Mississippi has used the tobacco control settlement funds to implement statewide and community interventions, mass-reach health communication interventions, and cessation interventions to reduce youth tobacco use. The state has passed 159 comprehensive smoke-free municipal ordinances that protect 35% of Mississippians. The state cigarette tax has raised the cost of a pack of cigarettes, and smokefree ordinances at the municipal level deter youth initiation of tobacco use. Previous research strongly links each of these strategies to reductions in youth smoking.

Despite advances in local and state-wide policies, the landscape continues to present some challenges. The introduction and aggressive marketing of lightly-regulated e-cigarettes has added another factor to the social climate. Continuing regulatory action to prohibit e-cigarette use in places where smoking is not allowed and eliminating flavors and marketing that target youth are needed to curb the growth of e-cigarette use among youth. E-cigarettes are not subject to a state tobacco tax, while smokeless tobacco and cigars have a much lower tax burden than cigarettes. Equalizing the tax on each of these products could reduce the appeal of the less expensive products to youth.

As demonstrated by our YTS results, Mississippi has had remarkable success in decreasing cigarette and cigar smoking. However, smokeless tobacco use has not changed and e-cigarette use is at record high levels. Currently, Mississippi youth are at a much greater risk to be current users of e-cigarettes than cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco. A shift in strategy is now desired and needed in order to focus tobacco control interventions, mass-reach health communication interventions, and cessation interventions to reduce youth tobacco use.