

### TALKING TOBACCO

provides information, discussion, and resources on activities, strategies, efforts, and emerging issues and products in tobacco control.



## COMMUNITY STRATEGIES AND POLICIES THAT DECREASE TOBACCO USE AND EXPOSURE

A person's daily environment often supports their social norms: they believe what they live. Community strategies targeting risky social norms can influence behavior change that leads to a decrease in tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke. Local and state policies, regulations, and laws that complement, enforce, and promote behavior-changing strategies are even more effective to drive norm change.

Tobacco control advocates can address the gaps in tobacco prevention regulations by educating and advocating for changes at the local level that support behavior and social norm change and protect citizens from the harmful effects of tobacco use and exposure.

**Strategies and policies** that support tobacco use prevention and control include:

- implementing tobacco free policies in all campuses and workplaces, multi-unit housing complexes and open spaces;
- limiting and reducing the number of tobacco retailer outlets within an area;
- limiting and/or banning tobacco product advertisements;
- banning tobacco industry sponsorship of events and programs;
- banning self service displays of all tobacco products;
- requiring that health warnings and quit information be posted in establishments where tobacco products are sold;
- increasing the minimum age to purchase tobacco products.

### ADOPTING TOBACCO FREE ENVIRONMENTS

Tobacco free environments protect the health and safety of the community. No level of exposure to secondhand smoke is safe. Adopting tobacco free policies/ordinances in all workplaces, multi-unit housing, college/school campuses, parks, playgrounds, sport fields, beaches, fairs, bus stops, and outside common areas and venues all help to promote healthy communities. These policies/ordinances protect citizens from exposure to tobacco smoke and establish community norms where the public expects tobacco free environments. Adopted policies/ordinances include the rationale for the policy, specifics about covered areas, prohibits the use of any form of tobacco, includes vaping, and defines enforcement measures.

### LIMITING AND REDUCING THE NUMBER OF TOBACCO RETAILER OUTLETS

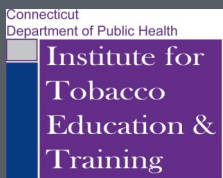
The presence of tobacco retail outlets is unrestricted in most communities which makes tobacco products easily accessible. Studies show that greater density of tobacco retail outlets is related to increased tobacco use by both youth and adults. (Center for Public Health Systems Science) Reducing the number of outlets and restricting their location can assist in the reduction of tobacco use. This can be done by capping the number of retailers, limiting the number of retailers based on population density, prohibiting tobacco sales within a specific distance of places such as schools, barring sales in certain



**LEAD BY EXAMPLE.  
BE TOBACCO FREE.**

TOBACCO USE PREVENTION & CONTROL

CT Dept. of Public Health  
Tobacco Control Program  
410 Capitol Avenue  
MS #11 HLS  
Hartford, CT 06134-0308  
860-509-8251  
dph tobacco@ct.gov  
[www.ct.gov/dph/tobacco](http://www.ct.gov/dph/tobacco)



zoning districts such as residential zones, and prohibiting new tobacco retailers from operating within a certain distance from an existing tobacco retailer. These policies/ordinances would decrease the number of tobacco retailers and lessen the impact of tobacco in the community.

#### **LIMITING AND/OR BANNING ADVERTISEMENTS**

Tobacco advertising has an impact on tobacco use: the greater the exposure, the more favorable attitude and the higher the rate of tobacco use. Tobacco ad designs often appeal to youth. These advertisements also affect tobacco users who are trying to quit by triggering their addiction, encouraging unplanned tobacco purchases. By implementing content-neutral advertising policies/ordinances, the effect of point of sale advertising can be diminished. “Content-neutral” means to restrict all types of advertising without focusing on content, not just tobacco advertising. This type of restriction has fewer legal challenges since it is not solely targeting tobacco advertising. One example is to limit the area in any window that can be covered by signs. Most communities already have ordinances regarding sign code; these policies/ordinances can be reviewed for further strengthening and/or enforcement.

#### **BANNING TOBACCO INDUSTRY SPONSORSHIPS**

The World Health Organization reports that bans on advertising, promotion and sponsorship are an effective way to reduce tobacco consumption, with countries that have already introduced bans showing an average reduction of 7% in tobacco consumption. Research shows that about one third of youth experimentation with tobacco occurs as a result of exposure to tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. The tobacco industry sponsors local school program curriculums, research, events and activities. Banning tobacco company sponsorships of events, venues, activities and programs in the community including e-cigarette sponsorships decreases industry influence and promotes tobacco free social norms.

#### **BANNING SELF SERVICE DISPLAYS**

Current federal laws prohibit self service displays for cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products. These products must be stored behind the counter of the retail outlet and a store employee must hand them to the customer for purchase. These regulations do not extend to other tobacco products, which provides open viewing and easy access to them. Product displays are used to encourage the belief that tobacco use is popular, enhance brand imaging, encourage impulse purchases, and undermine cessation attempts. Policies that ban self service displays of all tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems, complement federal requirements.

#### **POSTING HEALTH WARNINGS AND QUIT INFORMATION**

Tobacco companies use the retail setting as a means to advertise products. To counter this, policies can require health warning and quitting information such as the CT Quitline number be posted in establishments where tobacco is sold and consumed, including hookah, vaping and cigar lounges. Studies have shown that there are still many misunderstandings about the risks of tobacco products, especially newer products such as e-cigarettes and hookah. Posting prevention and cessation messages increases awareness of cessation services and of the health concerns associated with these products.

#### **MINIMUM PURCHASE AGE**

Most tobacco users begin using before the age of 18, and many smokers transition to regular, daily use between the ages of 18 and 21. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) reports 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 as well as their children.” The IOM predicts that by increasing the minimum age to 21, over time, the adult smoking rate would decline by about 12% and smoking-related deaths would decline by 10%. A policy/ordinance that increases the tobacco minimum purchase age can assist in reducing tobacco use initiation.

The Tobacco Program has tool kits, model policy language, resources and experience to help communities. Contact us at [dphtobacco@ct.gov](mailto:dphtobacco@ct.gov) or 860-509-8251. *As with any policy work, seek legal advice to lessen the likelihood of legal challenges.*