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ClearWay MinnesotaSM funds new research grants

Studies will examine tobacco issues affecting diverse communities, inform future regulation

MINNEAPOLIS (March 17, 2016) – Yesterday, ClearWay Minnesota’s Board of Directors approved three new research grants. The grants, totaling \$500,000, examine issues that affect some of the populations most burdened by the harms of smoking, and are designed to inform good future regulation of tobacco products.

“We are excited to share the results of our most recent round of research funding,” said Dr. Barbara Schillo, Vice President at ClearWay Minnesota. “These grants will yield insights and knowledge that can be used to protect Minnesotans against the harms of tobacco.”

The new grants will fund three 24-month projects. The recipients are:

- **Public Health Law Center** for a study simulating the effect of policies restricting the sale of menthol tobacco products (\$250,000, Principal Investigator Maggie Mahoney, J.D.);
- **The University of Minnesota** for a study to examine use of menthol-flavored e-cigarettes in the context of a simulated ban on menthol cigarettes (\$125,000, Principal Investigator Michael Kotlyar, Pharm.D.); and
- **The University of Minnesota** for a study on policies regarding commercial tobacco marketing on American Indian reservations (\$125,000, Principal Investigator Rachel Widome, Ph.D.).

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The new research is expected to have implications for reducing tobacco's harms in specific populations that are disproportionately harmed by tobacco use. The tobacco industry heavily markets menthol cigarettes to African Americans, who smoke at higher rates than the general population and are more likely to suffer and die from tobacco-related diseases. The burden of cigarette smoking may fall hardest upon American Indians, who in Minnesota smoke at enormously high rates: 59 percent compared to 14 percent in the general population.

“We believe these projects will inform future efforts to advance health equity and reduce health disparities in those populations that have been most heavily targeted by the tobacco industry,” said Schillo.

About ClearWay MinnesotaSM

ClearWay Minnesota is an independent nonprofit organization that improves the health of Minnesotans by reducing the harm caused by tobacco. ClearWay Minnesota serves Minnesota through its grant-making program, QUITPLAN[®] stop-smoking services and statewide outreach activities. It is funded with 3 percent of the state's 1998 tobacco settlement. For more information on ClearWay Minnesota or QUITPLAN Services, call 952-767-1400 or visit clearwaymn.org.

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