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July 1, 2015

Dear Mr. Peterson and Greater North Dakota Chamber Leadership,

We send this communication upon reading the recent *New York Times* article by Danny Hakim titled, "U.S. Chamber of Commerce Works Globally to Fight Antismoking Measures," in addition to witnessing firsthand the Greater North Dakota Chamber's (GNDC) work alongside Big Tobacco lobbyists during the 2015 Legislative Assembly to defeat statewide tobacco prevention efforts in North Dakota.

If you have not read the June 30, 2015 article referenced above, please do so. While we acknowledge a disconnect at times between national, state and local organizations such as the Chambers of Commerce, we couldn't help but recognize some similarities between points made in the article and the actions of the GNDC. Even as an active member of the Healthy North Dakota Summit, whose goal is to identify strategies and "support North Dakotans who make healthy choices – in schools, workplaces, senior centers, homes and anywhere people live, learn, work and play," the GNDC has not only been absent in supporting tobacco prevention efforts, it has actively opposed them.

One of the goals identified in the North Dakota State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP), the publication and resource provided by Healthy North Dakota, is to reduce tobacco use in North Dakota. With that initiative on paper and in mind, we are troubled to see efforts of the Chambers of Commerce – whether internationally or here at the state level – oppose proven prevention strategies that save both lives and money.

More importantly than just being troubled by this, we challenge the GNDC to accept what the numbers have long confirmed – that comprehensive tobacco prevention practices are fiscally responsible to taxpayers, health care systems, and ultimately, our workforce and employers in the business community.

Please use this negative press and unfortunate past as an opportunity to follow through with "supporting health improvement through the state" and reducing tobacco use as outlined by GNDC's participation in the key priorities and outcomes of ND SHIP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric L. Johnson".

Eric L. Johnson, M.D.
President

cc: Jack Dalrymple, Governor; Dr. Terry Dwelle, State Health Officer; Karen Ehrens, Healthy North Dakota Coordinator