

April 4, 2019

To: Committee on Human Services
From: Rebecca Ryan, Division Director, Eastern Division
Subject: In Support of S.86 as Passed by the Senate

Raising the minimum sale age of tobacco to 21

- T21 is an additional policy strategy (to a well-funded tobacco control program, high tobacco taxes and strong clean air laws) to prevent tobacco use.
- T21 is a prevention policy, not a cessation policy.

In 2017, one-third of Vermont high school students tried to quit smoking in the last year¹ – that's 1,000 students! In 2016, 47% of Vermonters between the ages of 18-24 tried to quit smoking and nearly 20% succeeded.² If T21 motivates teens and young adults to quit, they have help!

1. American Lung Association

[N-O-T on Tobacco](#) - research - and evaluation-based smoking cessation program for teens ages 14-19 years old and addicted to nicotine.

- ✓ Between 2002 and 2015 - 2,300 enrolled and nearly 1,600 completed (29% not smoking at the end of ten weeks)
- ✓ Now the Agency of Education requires tobacco grantees to provide tobacco cessation and 17 Supervisory Unions offer the program
- ✓ Training in Franklin/Grand Isle last week - 20 school personnel trained
- ✓ Blueprint for Health is launching community-based program

Coming this fall - INDEPTH, Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health, alternative to suspension or citation program.

2. Community Intervention Inc.

[TAP \(Helping Teens Stop Using Tobacco\) /TEG \(Intervening with Teen Tobacco Users\)](#)

¹ Vermont Department of Health, 2017 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

² Vermont Department of Health, 2016 Vermont Adult Tobacco Survey (ATS)

3. Vermont Department of Health [802Quits](#)

- ✓ 13 through 17 - counseling online or by phone without parental consent
- ✓ 18 and older - counseling and free nicotine replacement therapy (patches, gum and lozenges)

4. Stanford Medicine [Tobacco Prevention Toolkit](#) (including e-cigs, hookah and smokeless)

5. National Institutes of Health [Becoming a Smokefree Teen](#) (text messaging and app)

6. The Truth Initiative® “This is Quitting,” a [first-of-its kind e-cigarette quit program](#). This innovative and free text message program was created with input from teens, college students and young adults who have attempted to, or successfully, quit e-cigarettes. To access the new e-cigarette quit program, users can simply text “QUIT” to (706) 222-QUIT or can learn more at [thetruth.com](#) and [www.thisisquitting.com](#).

[Health/Cost Benefits for T21 from the 2015 Institutes of Medicine Report³](#):

Predicted long-term impacts (for cohort born between 2000 and 2019):

- ✓ reduce the smoking rate by 12 percent
- ✓ reduce smoking-related deaths by 10 percent including:
 - 223,000 fewer premature deaths
 - 50,000 fewer deaths from lung cancer
 - 4.2 million fewer years of life lost

Predicted short-term impacts:

Raising the minimum legal age to 21 will likely *immediately* improve the health of adolescents and young adults

- ✓ “by reducing the number of those with smoking-caused diminished health status.”
- ✓ “likely reduce the prevalence of other tobacco products and exposure to secondhand smoke.”
- ✓ “likely improve maternal/fetal and infant outcomes by reducing the likelihood of maternal/paternal smoking.”

³ Institutes of Medicine of the National Academies, Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products, March 2015



Since the Institutes of Medicine report was released four years ago, two T21 bills (including one passed by this committee) did not pass in the Senate. Tobacco use is still the number one cause of preventable disease and death in Vermont. The American Lung Association and partners urge you to pass this year's bill, S.86 as passed by the Senate, to help prevent Vermont teens from a lifetime of addiction. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

