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June 7, 2012

Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.
Director, National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

RE: FR Doc No: 2012-12017

Dear Dr. Collins:

The American Lung Association wishes to express its support for the efforts of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the launching of the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health study (PATH) to monitor and evaluate the effects of FDA regulation of tobacco products. The American Lung Association is proud of our role in fighting for the passage of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, and this effort to evaluate its impacts on public health and behavior is crucial to its success. With this study and other activities, NIH will play an invaluable role with the FDA in implementing this legislation and saving lives.

Establishing the PATH study will allow the tobacco control community and public to see the positive effects of regulating tobacco product advertising, labeling, marketing, constituents, ingredients and additives. This system will be invaluable in informing the public of the positive effects of tobacco regulation and measuring the long term health and behavior of tobacco consumers.

A careful evaluation of FDA's policies such as this will help understand the impact FDA's policies have on tobacco use and ultimately drive down the rate of tobacco use in the United States. Reducing tobacco use will prevent disease, save lives and reduce tobacco-related health care costs. As you know, the 45 million Americans who currently smoke are at heightened risk for a variety of cancers, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and other serious medical conditions.

The American Lung Association strongly supports the FDA and NIH's mission to improve the health of the American people. We are encouraged by NIH and FDA's efforts to measure the impact of current and future smoking regulations and communications. Thank you for your continued leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Billings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" being more prominent than the last name "Billings".

Paul Billings, Vice President of National Policy and Advocacy
American Lung Association

Cc: Dr. Margaret Hamburg, Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration
Dr. Laurence Deyton, Director, Center for Tobacco Products