

THE ANSR

Association for Nonsmokers - Minnesota

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Minneapolis adopts restrictions on flavored tobacco

The Minneapolis City Council voted unanimously on July 10 to restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products, other than menthol, to adult-only tobacco shops.

The Council also increased the price of cigars to \$2.60 per stick. Four cities in Minnesota, including Maplewood, Bloomington, Saint Paul and Brooklyn Center, previously adopted policies that regulate the price of cheap cigars. However, no other Minnesota cities have restricted the sale of flavored tobacco products. Nationally, New York City and Providence, RI, have similar policies in place that served as a model for the Minneapolis ordinance.

The new policy means that only about 15 of the city's 400-plus tobacco vendors will be allowed to sell candy-flavored tobacco products. In order to sell these products, the stores must derive at least 90 percent of their revenue from tobacco and be adult-only at all times.

Council Members Blong Yang (Ward 5) and Cam Gordon (Ward 2) co-authored the ordinance in response to input from youth in the Minneapolis Youth Congress and the Breathe Free North program



ANSR staff photo

Council members Blong Yang and Cam Gordon, along with ANSR staff and volunteers and youth from Breathe Free North and Minneapolis Youth Congress and many other advocates, celebrate the passing of the Minneapolis flavored tobacco ordinance.

at NorthPoint Health & Wellness. The youth said these products are appealing to young people in their communities.

“We heard loud and clear from Minneapolis youth that flavored tobacco products are what most kids use when they start smoking,” Council Member Cam Gordon said. “We believe that limiting access to these products will help prevent youth from becoming addicted to

nicotine and dramatically improve the health of future generations.”

Opponents of the policy included convenience store owners and chains, such as Holiday, SuperAmerica, Bobby & Steve's, retailer associations, and Altria the company that makes Marlboro and Skoal. Proponents included health groups and groups who work with

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youth.

“This policy is an important step in the fight to reduce the harm caused by tobacco. These

changes will protect youth from lifelong addiction to tobacco and the associated health problems. We are proud of the Minneapolis City Council for showing leadership

and voting to protect the health of Minneapolis youth,” Betsy Brock, Director of Research at ANSR, said.

The policy takes effect on Jan. 1.

Maplewood increases cigar prices

The Maplewood City Council showed strong leadership in protecting the health and well-being of its residents on May 14 when the council voted unanimously to set a minimum price for single cigars at \$2.60 each. All cigars sold in packages of four or less must be priced at \$2.60 per stick.

Under the ordinance, a two-pack of cigars costs \$5.20 and a three-pack costs \$7.80, while four or more cigars cost at least \$10.40.

The ordinance sets a minimum age of 18 for anyone selling tobacco or tobacco-related products. The city did not previously have a minimum age requirement. Setting it at 18 helps eliminate peer pressure to sell. Falcon Heights also has a minimum age of seller but few cities nationwide have this requirement.

The use of electronic cigarettes in tobacco shops will be prohibited, but four existing businesses are



ANSR staff photo

Members of the Tartan High Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) group, as well as the Support our Schools group at John Glenn Middle School, joined with community advocates to support the ordinance changes.

grandfathered out of the new regulations. The city might discuss prohibiting the use of electronic cigarettes in all indoor public places at a later date.

Mayor Nora Slawik said she

voted in favor of the proposal in order to protect young people.

“These deadly and addictive products are far too accessible to young people,” Slawik said.

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“This ordinance will help keep tobacco out of the hands of kids. It will help prevent youth from experiencing the terrible health consequences of tobacco use.”

Students from Tartan High School’s Students Against Destructive Decisions and John Glenn Middle School’s Support Our Schools group were strong advocates for the proposal.

Councilmember Kathleen Juenemann said, “Young people came out, contacted us and asked us to help protect their peers.

“The young people reinforced to me what this ordinance is all about. Young people want to be protected, and we are the elected officials who need to protect them. It is the right thing to do.”

In raising the price of single cigars, Maplewood was the fourth Minnesota city to impose this

requirement. Brooklyn Center, Saint Paul and Bloomington also raised the price of the cheap, flavored cigars.

Before prices were raised, the cigars were available for as cheap as three for 89 cents.

“I am proud that Maplewood is leading the way to prevent young people from becoming addicted to tobacco,” Juenemann said.

The tobacco industry has a long history of targeting young people with cheap and flavored tobacco. Katie Engman, from the Ramsey Tobacco Coalition, said she is thrilled Maplewood is taking action to stop that.

“Raising the price of tobacco is one of the most effective methods to prevent tobacco use among young people,” Engman said. “Thank you to the students, community and council members for taking on this important issue.”

Lakeville, Jordan add e-cigarettes to clean indoor air

The City Councils for Lakeville and Jordan recently voted to include electronic cigarettes in the state clean indoor air act.

That pushes the number of cities that have included e-cigarettes in the clean indoor act to 20. There are nine counties that have also done this.

This means e-cigarettes will be treated the same as conventional cigarettes and are prohibited anywhere cigarettes are prohibited, such as work places, bars and restaurants.

Garage sale continues to be huge success

Thanks to everyone who supported ANSR’s 32nd annual plant and garage sale. The sale was once again a success, providing the organization with funds to address needs not covered under grants.

The sale raised almost \$6,000 as visitors kept up a steady stream of traffic over the two days.

Now who wants to buy a full-blown Hawaiian hula skirt?



ANSR staff photo

Customers lined up before the sale kicked off and kept up a steady pace both days.

Advocates talk to legislators at ClearWay Day at Capitol

ANSR staff worked with a large number of advocates for the ClearWay Minnesota 2015 Day at the Capitol on April 29.

The day was about learning and advocacy for everyone who attended.

On hand for the day were Henry Sibley High ALMAS (Anglos Latinos Motivated to Succeed), Tartan High's SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), Aurora St. Anthony's Vision in Living Life: Change is Possible, the LAAMPP (Leadership and Advocacy Institute to Advance Minnesota's Parity for Priority Populations) Policy Champs, Southside Urban Coalition, NorthPoint's Breathe Free North and Hamline law students.

Advocates spent the morning learning about statewide tobacco issues and preparing for meetings with legislators. In the afternoon, they spoke individually with their legislators about tobacco-related issues.

Advocates educated their legislators on three issues:

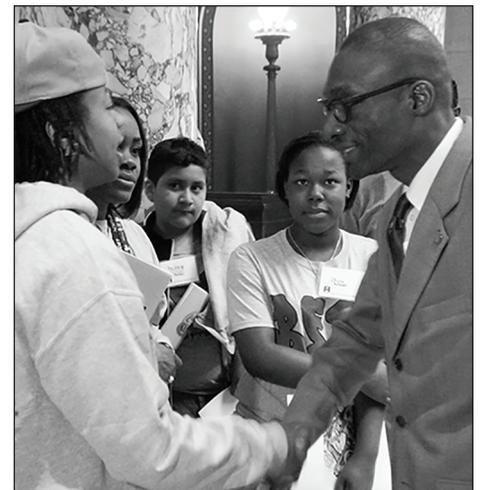
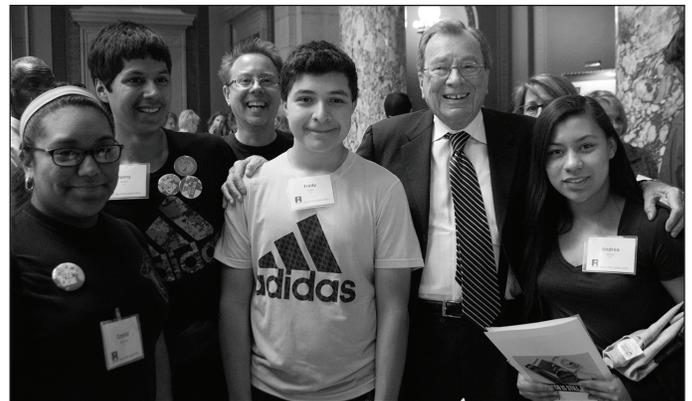
- Regulating electronic cigarettes and adding them to clean indoor air ordinances,
- How the tobacco industry targets youth and minorities with flavored and menthol products,
- Keeping cigarette taxes high to keep youth from starting smoking and encourage smokers to quit.



ANSR staff photos

Youth from Aurora St. Anthony's Vision in Living Life program speak about tobacco-related issues with Sen. Fong Hawj.

At right, members of the ALMAS met with Sen. James Metzen. Below right, Breathe Free North youth speak with Sen. Bobby Joe Champion. Bottom, members of the Tartan High SADD group met with Sen. Karin Housley.



LAAMPP concludes successful year

The first year of ANSR's coordination of the Policy Champions project has ended.

The Policy Champions are alumni from the Leadership and Advocacy Institute to Advance Minnesota's Parity for Priority Populations (LAAMPP) program who are dedicated to eliminating tobacco-related health disparities among diverse communities. Eight Policy Champions joined the team this year to advocate for strong tobacco prevention policies at the state and local level.

The Policy Champions built relationships with their legislators and worked collaboratively with the Raise it For Health Coalition to maintain and defend the tobacco tax at the state capitol. The group also joined forces with the Safety Net Provider Coalition to advance a bill related to race, ethnicity, and language data collection and risk adjustment. At the municipal level, Policy Champions advanced



ANSR staff photo

Members of the LAAMPP team wrote letters to the editor, wrote letters of support to elected officials and also testified at public hearings in support of tobacco regulations.

initiatives to prohibit the use of electronic cigarettes in public places, restrict the sale of flavored tobacco, and increase the price of cheap cigars. Policy Champions attended regular meetings and training sessions hosted by ANSR.

The Policy Champions made their voices heard. An estimated 180 letters of support and thanks were sent to elected officials and

five Policy Champions testified at hearings. Policy Champions had more than 25 meetings and phone calls with elected officials. Eleven news articles or letters to the editor were submitted, of which six were published.

The ANSR team is gearing up for another great year with returning and new Policy Champions to begin in October.

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ANSR participates in community discussions on menthol

About 55 St. Paul African American community leaders, youth, public health professionals and interested community members gathered for a Menthol Community Conversation on June 17.

National experts from the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council presented to the group about the deliberate targeting of the African American community by tobacco companies using menthol. They presented information about what other communities have done to reduce the impact of menthol on their communities.

The meetings' intent was to raise awareness about menthol and its impact on St. Paul's African American community.

The St. Paul meeting was one of six meetings held that week across the Metro.



ANSR staff photo

Rep. Rena Moran, left, and Sen. Jeff Hayden helped pass a bill funding a program focused on menthol in the African American community.

Ramsey Tobacco Coalition and our partners at Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation coordinated and hosted the event. Youth from Vision In Living Life: Change is Possible performed a skit to the audience to introduce the Rondo neighborhood

and dramatize its history.

Those in attendance learned how the tobacco industry has strategically targeted African American communities with menthol, the devastating effect, and what can be done to put an end to the harms.