



Association for Nonsmokers - Minnesota

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ANSR staff photo

Advocates celebrate after Hennepin County passes Tobacco 21 and restricts the sale of all flavored tobacco products.

## Hennepin County passes T21, restricts sale of all flavored tobacco products

The landscape for selling tobacco at the Minneapolis airport will look different in the future since the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners voted 6-1 on three significant changes to its tobacco ordinance on July 9.

The county, which is the tobacco licensing authority for the airport, as well as Mound, Greenfield, St. Bonifacius and Rockford, voted to raise the tobacco sales age to 21, restrict the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including menthol, and set

a minimum price of \$3 for cigars. The city of Rogers had previously been licensed by the county but voted in June to license its own tobacco retailers.

During a discussion of the proposed changes in the Health and Human Services Committee on June 25, Commissioner Angela Conley said, "I really appreciated the public hearing and all the impassioned pleas for us to really take action and movement on this considering how products are

severely advertised in certain stores in impacted communities, specifically black communities and indigenous communities."

Commissioner Jan Callison added, "Really what was decisive for me was getting the results of the Minnesota Student Survey for Mound, which is partly in my jurisdiction, and seeing that for example for suburban Hennepin County the overall rate for 30-days of any tobacco use is 19

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percent and in the Mound-Westonka District is 34 percent.”

Youth e-cigarette use has increased almost 50 percent in the past three years, according to the Minnesota Department of Health. Nearly one in five Minnesota High School

students currently uses e-cigarettes, according to the 2017 Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey. Approximately 95 percent of current adult smokers started before they turned 21. If youth don’t start smoking before the age of 21, they likely never will.

LaTrisha Vetaw, Health

Policy and Advocacy Manager at NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center, Inc., led the team of community members who advocated for the policy changes.

“Kudos to Hennepin County for raising the tobacco age to 21, restricting the sale of

flavored tobacco including menthol, and raising the price of cheap cigars,” she said. “These very important policies protect future generations from getting hooked on deadly tobacco. The commissioners’ leadership means so much to young people throughout the county.”



ANSR staff photo

It was smiles and thumbs up from advocates after the Minneapolis City Council voted on spacing restrictions for tobacco vendors.

## Minneapolis sets spacing minimum

Minneapolis city leaders took an important step to strengthen the city’s existing restriction on the sale of flavored tobacco. All new tobacco shops in Minneapolis now must be at least 2,000 feet from each another. This means there are fewer places in the city where it would be possible for a new tobacco shop to open and therefore fewer outlets for flavored and menthol tobacco. The new

requirement was part of the city’s response to the proliferation of stores “splitting” after the city council enacted ordinances in 2015 and 2017 that restricted the sale of flavored tobacco and menthol tobacco to adult-only tobacco shops.

The city’s restriction on menthol, in particular, was met with fervent pushback from the tobacco industry. In an effort to skirt the restriction,

several stores in Minneapolis “split” their businesses in two. The city imposed a moratorium in 2018 to study the situation, then city staff later presented several policy options to the council. The council passed the distance requirement in August. It will consider capping the total number of tobacco licenses in the future. Contact ANSR to get involved with this in 2020.



The ANSR Bulletin is published quarterly.

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ANSR staff photo

Advocates in Little Canada give a thumbs up after the city council voted to raise the tobacco sales age to 21 in May.

## Little Canada raises tobacco sales age

Little Canada council member Tom Fischer expressed support for raising the tobacco sales age, but he was adamant that his city shouldn't have to be taking the step.

"Both my parents passed away from cancers related from smoking," Fischer said during the May 8 council meeting. "I couldn't see across the room for smoke. I detest the idea of smoking. The Tobacco 21 group is amazing. This is 30-plus cities."

Fischer then abstained from voting to make his point as his council colleagues unanimously voted to raise the tobacco sales age in Little Canada to 21. Fischer firmly placed

the onus on the state of Minnesota to pass Tobacco 21 at the state level to protect not just youth in Little Canada but throughout the state.

"We've got 853 cities in our state. We need something bigger," Fischer said.

Local communities continue to raise the sales age even as the state legislature is mulling it over. A Tobacco 21 bill passed the floor of the House and was included in a large Health & Human Services Omnibus bill but was heard in only one committee in the Senate. It was discussed in the HHS conference committee.

Curtis Johnson, a Little Canada resident and member of the Roseville Area High School Board, testified in favor of raising the sales age two weeks ago and said he'd like to see it passed at the state level.

"As a resident, I'm happy the city has decided to do what's best for the children," Johnson said.

"This is something that's been brought forward as a valid state issue, but so many issues start at the local level. Little Canada has joined so many other cities. We need to protect your youth from these products. I look forward to seeing this as a state law."

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*Curtis Johnson, Little Canada resident and Roseville Area High School Board Member*



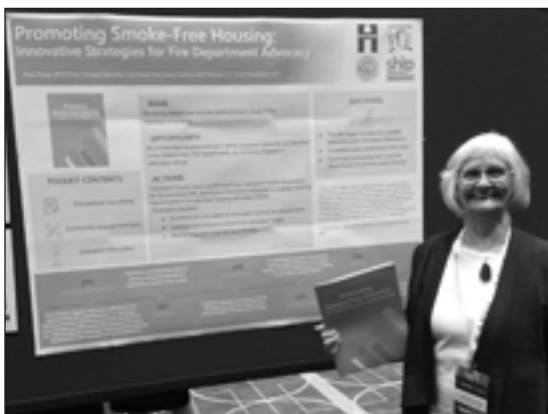
Chris Turner presents a poster on a media campaign.



Sylvia Amos and staff member Jack Ayim's poster on engaging the faith community.



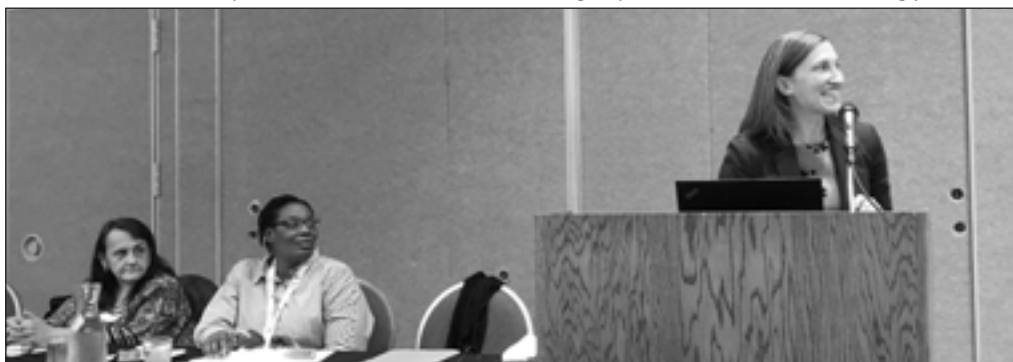
Jackie Siewert makes a presentation.



Rose Hauge's poster on smoke-free housing promotion.



Katie Engman presents on enforcement and point of sale restrictions.



Kara Skahan, at podium, leads the Live Smoke Free ancillary session.



Kara Skahan and Jackie Siewert with a poster on smoke-free policies.

## NCTOH 2019

The National Conference on Tobacco or Health, which is held every couple of years, was in Minneapolis this year. ANSR was well-represented in terms of attendance, presentations and posters. Staff members Katie Engman, Jackie Siewert and Kristen Ackert were all part of presentations. Also, Live Smoke Free, through their national Clean Air for All: The Smoke-Free Public Housing Project, hosted a National Conference on Tobacco or Health ancillary session called "One Year Later: Assessing the Implementation and Lessons Learned from Smoke-Free Public Housing." The interactive session with 75 attendees from throughout the country highlighted national efforts currently underway to support PHA staff and residents with smoke-free implementation and cessation, featured a panel of stakeholders who shared lessons learned, and concluded with small group discussion. The planning committee received excellent session feedback from attendees.



**Give to the Max Day** is on Thursday, Nov. 14. ANSR works hard to protect all Minnesotans from the harms of tobacco. To help us with this endeavor, make plans to donate. This is a great opportunity to help us continue our work on a statewide day of giving. You can mail a check to the address below or go online at [www.ansrmn.org/donate](http://www.ansrmn.org/donate) or directly at [www.givemn.org](http://www.givemn.org) and search for Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota.

## Mother Nature upends Sale

Rain is always a potential issue when it comes time for ANSR's Annual Plant & Garage Sale and 2019 was no different. Rain hit on Friday evening of the sale and forced the postponement of the second day of the sale. The sale was

put off for almost a month until June 14 for final conclusion. While this was not ideal, it meant ANSR was still able to sell many of the items that had been donated. For the two rain-interrupted days, ANSR tallied \$5,485 from the sale.

## Vaping epidemic, lung damage spurring action at all levels

The past few months have seen a lot of local action on the Tobacco 21 front, as well as a lot of outcry for action at the state and federal level. A lot of it is due to data showing increased youth usage rates (**See story on Page 6**).

Also, there has been a nationwide scare because of severe lung damage linked to vaping. As of Oct. 23, there were 1,600-plus cases in 49 states and 34 deaths lined to vaping. A large portion of it has been attributed to vaping cartridges with

THC, or Tetrahydrocannabinol, one of the main psychoactive ingredients in cannabis. However, not all the deaths were associated with THC, and many more are still being investigated. Several states banned flavored e-cigarettes in response, while almost all states, as well as the federal government, started looking for answers to both issues. Minnesota has seen three vaping-related issues and has 78 cases it is investigating, per the Department of Health

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# ANSR Bulletin

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# MN lawmakers work to combat state's youth tobacco epidemic

Bipartisan lawmakers from the House and Senate announced support for tobacco prevention policies to combat Minnesota's youth tobacco epidemic on Oct. 29.

Sen. Carla Nelson (R-Rochester) and Rep. Heather Edelsen (DFL-Edina) urged colleagues to pass a statewide Tobacco 21 bill in a morning press conference. Later in the day, members of the House DFL caucus announced a package of tobacco prevention proposals including Tobacco 21, clearing the market of flavored tobacco products, closing tobacco tax loopholes, ending online tobacco sales, and dedicating funding to preventing youth addiction.

These policies were supported by Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation, a statewide coalition of which ANSR is a part.

Data from the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey, which was released earlier this month, showed another jump in youth e-cigarette use. The survey found one in four 11th graders regularly uses e-cigarettes.

Kid-friendly flavors are a major reason for the rise in tobacco use. A recent national survey found that 70 percent of youth who use e-cigarettes do so specifically because of flavors. President Trump recently asked the FDA to remove flavored e-cigarettes from the marketplace, but the FDA has not yet followed through on that promise.

There are 13 Minnesota communities that have restricted the sale of flavored tobacco products, including 10 that have restricted the sale of menthol.

Prevention efforts are needed to counteract the aggressive and

predatory marketing of the tobacco industry. E-cigarette giant JUUL recently was found to be using marketing strategies including social media influencers, summer camps and school programs that targeted kids as young as eight years old.

In the House DFL event, Rep. Laurie Halverson (DFL-Eagan) said, "We have watched as Big Tobacco has addicted our kids with tried and true industry tactics, including cartoons, misleading health claims and enticing flavors. We can no longer take a wait-and-see approach as our kids are facing an epidemic of addiction to new nicotine products."

Marty Davis, CEO of Cambria, has joined the effort. Cambria recently launched a peer-to-peer campaign called "They Lied. We Know."

– ClearWay Minnesota