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CounterAct Tobacco Makes Partner Progress

Nine organizations signed on as partners during the first year of the campaign.

Oklahoma City (July 1, 2022) – [CounterAct Tobacco](#), a youth-driven program working to increase local control of tobacco policies through comprehensive tobacco retail licensing, had nine organizations from five counties sign on as partners during its first year.

High school students who are members of [Youth Action for Health Leadership](#) (YAHL), a program funded by the Oklahoma [Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust](#) (TSET), presented to community organizations across the state to explain the campaign and encourage them to sign on as partners. Becoming a partner indicates the organization's support for CounterAct Tobacco's goals to license e-cigarette, vape, and nicotine-only retailers and overturn preemption.

CounterAct Tobacco's first nine organizational partners are the Adair County Community Coalition, Cherokee County Healthy Living Collaborative, Cherokee Nation Public Health, Family Health Center of Southern Oklahoma, Johnston County Chamber of Commerce, Mercy Hospital Tishomingo, Murray State College, TSET Healthy Living Program Serving Garvin County and the Wilma P. Mankiller Clinic.

Erin Bolin, TSET Healthy Living Program coordinator in Garvin County, is impressed by the commitment shown by local teens to empower their peers and local communities.

"It's exciting to see the passion in our youth who are working towards the same goals and outcomes as people more than twice their age," Bolin said. "These students see firsthand how tobacco is impacting their peers, and they are advocating to make a difference. It is an honor to collaborate with these young adults who are taking action to create change and spread awareness."

Children and teenagers in Oklahoma face increasing health threats as rates of vaping use rise. More than 1 in 4 Oklahoma youth report using some form of tobacco product. In 2017, Oklahoma had the 11th highest prevalence of electronic vapor product use among youth in the nation. Use of nicotine and tobacco products at a young age can have a lasting effect. Nearly 90 percent of adults who smoke daily began when they were under 18 years old.

CounterAct Tobacco Senior Account Manager Alex Escamilla-Rosenberg is thrilled that partners are showing their support for the campaign.

"The tobacco industry spends millions of dollars each year trying to get Oklahoma youth addicted to their deadly products, so it's going to take all of us together to pass comprehensive tobacco retail licensing," said Escamilla-Rosenberg.

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CounterAct Tobacco is an initiative working to move the power out of Big Tobacco's hands and into ours through comprehensive tobacco retail licensing. It is funded by the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET). For more information, visit www.CounterActTobacco.com.

Youth Action for Health Leadership (Y AHL), a program of the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET), is a statewide youth-led initiative that partners with schools and organizations to make meaningful and measurable impact on Oklahoma by promoting healthy behaviors. For more information, visit <https://yahlok.org/>.

The Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) serves as a partner and bridge builder for organizations shaping a healthier future for all Oklahomans. TSET provides leadership at the intersections of health by working with local coalitions and initiatives across the state, cultivating innovative and life-changing research and working across public and private sectors to develop, support, implement and evaluate creative strategies to take advantage of emerging opportunities to improve the public's health. TSET – Better Lives Through Better Health. To learn more, go to <https://tset.ok.gov/>.