

BEFORE THE BOARD OF HEALTH
SPOKANE REGIONAL HEALTH DISTRICT

RESOLUTION # 16-10

RE: CALLING ON THE WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE, AND SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES WHO REPRESENT THE PEOPLE OF SPOKANE COUNTY, TO RAISE THE MINIMUM LEGAL AGE FOR SALES OF TOBACCO AND VAPING PRODUCTS FROM 18 TO 21.

WHEREAS, tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, killing more than 8300 Washingtonians each year, more than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined; and

WHEREAS, tobacco use causes cancer, heart disease, and respiratory diseases, among other health disorders, that add an estimated \$2.81 billion in annual health care costs in Washington alone; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the number of Washington 10th graders using either cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or electronic cigarettes was 20 out of 100; and

WHEREAS, evidence from multiple studies, including those conducted by the United States Food and Drug Administration, indicates that use of vaping devices is not safe, the vapor having been found to contain chemicals known to cause cancer such as formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, lead, nickel and chromium; ultrafine particulates, acrolein, tin, toluene and aluminum which are associated with a range of negative health effects such as skin, eye and respiratory irritation, neurological effects, damage of reproductive systems and premature death from heart attacks and stroke; and toxic chemicals such as diethylene glycol which is toxic to humans; and

WHEREAS, vaping devices may contain nicotine and present a substantial risk of nicotine and other substance addiction; and

WHEREAS, vaping devices have a strong appeal to youth due to their high technology design and flavors attractive to youth, as evidenced by a recent survey in which 26 percent of high school sophomores in Spokane County reporting use of a vaping device in the past 30 days which is over twice the rate of sophomores who reported smoking a cigarette, exposing youth to the adverse effects of nicotine on brain development, the strong risk of nicotine addiction in youth, and the potential to initiate the smoking of cigarettes as indicated by emerging research; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 the Institute of Medicine (IOM) concluded that raising the minimum legal sales age for tobacco products to 21 would reduce tobacco initiation among youth, especially those aged 15-17, improve health across the lifespan, and save lives; and

WHEREAS, the IOM projected that if the minimum legal sales age for tobacco products were raised to 21 nationwide, there would be approximately 223,000 fewer premature deaths, 50,000 fewer deaths from lung cancer, and 4.2 million fewer years of life lost for persons born in the United States between 2000 and 2019, and result in near-immediate reductions in preterm births, low birth weight babies, and sudden infant death syndrome; and

WHEREAS, most youth get their cigarettes from those between 18 and 21 because more youth are likely to know someone in that age group rather than someone over 21; and

WHEREAS, 90 percent of people purchasing cigarettes for minors are between eighteen and twenty years old; and

WHEREAS, there is strong evidence that people who begin smoking at an early age are more likely to develop a severe addiction to nicotine than those who start at a later age; and

WHEREAS, the transition from experimental to regular smoking typically occurs around 20 years old, and

WHEREAS, most people who are not smokers by twenty-one years of age do not start smoking later in their lives; and

WHEREAS, raising the minimum legal sales age for alcohol to 21 is associated with reduced alcohol use and dependence among persons under 21; and

WHEREAS, raising the minimum legal sales age for tobacco and vaping products from 18 to 21 will help lead to less smoking, tobacco use and vaping among Washington teens aged 12-17, sparing these young people from the ravages that develop over time from harmful and highly addictive tobacco and vaping products; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Legislature has the authority to enact statewide legislation to protect, promote and improve public health by raising the minimum legal sales age for tobacco and vaping products; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Health for the Spokane Regional Health District wants to protect the health of people, especially youth, of our community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF HEALTH, that the Board of Health calls upon the Washington State Legislature, and the senators and representatives who represent the people of Spokane County, to pass legislation raising the minimum legal sales age for tobacco and vapor products from 18 to 21.

Signed this 1st day of December, 2016 in Spokane, Washington.

SPOKANE REGIONAL HEALTH DISTRICT BOARD OF HEALTH

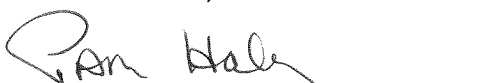

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