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- Boston prohibits pharmacies and college campuses from selling cigarettes, requires all smoking lounges to close their doors within 10 years
- “Liquid Smoking” herbal drink released globally in 2009
- Please contact Betsy Brock with questions or comments: 651-646-3005 or [bb@ansrnmn.org](mailto:bb@ansrnmn.org)

### Phillip Morris USA Attempts to Boost Sales of Copenhagen and Skoal in 2009

From February 1 – March 28, 2009 the prices of UST’s Copenhagen and Skoal moist were both reduced by \$1. The price reduction was part of a special price promotion (SPP).

The Phillip Morris USA sales force were responsible for enforcing and promoting the SPP with tobacco vendors. Phillip Morris USA/ Altria aquired UST in late 2008. In order to acquire the SPP promotional allowance, tobacco vendors were required to reduce the price of Copenhagen and Skoal products by at least \$1 for the entirety of the SPP period and maintain exterior and interior Copenhagen and Skoal signage.

This Copenhagen and Skoal SPP is part of an overall strategy to increase the market share of these products, which have lost share to Conwood’s Grizzly product. Reynolds

American/ Conwood is responding to the UST SPP by introducing two new flavors of Grizzly (straight and mint) and giving away free lighters with each Grizzly purchase, which is slightly odd given that Grizzly is a smokeless product.

Meanwhile, RJ Reynolds is flooding the market with free cans of Camel SNUS in an effort to capture smokeless tobacco sales. Despite all of the promotion that Camel has done around the product, SNUS does not appear to be catching on in a big way. ♦



Source: Snus-News Blog: <http://snus-news.blogspot.com/> (3/15/09)



### NY State Debates Increasing Tobacco Licensing Fees Substantially

New York state is currently considering a substantial increase in fees associated with holding a license to sell tobacco. Currently, it costs tobacco vendors \$100 each year to purchase a tobacco license. If a fee increase is approved, it could cost as much as \$5,000 per year to sell tobacco. Licensing fees would be based on annual sales. For stores with less than \$1 million in sales, the new license fee would be \$1,000 per year. For those stores with annual sales between \$1-\$10 million, the new fee would be \$2,500 per year. Finally, for those stores with more than \$10 million in sales, the new fee would be \$5,000 per year. NY Governor

Paterson’s budget office estimates that these new fees would result in a 40% reduction of total tobacco vendors in New York state. The New York Association of Convenience Stores is firmly opposed to proposed changes, which they call “obscene” and “outrageous.” In response, Russell Sciandra, director of the Center for Tobacco Free New York had this to say: “You’re selling a product that kills people. You should pay a significant license fee.” ♦

Source: Convenience Store News, 3/4/09; NY Daily News, 3/23/09

# Ramsey Tobacco Coalition

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On April 1, a committed group of youth testified in support of an ordinance to restrict the sale of faux tobacco products and toy lighters in St. Paul. From left to right: ANSR Board Member Chris Tholkes, Jeremiah Shaquille Carter, Justyn Sanders, Brian Bell, Shanicee Dillon, St. Paul Fire Marshall Steve Zaccard, Calitta Jones, Dante Banks, Roberta Perry. In front: Julio Rosario.

## St. Paul Restricts the Sale of Imitation Tobacco Products and Toy Lighters!

The Ramsey Tobacco Coalition (RTC), a program of the Association for Nonsmokers—Minnesota (ANSR), is currently working to reduce tobacco industry influence in Ramsey County, West St Paul, and South St. Paul. As part of this work, Coalition partners have been busy examining their local neighborhoods to find out what kind of in-store tobacco marketing and promotion is present.

During the assessment of the Summit-University neighborhood in St. Paul, RTC youth from River of Life Christian Church discovered an alarming number of in-store tobacco advertisements. They also discovered that many neighborhood stores were selling candy tobacco products (such as candy cigarettes and bubblegum chew) and lighters that looked liked toys. The youth from River of Life were outraged, especially because they had a 2 year-old child with them who was immediately drawn to the candy cigarettes and toy lighters. They felt that these products were directly targeting kids and it "just wasn't right" said Shanicee Dillon, a youth from River of Life. The 2 year-old who was with them "wanted the candy cigarettes and thought the lighter was a toy" said Justyn Sanders, another youth from River of Life.

Studies published in academic journals such as *BMJ*, *Pediatrics*, and *Preventive Medicine* indicate that these youth are right, these products are a problem. Candy cigarettes and other imitation tobacco products have been shown to predispose children to use tobacco later in life, by desensitizing children to the danger of tobacco use and promoting tobacco use as socially acceptable. The World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control also calls on countries to adopt legislation prohibiting the manufacture and sale of sweets, snacks, toys and other objects in the form of tobacco products which appeal to minors.

Toy lighters are also a problem. According to St. Paul Fire Marshall, Steve Zaccard, the theme of the 2008 "Arson Awareness Week" was "Toylike Lighters- Playing with Fire." About toy lighters, Zaccard said "They look like toys, and kids are going to play with them." Many adults and kids have been severely hurt by these novelty lighters.

After finding these problem products, the youth immediately brought the findings from their community assessment to St.

Paul Councilmember Melvin Carter III, who represents the ward where the youth did their assessment. Carter was excited to hear from these young adults and he encouraged the group to share their findings with the rest of the St. Paul City Council and the Mayor. The youth did just that. They also worked with Carter to draft an ordinance to restrict the sale of faux tobacco products and toy lighters in St. Paul. These young advocates also reached out to other Ramsey Tobacco Coalition partners, youth and adults, to build support. Youth from Mt. Airy Boys & Girls Club, West Side Boys & Girls Club, Jóvenes de Salud, and Hmong American Partnership all played a key role in advocating for the ordinance.

On April 1, 2009, more than 100 supporters showed up at the St. Paul City Council chambers for a public hearing. Youth from River of Life, Mt. Airy Boys & Girls Club, and West Side Boys and Girls Club testified in support of the ordinance that would restrict the sale of faux tobacco products and toy lighters. ANSR board member Chris Tholkes and St. Paul Fire Marshall Steve Zaccard also testified in favor of the ordinance (see the picture above). No one testified in opposition. One week later, on April 8, the City Council voted unanimously to pass the

ordinance.

So far, Canada, the United Kingdom, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Norway, Thailand and Australia have all passed laws prohibiting the sale of candy tobacco products. Additionally, several national retail chains such as Conoco-Phillips, CVS, Exxon-Mobil and Wal-Mart have all voluntarily agreed not to sell imitation tobacco products. However, St. Paul is believed to be the first place in the United States to restrict the sale of faux tobacco products. The European Union, Maine, and the cities of Highland CA, North Little Rock, AR, and Yakima, WA all restrict the sale of toy lighters.

RTC is very proud of all the time and effort these youth put into making their community a better place to live! The Coalition also commends the City of St. Paul for taking a stand for health.

**Thank you, St. Paul City Council! ♦**

Sources:

1. JD Klein et al. / *Pediatrics*: 89 (1992) 27-31.
2. JD Klein et al. / *Preventive Medicine* 45 (2007) 26-30.
3. JD Klein & S St. Clair / *BMJ* 321 (2000) 362-365.