



PRESS RELEASE

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HEALTH ADVOCATES APPLAUD CITY COUNCIL FOR PASSING IMPORTANT LEGISLATION TO PROTECT YOUNG PEOPLE, ENHANCE TOBACCO ENFORCEMENT

***MEASURES WILL RAISE MINIMUM AGE TO 21 FOR SALE OF TOBACCO, AND
CRACK DOWN ON TOBACCO PRICE DISCOUNTS AND ILLEGAL TAX EVASION***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 30, 2013

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, the NYC Coalition for a Smoke-Free City, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, and the American Lung Association of the Northeast applauded the City Council passing two bills to reduce smoking, protect young people and crack down on illegal cigarette smuggling.

One bill will raise the minimum legal sale age for tobacco products to 21. The second bill, the Sensible Tobacco Enforcement Act, will step up enforcement against retailers who evade tobacco taxes or sell tobacco without a license, prohibit coupons or price discounts for tobacco products, create a minimum price for cigarettes and little cigars, and set minimum packaging requirements for cheap cigars, little cigars and cigarillos to crack down on the sale of "loosies."

Matthew L. Myers, President of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, applauded the City Council's continuing national leadership in fighting back against Big Tobacco's efforts to recruit new smokers.

"Today the New York City Council has once again taken historic action to further reduce tobacco use, the number one cause of preventable death," said Myers. "The bills approved by the Council establish a minimum price for cigarettes and little cigars, stop tobacco industry discounting schemes, and prohibit the sale of tobacco products to anyone under the age of 21. These bold actions will dramatically reduce youth tobacco use and serve as models for the rest of the United States and the world. We applaud Mayor Bloomberg, Health Commissioner Farley, Speaker Quinn and Council members for their strong leadership in the fight against tobacco."

Michele Bonan, the Regional Advocacy Director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, lauded the progressive steps the City Council took today to reduce smoking in New York City.

“New York City has done it again: leading the way to protect our families from the scourge of Big Tobacco. Ensuring high prices and increasing the age of sale are two progressive steps that will help keep tobacco out of the hands of kids, and further decrease smoking rates. We applaud the New York City Council for yet again implementing smart policy and protecting the health of New York families,” said Bonan.

“Tobacco is the biggest public health menace of our time. It is the leading preventable cause of cancer and steals the lives of 25,000 New Yorkers every year. For years New York City has aggressively, and effectively, fought back against this threat” continued Bonan. “The City has implemented high tobacco taxes, smoke free workplaces and public spaces, hard-hitting media campaigns and cessation efforts to fight against the advance of Big Tobacco. We are pleased to support today’s freshly passed policy that will build on that strong foundation.”

Jeffrey Seyler, the President and CEO of the American Lung Association of the Northeast, praised the City Council’s step to approve this important legislation designed to combat the scourge of smoking’s public health impacts.

“Speaker Quinn and the City Council are to be commended for taking action to prevent another generation of New York City kids from becoming addicted to tobacco,” said Seyler “Ten years ago when New York City implemented landmark smoke-free legislation, it not only protected residents from deadly secondhand smoke, but solidified itself as a worldwide public health leader. With the passage of these bills today, New York City has again demonstrated that it leads the way when it comes to protecting New Yorkers’ health. The Lung Association thanks the City Council for recognizing the dangers of tobacco and putting the health and wellbeing of our kids first. We look forward to seeing these bills take effect.”

Dr. Tara Narula MD, FACC - spokesperson for the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, Associate Director of the Cardiac Care Unit at Lenox Hill Hospital/North Shore LIJ, and member of the American Heart Association Advocacy Committee, lauded city leadership in the fight against the health impacts of smoking.

“Today, New York City once again has set the highest bar for strong tobacco control in our nation,” stated Dr. Narula. “With the passage of these two bills, we anticipate that our most vulnerable parts of our population – those that the tobacco industry has historically targeted via their insidious marketing schemes – will be afforded greater protection from a lifetime of addiction and disease. Making sure our youth and communities of color are safer from tobacco, the number one preventable cause of heart disease and stroke, is worthy of our applause. New York City leaders have proven that Big Tobacco has no authority in the Big Apple.”

Sheelah Feinberg, the Executive Director of the NYC Coalition for a Smoke-Free City, said today’s measures will save lives and stop kids from smoking.

“We’re thrilled the Mayor and New York City Council have taken these historic and bold steps to reduce youth smoking rates. By raising the minimum sale age to 21, New York City is now the first in the country to have a minimum smoking age above 19,” said Feinberg. “Also, by creating a minimum price for a pack of cigarettes, eliminating cigarette discounts and raising penalties for the sale of untaxed cigarettes, we will protect honest, law-abiding retailers. We believe these innovative policies will prevent kids from smoking. These policies will help save lives and potentially millions of dollars in health care costs.”

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