

# Funds approved to fight use of chewing tobacco

A U.S. Senate committee has approved a \$2 million appropriation to help states educate school children about the dangers of using smokeless tobacco, according to Sen. Ted Stevens.

The Senate Appropriations Committee earlier this month approved the funds. Under the legislation, states with high rates of smokeless tobacco usage by children would be eligible to receive a \$250,000 federal grant. The money could be used for educational materials for schools, public service campaigns and other programs to discourage smokeless tobacco use.

"An alarming number of very young Alaskans in rural parts of the state use smokeless tobacco," Stevens said. "A recent survey of 5-year-olds showed that one out of six girls and one out of 10 boys have used smokeless tobacco. Many of them started when they were only 3 or 4."

Stevens said usage of smokeless tobacco at such a young age could lead to a significant increase in mouth and throat cancers, as well as gum disease.