

RESOLUTION
OF THE
TENNESSEE PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
REGARDING
INCREASING THE SALE AGE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS TO 21

WHEREAS, According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, over 80 percent of adult smokers smoked their first cigarette before they turned 18, and 95 percent of adult smokers begin smoking before they turn 21¹; and,

WHEREAS, the developing brains of young people are particularly susceptible to the addictive properties of nicotine², and tobacco industry documents show that those who start smoking by the age of 18 are almost twice as likely to become lifetime smokers as those who start after they turn 21³; and,

WHEREAS, Increasing the tobacco sales age to 21 will help counter the efforts by the tobacco companies to target young people at a critical time when many move from experimenting with tobacco to regular smoking; and,

WHEREAS, Research shows that children and adolescents often turn to older friends and classmates as sources of cigarettes and raising the tobacco age to 21 would reduce the likelihood that a high school student will be able to legally purchase tobacco products for other students and underage friends; and,

WHEREAS, A March 2015 report by the Institute of Medicine strongly concluded that raising the tobacco sale age to 21 will have a substantial positive impact on public health and save lives⁴; and,

WHEREAS, The same study found that raising the tobacco sale age will significantly reduce the number of adolescents and young adults who start smoking, reduce smoking-caused deaths and immediately improve the health of adolescents, young adults and young mothers who would be deterred from smoking; and,

WHEREAS, The same IOM study predicts that if the minimum age for the sale of tobacco products was raised to 21, over time, the adult smoking rate would decline by about 12 percent and smoking-related deaths would decline by ten percent; and,

WHEREAS, On May 4, 2016, California⁵ became the second state in the U.S., joining Hawaii⁶, to raise the tobacco sale age to 21; and,

WHEREAS, At least 170 localities in 13 states have also raised the tobacco age to 21, including New York City, Chicago, Cleveland and both Kansas Cities and statewide legislation to do so is also being considered in several other states; and,

WHEREAS, Three-quarters of U.S. adults favor raising the minimum legal sale age for tobacco products to 21, including seven in ten smokers⁷; and,

WHEREAS, About 580 young persons under the age of 18 become regular smokers each day and one in three will eventually die as a result;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Tennessee Public Health Association strongly recommends we work with the Tennessee General Assembly to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco use at an early age by enacting legislation that increases the age for the sale of tobacco to 21 years in Tennessee; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be furnished to members of the Tennessee General Assembly and that a copy of this resolution be spread upon the minutes of the Association.

Paul Erwin, MD DrPH
President

Doris G. Spain
Executive Director

¹ Calculated by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids based on data in the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2013), <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUHresultsPDFWHTML2013/Web/NSDUHresults2013.pdf>.

² Angelica M. Morales et al., *Cigarette Exposure, Dependence, and Craving Are Related to Insula Thickness in Young Adult Smokers*, 39 NEUROPSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY 1816 (2014), <http://www.nature.com/npp/journal/v39/n8/full/npp201448a.html>.

³ *Estimated Change in Industry Trend Following Federal Excise Tax Increase*, LEGACY TOBACCO DOCUMENTS LIBRARY (Sept. 10, 1982), at 2, <http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/tib23d00;jsessionid=211D4CCF0DBD25F9DC2C9BB025239484.tobacco03>

⁴ INST. OF MED., *Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products* (2015), <http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2015/TobaccoMinimumAgeReport.aspx>.

⁵ *Tobacco 21 Cities*, TOBACCO21.ORG (Apr. 2015), <http://tobacco21.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Tobacco-21-Cities-new1.pdf>.

⁶ HAW. REV. STAT. § 709-908 (2015) (effective Jan. 1, 2016).

⁷ Brian A. King et al., *Attitudes Toward Raising the Minimum Age of Sale for Tobacco Among U.S. Adults*, 49 (4) AM. J. PREVENTATIVE MED. 583, 583 (2015).