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In the Resolution presented by Dean Henderson, the Task Force moves, "To increase state-level enforcement activity in the critical effort to reduce illegal sales of addictive tobacco products to Oklahoma youth, we recommend that the Oklahoma State Legislature and the Governor approve funding for at least six agents for the Oklahoma ABLE Commission (two per geographical enforcement district) to be assigned to full-time enforcement of state laws against youth access to tobacco."

Henderson said, "I certainly compliment the ABLE Commission on what they've been able to do which what they have with the lack of manpower. Hopefully this will make them even more effective."

Dr. J. Kevin Barry with the Oklahoma ABLE Commission said that within the last three months the points of sale of tobacco products has increased by 100, making a total of 6100 sites for which the Commission is responsible. He said he felt the increase of manpower will be a starting point for increased efficiency.

In addition, Barry mentioned that surprisingly, the tobacco lobbyists are in favor of the increase in agents with the hope that this resolution will take the task force's attention away from putting control in the hands of local governments.

In relation to the issue, the Task Force discussed the repercussions resulting by the Synar Regulations. In 1992, Rep. Mike Synar attached language to a bill that became known as the Synar Amendment. This required all states to reach a 80% compliance rate with youth prevention tobacco laws by the year 2000. If the states fail to comply, they will lose up to 40% of federal substance abuse funding. In Oklahoma, that would mean a loss of \$6 million in federal funding which is the sole source of funding for the substance abuse programs in Oklahoma.

The Task Force is faced with finding a way to ensure Oklahoma reaches full compliance with the Synar Regulation. This would include the ABLE Commissions cooperation in random surveying of sites throughout the state to measure compliance rates. However, as Dr. Barry noted, a large source of the problem is vending machines that sell tobacco products. As the current statutes stand, the only one accountable if a minor purchases tobacco products from such a machine is the minor, not the owner of the machine.

"I love when the legislature does this. They assign a law, and offer no penalty. That's how current statutes stand in Oklahoma," Barry said.

The Task Force decided that the issue of the vending machine problem needs to be further explored before the next legislative session.

Dan Reich with the Oklahoma State Department of Education brought the group up to date with the latest efforts being made in the schools for tobacco prevention programs. He said that despite previous obstacles, Superintendent Sandy Garrett has recently authorized a state-wide survey of 6th, 8th and 12th grade students to examine their attitudes about drugs, alcohol and tobacco, the frequency with which they use it, etc., in an effort to provide the state with a better understanding from the youths' perspective.

Reich also brought to the members' attention that while certain forms of education and prevention are mandated under HB1017, the efforts are not enough. The members agreed to support a curriculum proposed by the State Board of Education to be created and dispersed to teachers across the state as a teaching mechanism.

"The only thing that changes student behavior is day to day service. We need that a lot in Oklahoma," Reich said.

"Noting is impossible for the person who doesn't have to do it."

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