

New York State

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## Leading the Way

The Surgeon General declared tobacco use a “pediatric epidemic” and estimates that 600,000 middle school students and 3 million high school students smoke cigarettes.

Tobacco use remains the single largest cause of preventable disease and death in the US.

A recent CDC report indicates that e-cigarette use has risen dramatically in the last five years, with 1 in 5 high school students using e-cigarettes in the past month.

5.6 million Americans under 18 years of age are projected to die prematurely from smoking-related disease and almost one of four high school seniors is a current cigarette smoker, compared with one in three young adults and one in five adults.

Every day, over 3,800 children under the age of 18 try tobacco. In New York, approximately 25.4% of high school aged students use tobacco/e-cigarettes.

# Strong Support for Tobacco 21

NYS PTA has been a leader in combating underage use of tobacco and e-cigarettes and we strongly support the new Tobacco 21 proposal which:

- raises the minimum age to purchase cigarettes and e-cigarettes from 18 to 21;
- prohibits the sale of tobacco products in all pharmacies;
- prohibits the acceptance of price reduction instruments for both tobacco products and e-cigarettes;
- prohibits the display of tobacco products or e-cigarettes in stores;
- clarifies that DOH has the authority to promulgate regulations that prohibit or restrict the sale or distribution of e-cigarettes or vapor products that have a characterizing flavor, or the use of names for characterizing flavors intended to appeal to minors;
- prohibits smoking inside and on the grounds of all hospitals licensed or operated by OMH; and
- requires that e-cigarettes be sold only by licensed dealers.

We also support the proposal which imposes a 20 percent tax on the retail sale of vapor products.

Increasing the age of purchase of tobacco products to 21 is an evidence-based policy intervention known to reduce youth smoking by approximately 50% and can significantly decrease the risk of lifetime tobacco addiction by 12%. 90% of people who purchase cigarettes for distribution to minors are under 21 and raising the age to buy tobacco and e-cigarettes could potentially eliminate minors’ ability to buy from other high school students.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the US Surgeon General, the National Academy of Medicine, and the American Lung Association all recognize the benefits of raising the sale to 21 years.

NYS PTA strongly supports this proposal and urges its full adoption.

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