

# FACT SHEET

## TOBACCO 21



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The initiative to raise the tobacco purchase age from 18 to 21

### Current tobacco use trends are driving new prevention strategies

- In Illinois, 6,300 teens become new daily smokers each year.<sup>1</sup> In suburban Cook County, 29 percent of high school seniors use tobacco products.<sup>2</sup>
- While great strides have been made in tobacco prevention, declines in tobacco use rates have slowed and products like cigarillos, hookah, and e-cigarettes are now used at double the rate of cigarettes.<sup>2</sup>
- Reducing teens' access to tobacco products is a proven means to reduce current use and prevent initiation.

### The age of 21 is important for prevention

- 95 percent of smokers start before the age of 21.<sup>3</sup>
- The majority of underage tobacco users get their tobacco from a peer; however, 90 percent of those suppliers are themselves often under the age of 21.<sup>4</sup>
- Drawing the line at 21 gets legal tobacco purchasers out of high schoolers' social circles.

### Tobacco 21 saves lives and improves health

- The Institute of Medicine projects that Tobacco 21 could reduce overall smoking by 12 percent by the time today's teenagers become adults; the biggest declines in tobacco use would be seen among 15-17 year olds (25%) and 18-20 year olds (15%).<sup>5</sup>
- Tobacco 21 would immediately improve community health by reducing inflammation, improving immune function, and reducing premature births and SIDS.

### The economic impact of Tobacco 21

- Economists project that nationally, Tobacco 21 could save \$212 billion in medical costs.<sup>6</sup>
- Each year, tobacco use costs Illinois \$5.49 billion in health care costs and \$5.27 billion in lost productivity.<sup>1</sup>
- The impact of Tobacco 21 on retail sales would be minimal since the 18-21 year old age group only accounts for 2 percent of overall tobacco sales.<sup>7</sup>

### Tobacco 21 enjoys broad support across Illinois and the U.S., even from smokers!

- A 2015 CDC study found that 75 percent of adults support Tobacco 21, including 70 percent of current smokers.<sup>8</sup> A recent study also found that 68 percent of 18-24 year olds would support Tobacco 21.<sup>9</sup>
- More than 220 cities across 16 states, plus the states of California and Hawaii, have enacted Tobacco 21.<sup>10</sup>
- In Illinois, Tobacco 21 has already been adopted by Evanston, Chicago, Oak Park, Highland Park, Naperville, Deerfield and Maywood, and is being considered by dozens more communities.

## CITATIONS

<sup>1</sup> Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids. (2017). The Toll of Tobacco in Illinois. Available at [http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts\\_issues/toll\\_us/illinois](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/illinois).

<sup>2</sup> University of Illinois, Center for Prevention Research & Development. (2016). Illinois Youth Survey. Available at <https://iys.cprd.illinois.edu/>.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). Youth and Tobacco Use [fact sheet]. Available at [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/youth\\_data/tobacco\\_use/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/).

<sup>4</sup> Berman, M., Crane, R., Hemmerich, N. (2015). Running the Numbers - Raising the minimum tobacco sales age to 21 will reduce tobacco use and improve public health in Franklin County, Ohio. The Ohio State University, College of Public Health, Columbus, OH.

<sup>5</sup> Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. (2015) Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products. Available at [www.iom.edu/tobaccominimumage](http://www.iom.edu/tobaccominimumage).

<sup>6</sup> Counter Tobacco. (2015). Raising the Minimum Legal Sale Age to 21 [fact sheet]. Available at [www.countertobacco.org/raising-minimum-legal-sale-age-21](http://www.countertobacco.org/raising-minimum-legal-sale-age-21).

<sup>7</sup> Winickoff, J.P., Hartman, L., Chen, M.L., Gottlieb, M., Nabi, E., DiFranza, J. (2014). Minimum Retail Impact of Raising Tobacco Sales Age to 21. *Am J Pub Health*, 104(11): e18-e21.

<sup>8</sup> King, B.A., Jama, A.O., Marynak, K.L., Promoff, G.R. (2015). Attitudes toward raising the minimum age of sale for tobacco among U.S. adults. *Am J Prev Med*, 49(4):583-588.

<sup>9</sup> Morain, S.R., Winickoff, J.P., Mello, M.M. (2016). Have Tobacco 21 Laws Come of Age? *N Engl J Med*, 374: 1601-1604.

<sup>10</sup> Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids. (2017). States and Localities that have Raised the Minimum Legal Sale Age for Tobacco Products to 21. Available at [http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/content/what\\_we\\_do/state\\_local\\_issues/sales\\_21/states\\_localities\\_MLSA\\_21.pdf](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/content/what_we_do/state_local_issues/sales_21/states_localities_MLSA_21.pdf).

# TOBACCO 21

raises the age to purchase tobacco products

including e-cigarettes, hookah, etc.

FROM 18 TO 21

## PROJECTED HEALTH OUTCOMES

**25%**

decline in 15- to 17-year-olds starting to smoke

**12%**

overall drop in smoking prevalence

**10%**

reduction in smoking-related deaths

**12%**

decline in premature births

**16%**

drop in SIDS cases

## BUT IF YOUTH SMOKING RATES PERSIST...

**1 in 13**

Americans age 17 or younger will die early from a smoking-related illness



**230,000** Illinois teens alive today will die prematurely from smoking

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

Economists project that nationally, Tobacco 21 could save

**\$212 BILLION**

in medical costs.

Each year, tobacco use costs Illinois

**\$5.49 BILLION** in healthcare costs

**\$5.27 BILLION** in lost productivity

(That's **\$982** per household per year.)

## TEENAGE YEARS

ARE A **CRITICAL TIME** FOR TOBACCO PREVENTION



of smokers start before age 21

“Today’s teenager is tomorrow’s potential regular customer, and the overwhelming majority of smokers first begin to smoke **while still in their teens...**”

**Philip Morris executive** (1981)



of suburban Cook County high school seniors use tobacco products

**T21** gets legal tobacco purchasers out of teen social circles



of suppliers to teenage tobacco users are also under 21

## TO SUM UP

**TOBACCO 21** is being adopted by **hundreds of communities** and will ultimately **save millions** in healthcare costs, save lives, and immediately improve community health.