



Washtenaw County Board of Health

A resolution to support action by the Ann Arbor City Council to raise the minimum legal age for purchasing tobacco products or electronic smoking devices to 21 years of age

Washtenaw County Board of Health
July 22, 2016

WHEREAS, cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in Michigan. Smoking kills 16,200 Michiganders annually and 8,100 children become new, regular, daily smokers – a third of whom will die prematurely because of it; and

WHEREAS, the vast majority (95%) of adult smokers began smoking before age 21 and young people are sensitive to nicotine and can feel dependent earlier than adults. Adults over the age of 21 rarely start smoking. The younger individuals are when they start using nicotine products the more likely it is that they will be addicted; and

WHEREAS, adult smoking rates have increased 3% locally and remain disproportionately high among lower income adults (39% of individuals with Medicaid) and African Americans (26%) according to the 2015 Health Improvement Plan (HIP) Survey; and

WHEREAS, over 13% of young adults 18-24 years in Washtenaw County report current smoking and are more likely to use electronic smoking devices (HIP Survey, 2015); and

WHEREAS, the use of tobacco and nicotine-containing products and devices is a major public health concern and curbing this use, especially among young people, saves lives and health care resources; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine concluded that raising the age of legal access to tobacco products to 21 years of age will likely prevent or delay initiation of tobacco use by adolescents and young adults and substantially reduce smoking prevalence and related mortality over time and predicted that raising the age now to 21 nationwide will result in about 249,000 fewer premature deaths, 45,000 fewer deaths from lung cancer and 4.2 million fewer years of life lost for those born between 2000 and 2019; and

WHEREAS, raising the minimum age of legal access to 21 would reduce the likelihood that young people, especially those 15-17 years, would access nicotine products through peers and in social settings; and

WHEREAS, Needham, MA was the first city to pass a Tobacco 21 policy in 2005 and saw the prevalence of youth smoking cut in half by 2010 and some 140 jurisdictions in 13 states now have similar laws; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Health supports the regulation brought by the City of Ann Arbor to adopt a Tobacco 21 policy which prohibits providing, selling or giving tobacco products or electronic smoking devices to persons under 21 years of age.



Statement to the Ann Arbor City Council
In Support of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products to Age 21 in the City of Ann Arbor
August 4, 2016

Jessie Kimbrough Marshall, MD, MPH
Medical Director
Washtenaw County Public Health

I strongly support the proposal to raise the minimum age of legal access (MLA) to tobacco products in Ann Arbor to age 21. Over the last five decades, tobacco control has led to approximately 8 million fewer premature deaths, in the United States. Despite this progress, tobacco use continues to be a significant public health problem with over 40 million Americans still smoking. Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable deaths – in the United States and in the state of Michigan. Tobacco use kills more Michigan residents than AIDS, drug overdoses, alcohol, automobile accidents, suicides, and homicides combined. Smoking causes cancer, heart and lung disease, and other serious health problems. Smoking not only causes deleterious health effects to users, but everyone who is exposed to second-hand smoke, including children and unborn babies, are adversely affected.

A wealth of literature has documented the serious health consequences and public health toll that cigarette smoking causes. Several years ago, Congress gave a directive to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to study the effects of raising the minimum age for tobacco. Per the FDA request, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) convened a committee, composed of public health, medical, and other experts, to conduct this study. The IOM committee performed a comprehensive review of the literature on:

- tobacco use initiation
- developmental biology and psychology
- tobacco policy

The committee also used mathematical models to predict the population health impact of raising the minimum age for purchase of tobacco products to 19 years, 21 years, and 25 years of age. The IOM found that:

- over 42 million adults smoke
- nearly 480,000 deaths each year, are related to smoking, in the US
- approximately 90% of daily smokers first tried cigarettes before the age of 19 (a time that the brain is still developing in areas like decision-making and impulse control, with development continuing until about age 25)

In 2015, the IOM released its report, *Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products*, and concluded that raising the age would likely:

- prevent or delay initiation of use, especially for adolescents ages 15-17 years
- reduce smoking prevalence
- reduce smoking-related illness and death, including those caused by secondhand smoke
- improve fetal and infant outcomes by reducing the likelihood of smoking by parents

Furthermore, the IOM estimated that raising the MLA to 21 would result in a 12% decrease in smoking prevalence by year 2100, which also corresponded to 249,000 fewer premature deaths for those born between 2000 and 2019.

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So far, two states, Hawaii and California, and at least 125 municipalities have raised the minimum age for sale of tobacco products from 18 to 21 years. Locally, the Washtenaw County Board of Health passed a resolution at its July 22, 2016 in support of action by the Ann Arbor City Council to raise the MLA for purchasing tobacco products or electronic smoking devices to 21 years of age.

Moving forward with this proposal will save lives. This proposal will positively impact the public health of Ann Arbor. I urge the City Council to support this proposal to raise the minimum age for legal access to tobacco products.

Sources:

IOM Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products. 2015. https://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/~/media/Files/Report%20Files/2015/TobaccoMinAge/tobacco_minimum_age_report_brief.pdf [last accessed August 1, 2016]

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Smoking & Tobacco Use <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/> [last accessed July 29, 2016]

Tobacco Twenty-one <http://tobacco21.org/> [last accessed August 1, 2016]

Sincerely,

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