



Association for Nonsmokers - Minnesota

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ANSR staff photo

Advocates celebrate after Saint Louis Park restricts the sale of all e-cigarettes in the city.

Saint Louis Park bans all e-cigarettes, considers restricting menthol

The city of Saint Louis Park, one of the early adopters of Tobacco 21 and restricting the sale of flavored tobacco, recently worked to restrict the sale of all electronic cigarettes.

On Jan. 6, the city council again took comments from the community. Despite some opposition from the businesses, the council passed a ban of all e-cigarette sales in the city.

This was the second hearing the council had. The first was in December, and number of advocates testified.

Additionally, the city council is considering removing the exemption for menthol flavored tobacco products. Work continues in that important area with ANSR and NorthPoint Health & Wellness Inc., collaborating.

Annual sale to be plants only

You'll read more about how ANSR is dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic elsewhere in this newsletter, but one thing it has impacted is our annual plant and garage sale.

To help protect people, ANSR has made the tough decision to limit this year's sale to plants only. There will be no garage sale items available. That said, we still need your support for our 37th Annual ANSR Plant Sale.

The sale will be on May 15-16, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. each day at 1647 Laurel Ave., Saint Paul.

Also, as has been the case previously, the plants will be available before the sale as part of an honor system beginning on Monday before the sale. So starting May 11, anyone can stop by, pick out their plants and leave payment in the dropbox outside.

If you have any questions, please call 651-646-3005 and leave a message.



ANSR staff photo

Advocates in Hastings give a thumbs up after the city council passed Tobacco 21 in March.

Hastings, Lakeville pass T21

Hastings and Lakeville each joined the Tobacco 21 movement in early March under the guidance of ANSR sister organization, Tobacco-Free Alliance.

With e-cigarette use among youth continuing to rise, communities in Minnesota are working to combat what the U.S. Surgeon General has called an “epidemic.” Survey results released in October showed an alarming jump in the rate of teens vaping in Minnesota. According to the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey, one in

four Minnesota 11th graders reported using an e-cigarette in the past 30 days.

Hastings resident Gail Conzemius testified about what she sees from young 18- and 19-year-olds on the college campus where she works and thanked the council for their diligence.

“Raising the sales age to 21 to purchase devices like these from tobacco retailers in our community will have a major impact on youth access,” Conzemius said.

A high school student

testified about how easy it is to get products from older students and about her concern for her peers becoming addicted to nicotine.

“I’m watching my peers becoming addicted to nicotine because vapes are so easy to get” the student said. “Raising the sales age to 21 takes away the connection between the 18-year-old high school students who are buying and then selling them to younger kids. This ordinance is extremely important.”

ANSR deals with Covid-19

Covid-19 has hit ANSR hard, but we are hanging in there. However, our work has changed. As of this writing, staff are mostly working from home but looking forward to when many of us will be able to return to our offices.

Like most organizations, we are becoming adept at doing video calls and holding remote meetings. Our work with cities and the legislature has slowed, but we continue to reach out to decisionmakers via e-mail and video conference. Everything is moving more slowly.

There is still activity in cities to adopt T21 and flavored policies, so if there is an ordinance bubbling up in your city we will be in touch with you to provide letters of support or to ‘attend’ an on-line meeting.

Abe Lincoln said, “And this too, shall pass.” He was in a different war but right. It will take some time, but this will pass.

—ANSR president Jeanne Weigum



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For more information, contact ANSR at:

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ANSR staff photo

Advocate Gene Nichols, who has worked on numerous campaigns in the Metro to restrict the sale of all flavored tobacco products, speaks to a group of potential advocates in Moorhead.

ANSR educates advocates

ANSR's Chris Turner and advocate Gene Nichols conducted a pair of educational presentations in Moorhead in March.

The city of Moorhead is considering restricting the sale of all flavored tobacco products, so ANSR, as part of its ClearWay Technical Assistance grant, presented on the successful campaigns in the Twin Cities to a diverse audience to help PartnerSHIP4Health build a diverse advocate base. There were two presentations: a dinner on March 10 to diverse grasstops leaders and a Lunch&Learn on March 11 with public health advocates.

DON'T DISCOUNT MY LIFE CAMPAIGN

ANSR off and running with new education campaign

Price is the most important factor in adults stopping smoking or cutting back and keeping kids from ever starting.

ANSR knows that, and so do the tobacco companies. That is why the tobacco companies send legions of lobbyists to the Capitol every time we try to increase the tobacco tax. It is also why they spend the vast majority of their marketing budget on various types of price discounts.

People love bargains. Most of us can think of things we bought even though they didn't quite

fit or it was something we wouldn't ordinarily use because it was a bargain. You probably have a pair of shoes in your closet you have never worn but got such a good deal on them, you couldn't pass them up. It is one thing when a 'steal of a deal' leads us to buy a pair of shoes we don't need and don't really even want. It is quite another thing when that bargain leads someone to relapse after they have managed to quit smoking.

The tobacco industry discounts prices with coupons and in-store promotions such as buy

one, get one. To keep the industry from this type of predatory marketing ANSR is beginning work on preventing coupon redemption and in-store discounts and setting a minimum price on cigarettes and smoke-less tobacco.

These regulations will impact both traditional cigarettes and smokeless, as well as the newer e-cigarette products. We have a new campaign called Don't Discount My Life.

To see a short video and get additional information go to www.dontdiscountmylife.org



Andy Berndt/For ANSR

Don't Discount My Life is a new campaign to educate people on tobacco industry targeted marketing.

Live Smoke Free Hosts Workshop in Dakota Co.

Live Smoke Free teamed up with Dakota County Public Health Department to host a “Hot Topics in Smoke-Free Housing” Workshop for property owners and managers on March 12, 2020.

The special event drew in 39 workshop participants who heard from special guest speakers from American Family Insurance, the Dakota County Community Development Agency, and the South Metro Fire Department. Topics included e-cigarettes, fire risk, tips for policy compliance, and insurance discounts for smoke-free housing. The success of this event is a sign of the strong momentum for smoke-free housing in Dakota County, where an estimated 50 percent-plus of multi-unit housing properties are smoke free.

LSF educates about COVID-19

With many Minnesotans spending increased amounts of time in their homes to prevent the spread of COVID-19, clean indoor air and smoking cessation are more important now than ever. There is a potential increased risk for smokers or e-cigarette users who contract COVID-19. Experts suggest that secondhand smoke exposure could also increase the risk for COVID-19 infection. That’s why Live Smoke Free has been working



ANSR staff

Live Smoke Free program director Kara Skahen talks to property managers and owners in Dakota County.

hard to promote Quit Partner, Minnesota’s new smoking cessation program (1-800-QUIT-NOW, www.QuitPartnerMN.com). Quit Partner offers personalized coaching, email and text support, educational materials, and quit medication (nicotine patches, gum or lozenges) delivered by mail.

Live Smoke Free is ramping up efforts to make sure property owners, managers, and renters know that Minnesotans looking to quit nicotine and improve their health during the COVID-19 outbreak don’t have to go it alone.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation approves no-cost extension

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation approved a no-cost grant

extension for Live Smoke Free’s Clean Air for All: the Smoke-Free Public Housing Project.

This extension enables Live Smoke Free to continue partnerships with the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials and the Public Health Law Center to engage and assist public housing agencies across the country with the implementation and maintenance of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Smoke-Free Public Housing Rule.

Over the course of the next year, Live Smoke Free will conduct outreach and training for PHAs and their residents.

They will also work to convert key resources to online, interactive formats to make tools more accessible and sustainable.

GiveAtHomeMN 2020

ANSR participated in GiveMN's GiveAtHomeMN fundraiser in early May. If you missed it, don’t worry, you can give any day of the year by visiting us at: www.ansrmn.org/support-ansrmn



ANSR helps facilitate advocate training

Earlier this year, ANSR, the American Heart Association, the Twin Cities Medical Society and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network hosted two tobacco advocacy trainings for constituents in Senate Districts 9 and 34.

These districts were selected as sites for trainings because the respective senators hold important leadership positions at the capitol, but have not traditionally been in favor of tobacco control bills. The goal was to recruit and train advocates from these districts, so they would be comfortable contacting their senators to express their support for measures such as Tobacco 21 and restrictions on flavored tobacco.

Hearing from people who live in their districts is important to decision makers.

Attendees came away from the trainings with information about the history of tobacco control in Minnesota and ways they could contact their senator via email, social media, phone or an in-person meeting.



Photos special to ANSR



Above, ANSR's Emily Anderson conducts a training in Little Falls for Senate District 34. At left, staff from ANSR, the American Heart Association, Twin Cities Medical Society and American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network facilitated an advocate training in Maple Grove for Senate District 9.

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ANSR Bulletin

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What's the data point? TURNING DATA INTO ACTION

This edition explores binge drinking and how prevention champions, like you, can take action.

What is binge drinking? On any one occasion...

five drinks for men four drinks for women

Binge drinking may be more likely to occur during weekends, sports events, special events, and holidays.

* According to a national study, young adolescent drinkers drink less alcohol overall, but engage in binge drinking at special events like prom and sporting events.

The Minnesota Prevention Resource Center (MPRC) has re-envisioned the "What's the [Data] Point?" newsletter, which explores topical issues in Minnesota substance abuse prevention through straightforward data, resources, and action steps. The latest issue covering binge drinking was very successful — MPRC received positive feedback from a number of state and nonprofit organizations.

Visit mnprc.org/news to learn more and sign up for MPRC newsletters!

COVID-19 and tobacco use

Portions excerpted from a letter to the editor submitted by Jeanne Weigum, Dr. Paul Pentel and Dr. Tom Kotke.

Minnesotans are facing a major health crisis in COVID-19 with Gov. Walz estimating more than 40 percent of the state's population might eventually get the disease. The World Health Organization and the American Lung Association have voiced concern about increased COVID-19 severity and poor outcomes in smokers, and have advised quitting smoking as a measure that might help smokers withstand COVID-19 infection.

Could quitting smoking help reduce the risk of getting COVID-19 or suffering severe

complications? The final answer isn't in and won't be until long after the worst of the pandemic is past. We can't wait for that. Quitting smoking rapidly improves lung and heart function and could help equip smokers to fight COVID-19 infection. Quitting prevents further damage to the lungs if chronic lung disease is already present. We know much less about vaping or using e-cigarettes but early animal studies suggest that it too may impair lung immune function.

Resources for quitting are available at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or www.QuitPartnerMN.com. or by talking to your health care provider.