

Mr. Bruce W. Rauner
Governor of Illinois
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

January 30, 2018

Dear Governor Rauner:

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States. In Illinois, smoking claims the lives of 18,300 residents each year.ⁱ There are 230,000 Illinois children who are alive now that will die prematurely due to smoking-related disease.ⁱⁱ The annual health care costs in Illinois directly caused by smoking are \$5.49 billion.ⁱⁱⁱ Illinois can do better. We want to improve these numbers.

Increasing the sale age for tobacco products to 21, or Tobacco 21, is a proven intervention as a complimentary part of a comprehensive tobacco control strategy to reduce death and suffering from tobacco-related illnesses. Other important efforts include regular and significant tobacco tax increases, comprehensive smoke-free workplace laws, and fully funded tobacco cessation and prevention programs reduce youth initiation and help tobacco users quit.

National research shows that 95% of adult smokers start before they turn 21.^{iv} This time period is when the brain is fully developing, including the parts responsible for decision making, impulse control, sensation seeking, and susceptibility to peer pressure.^v Adolescents and young adults are therefore a critical population to target with evidenced-based, tobacco control strategies.

According to a March 2015 Institute of Medicine report- *Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products*^{vi}, raising the national minimum legal sale age to 21 is predicted to reduce smoking prevalence by about 12 percent and smoking-related deaths by nearly 10 percent for future generations.

The report authors predicted that raising the national minimum age of sale for tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, will prevent tobacco use, reduce suffering and death from tobacco-related diseases and save lives among the next generation of Americans. Furthermore, the IOM report concluded that active enforcement of minimum age laws can reduce underage sales, and additional measures, such as targeted retail education, community education and mobilization, and mass media campaigns can improve retailer compliance.

Increasing the sale age for tobacco products to 21 would be a significant step towards further reducing tobacco use in Illinois. Restricting youth and young adult access to tobacco products can be a critical component to a comprehensive strategy to reduce initiation and a lifelong addiction. Laws aimed to restrict youth commercial access to tobacco products are only effective when combined with interventions to educate retailers, mobilize the community, and actively enforce the laws.^{vii} Tobacco 21, combined with these additional interventions, has the potential to reduce youth and young adult initiation.

It is important to note that it takes more than just changing from 18 to 21 in existing statutes for the desired health benefits to be reached. An effective Tobacco 21 law will include all tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, while not creating new categories of products. Finally, providing a comprehensive definition of “tobacco products” can aid in compliance and enforcement by clearly specifying exactly which products are included in the law.

Tobacco companies heavily target young adults ages 18 to 21 through a variety of marketing activities—sponsoring music and sporting events, bar promotions, college marketing programs, college scholarships and parties—because they know it is a critical time-period for solidifying tobacco addiction. Increasing the age for sale of tobacco products to 21 will help counter the tobacco industry’s efforts to target young people at a critical time when many move from experimenting with tobacco to regular use. It will also help keep tobacco out of high schools, where younger teens often obtain tobacco products from older students.

As of January 2018, five states and over 290 localities have already passed laws to raise the minimum age of sale of tobacco products to 21 including Evanston, Chicago, Oak Park, Highland Park, Naperville, Deerfield, Maywood, Lincolnshire, Vernon Hills, Berwyn, Buffalo Grove, Unincorporated Lake County, Elk Grove Village, and Mundelein. It’s time for all of Illinois to raise the age of sale for tobacco products to 21.

Tobacco 21 will make it harder for young adults and adolescents to access and become addicted to cigarettes and other tobacco products. This legislation is the next step of a comprehensive tobacco control strategy that will save lives and money. We urge your support.

Sincerely,

Advocate BroMenn Medical Center
Advocate Christ Medical Center
Advocate Condell Medical Center
Advocate Eureka Medical Center
Advocate General & Vascular Surgery
Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital
Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital
Advocate Health Care
Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center
Advocate Lutheran General Hospital
Advocate Medical Group - Dreyer
Advocate Sherman Hospital
Advocate South Suburban Hospital
Advocate Trinity Hospital (Non CoC Accredited Facility)
AMITA Adventist Cancer Institute
AMITA Health Alexian Brothers Cancer Institute - Elk Grove Village
AMITA Health Alexian Brothers Cancer Institute - Hoffman Estates
AMITA Health Cancer Institute - Hinsdale

AMITA Health Cancer Institute - LaGrange
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
Blessing Hospital
Carle Foundation Hospital
Centegra Health System
Centegra Hospital - Huntley
Centegra Hospital - Woodstock
Centegra Hospital-McHenry
Community Cancer Center
DuPage Medical Group
Edward Cancer Center
Edward Hospital
Edward-Elmhurst Health
Elmhurst Hospital
HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital
HSHS St. Elizabeth’s Hospital
HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital Highland
HSHS Holy Family
Illinois Cancer Care
Loyola Medicine

MacNeal Hospital
 Mercy Hospital & Medical Center
 NorthShore Evanston Hospital
 NorthShore Glenbrook Hospital
 NorthShore Highland Park Hospital
 NorthShore University HealthSystem
 Northwest Community Healthcare
 Northwestern Grayslake Cancer Center
 Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital
 Northwestern Medicine
 Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital
 Northwestern Medicine Chicago Proton Center
 Northwestern Medicine Delnor Hospital
 Northwestern Medicine Kishwaukee Hospital
 Northwestern Medicine Kishwaukee Hospital
 Northwestern Medicine Valley West Hospital
 Northwestern Medicine Warrenville Cancer Center
 Northwestern Memorial Hospital
 OSF HealthCare
 OSF Holy Family Medical Center
 OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center
 OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center
 OSF Saint Elizabeth Medical Center
 OSF Saint Francis Medical Center

OSF Saint James-John W. Albrecht Medical Center
 OSF Saint Joseph Medical Center
 OSF Saint Luke Medical Center
 OSF Saint Mary's Medical Center
 OSF Saint Paul Medical Center
 Presence Health
 Presence Holy Family
 Presence Mercy Medical Center
 Presence Resurrection Medical Center
 Presence Saint Joseph Hospital
 Presence Saint Joseph Hospital - Elgin
 Presence Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center
 Presence St Francis Hospital
 Presence St Joseph Hospital
 Presence St Mary's Hospital
 Presence United Samaritans Medical Center
 Rush
 Silver Cross Hospital
 Swedish Covenant Hospital
 University of Chicago Hospital
 University of Illinois Cancer Center
 Vista Cancer Center - Gurnee
 Vista Health System





The way you *should* be treated.



Comprehensive Cancer Center



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
CANCER CENTER
Bench to Community

ⁱ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Illinois. Updated October 6, 2017.

https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/illinois

ⁱⁱ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Illinois. Updated October 6, 2017.

https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/illinois

ⁱⁱⁱ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Illinois. Updated October 6, 2017.

https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/illinois

^{iv} United States Department of Health and Human Services. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2014. ICPSR36361-v1. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2016-03-22. <http://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR36361.v1>; see also Institute of Medicine, *Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products*, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2015,

<http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2015/TobaccoMinimumAgeReport.aspx>. Retrieved August 3, 2016 from <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0376.pdf>

^v U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Prevention Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012.

^{vi} http://iom.nationalacademies.org/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2015/TobaccoMinAge/tobacco_minimum_age_report_brief.pdf

^{vii} Guide to Community Preventive Services. Community mobilization with additional interventions to restrict minors' access to tobacco products. www.thecommunityguide.org/tobacco/communityinterventions.html. June 2001.