

DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THE MINNESOTA PLAN FOR
NONSMOKING AND HEALTH

The Minnesota Plan for Nonsmoking and Health is a broad, coordinated statewide program to:

- o Prevent young people from starting to smoke,
- o Encourage and assist smokers to quit smoking,
- o Promote clean indoor air.

To further these goals, the plan delineates specific recommendations for actions, programs and legislation in six major program areas with which The Institute deals:

- o Workplace Smoking
- o Sampling
- o Taxes
- o Self-extinguishing cigarettes
- o Cigarette Labeling
- o Insurance

The majority of the Plan is aimed at building the case that smoking is medically, socially and economically unsound and unacceptable. The program and policies that result from this stance are sweeping. They encompass a wide range of methods and strategies to reduce the level of tobacco use in the state. Such methods include educational and behavioral interventions, economic strategies and regulatory actions.

Dealing with this Plan - and others of this type - will entail utilizing the full range of Institute resources, Scientific/Medical staff, Public Relations, and Federal Relations, as well as State Activities and Information Services.

Fortunately, The Institute possesses experience and has programs in place to address most of these stated areas. For example, the issue of workplace smoking and the Clean Indoor Air Act is long standing in Minnesota, which enacted one of the first and most stringent such laws in the country in the 1970's. Other issues, such as the labeling and self-extinguishing questions, are the subject of current federal legislative efforts and, accordingly, our position is developed.

At this time, it is unclear what, if anything, the State of Minnesota, the Perpich Administration, the Department of Health, or members of the Legislature intend to do with this Plan. Further, because of the massive scope of the Minnesota document, it would be impossible to confront the volume on a point-by-point basis. Consequently, The Institute's response should follow the following steps:

1. Headquarters staff must meet with appropriate lobbyists and field staff who have been monitoring the development of this Plan during the 10 months of the Technical Advisory Commission's work. The reasons for consulting with our on-site personnel are fourfold:
 - They are in the best position to advise what legislators' interests are regarding specific components of the Plan;
 - They know the "players" involved in its development and the particular causes of each;
 - They are best able to determine what the Commissioner of Health is likely to recommend;
 - They will be best able to estimate which issues are most likely to emerge from the Plan, and in what order of priority.
2. Following initial assessment of the Plan and its likely progress, Headquarters staff will marshal an inventory of existing alliances, ongoing programs and documentation for use as needed on specific issues. (E.g., the Smoking and Youth Program could easily be introduced into Minnesota upon request from State Activities to Public Relations.)
3. Continued close liaison between State Activities Headquarters and field staff who are monitoring this Plan and its potential issues will permit specific, tailored responses to be developed as the probability of concrete state action on individual topics increases. Earliest communication from State Activities to in-house staff on specific needs is, of course, critical to the preparation of effective and appropriate assistance.

The new communications capability between Headquarters and the field will play a key role in this type of project which, by its nature, mandates quick response time. Equipment, software, and procedures are in place to facilitate this activity. The coordination of an alerted headquarters staff, an aware and listening field staff, and effective communications between the two will result in a coordinated, effective response.

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