their intention that the majority of each year's payment from the tobacco industry to the State of Oklahoma be deposited into the TSET endowment. TSET uses only the earnings from the endowment to fund programs that improve the health of Oklahomans and Oklahoma remains the only state to constitutionally protect its MSA payments, making it a national model for tobacco prevention and public health investment; and

WHEREAS, TSET invests in programs to prevent cancer and cardiovascular disease as they are Oklahoma's leading causes of death. TSET has evolved to become one of the state's largest funders of preventative health initiatives by awarding grants to schools, communities, state agencies and partner organizations to support better health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, Oklahoma's adult smoking rate has decreased from 28.6% in 2001 to 15.8% in 2023; and

WHEREAS, because of TSET's investments in grants and programs, Oklahoma's adult smoking rate has declined ten times faster than similar states, based on a 2016 study that reviewed comparable cigarette taxes and comprehensive clean air protections, the two most influential factors in reducing adult smoking.

WHEREAS, TSET also funds multiple award-winning public health communication interventions to promote healthy behavior change and reduce key risk factors associated with obesity and tobacco use, providing critical counter-messaging to the \$149 million Big Tobacco spends in Oklahoma each year to market their products¹; and

WHEREAS, many TSET-funded programs have achieved significant outcomes, including the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline, which ranks among the highest in the nation in treatment reach, success rate and customer satisfaction, and has had over 600,000 registrations; and

¹ <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/oklahoma>

WHEREAS, TSET has provided funding to the Health Care Workforce Training Commission for the Physician Loan Repayment Program, resulting in over 655,000 patient visits in rural and underserved areas; and

WHEREAS, strategic investment in research at the Stephenson Cancer Center for TSET's Phase 1 Clinical Trial Program contributed to Stephenson earning a National Cancer Institute designation in both 2018 and 2023. TSET also supports the OU Health TSET Health Promotion Research Center and the Oklahoma Center for Adult Stem Cell Research. With its combined investments, TSET helped to secure \$757 million in additional research funding; and

WHEREAS, TSET's Healthy Living Program has reached 62 counties and 94% of Oklahoma's population, empowering communities to implement sustainable, evidence-based strategies for healthier living. TSET has also awarded more than 200 Healthy Incentive Grants to schools and school districts and over 165 Healthy Incentive grants to communities, investing almost \$10 million to encourage the adoption of health-promoting policies; and

WHEREAS, TSET's partnership with the Oklahoma Health Care Authority to reduce tobacco use among SoonerCare members has contributed to 59% of participants reporting at least one quit attempt, which is a meaningful step in reducing tobacco-related health harms in the Medicaid population; and

WHEREAS, the work TSET has done throughout the state over the last 25 years has resulted in improved health and quality of life for countless Oklahomans.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, the TSET Board of Directors, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary, commends the vision of Oklahoma voters, honors the agency's legacy of investment in healthier communities, and reaffirms its commitment to continue working boldly and strategically to improve the health of Oklahomans for generations to come.