

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Jim Blaine, MD
MPSH
(417) 830-9286 (c)
jimblaine@aol.com

Kathryn Harness
American Lung Association
(573) 353-4188 (c)
kharness@lungmo.org

**NEW SURVEY SHOWS MISSOURIANS BELIEVE THAT LEGISLATURE SHOULD SPEND
TOBACCO SETTLEMENT MONEY ON TOBACCO PROGRAMS**

Tobacco Prevention Spending Falls Short in Missouri

March 19, 2007 – The majority of Missourians believe that money from the Tobacco Settlement should be spent on funding tobacco prevention and cessation programs, according to a 2007 surveyⁱ.

“The Missouri legislature should listen to what the people of Missouri want and appropriate significant funding to tobacco prevention and cessation programs,” said Jim Blaine, MD, Chairman of the Missouri Partnership on Smoking or Health.

A survey by the Center for Social Sciences and Public Policy Research at Missouri State University showed that 77.8%ⁱⁱ of Missourians believe that money from the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) should be spent on tobacco prevention and cessation. Missouri receives over \$150 million annually from the MSA. According to the survey, 60%ⁱⁱⁱ of respondents believe that ‘50% or more’ of the MSA money should be spent on tobacco prevention and cessation programs. The Centers for Disease Control recommends that Missouri spend at least \$32.8 million each year on tobacco control. Despite the fact that tobacco costs the state of Missouri more than \$3 billion each year, zero dollars from the MSA are spent on a state comprehensive tobacco prevention and cessation program.

The American Lung Association, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, Siteman Cancer Center and the Missouri State Medical Association have joined with the Missouri Partnership on Smoking or Health to encourage Missouri residents to speak out on this issue.

“Tobacco takes a major toll on Missouri each year and it is time to take a stand.” said Michelle Bernth, Vice President of Marketing & Advocacy at the American Lung Association. “Missouri citizens should call their state legislators and demand that funding tobacco control be a priority in our state”.

The Missouri Partnership on Smoking or Health is a non-partisan, tobacco use prevention organization comprised of local, regional and statewide health organizations. Call (417) 830-9286 or visit www.smokingorhealth.org for more information.

###

ⁱ Missouri Registered Voters’ Opinions on State Smoking Policies. Center for Social Sciences and Public Policy Research at Missouri State University. T. Knapp, PhD and G. Brinker, PhD. Data collection 2/21/07-3/3/07.

ⁱⁱ Margin of error: +/- 3.8%

ⁱⁱⁱ Margin of error: +/- 4.7%