

## Raising the Tobacco and ENDS Purchase Age to 21

### OVERVIEW

Preventing youth smoking initiation is an important strategy to reducing tobacco-related diseases. Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), also called e-cigarettes or personal vaporizers (PV), present another way for smokers to ingest nicotine. Sold in fruit and candy-flavors, the products encourage smoking initiation by teenagers. The vast majority of people who become addicted to nicotine start using tobacco and ENDS products before the age of 21. Many high school students turn 18 (the legal age of tobacco/ENDS purchase in most states) during their senior year of high school and often purchase tobacco and ENDS products for younger students. As of August 2016, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has extended its tobacco regulating authority to include ENDS products, restricting sales to minors younger than 18.

The 2015 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report *Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products* notes that raising the minimum legal age of purchase of tobacco products would reduce youth smoking initiation, particularly among children ages 15 to 17, leading to substantial reductions in tobacco use, improve the health of Americans across lifespan, and save millions of lives.

### AAP POSITION

- The minimum age to purchase tobacco and electronic nicotine device systems (ENDS) should be increased to 21 years.
- Laws and regulations prohibiting the sale of tobacco and ENDS to minors should be vigorously enforced.
- Legislation to increase the minimum age of purchase can be implemented at the state and local government levels.
- Funding for enforcement activities can be provided from federal, state, or local revenues.
- Point-of-sale advertising of tobacco and ENDS products should be prohibited.

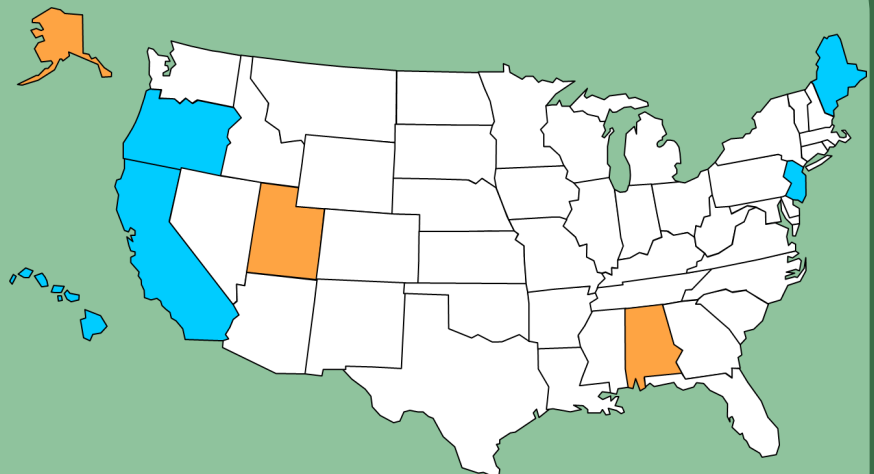
## FACTS

- According to a 2012 Surgeon General's Report, almost 1 in 4 high school seniors is a current smoker, 1 in 10 high school senior males is a smokeless tobacco user, and 1 in 5 high school senior males is a current cigar user.
- Cigarette smoking is responsible for more than 480,000 deaths per year in the US, including nearly 42,000 deaths resulting from secondhand smoke exposure. This is about 1 in 5 deaths annually, or 1,300 deaths every day.
- A 2015 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study showed that 75% of the American public, including 70% of current smokers, supported a minimum tobacco purchase age of 21.

## PROGRESS

- 3 states— laws banning sale of tobacco and ENDS products to youth younger than 19
- 5 states and DC— laws banning sale of tobacco and ENDS products to youth younger than 21

For information on current law or pending legislation in your state, please contact the AAP Division of State Government Affairs at [stgov@aap.org](mailto:stgov@aap.org).



## MORE

- [AAP Policy—Public Policy to Protect Children From Tobacco, Nicotine, and Tobacco Smoke](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2015/10/21/peds.2015-3109.full.pdf+html)—<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2015/10/21/peds.2015-3109.full.pdf+html>
- [AAP Policy—Clinical Practice Policy to Protect Children From Tobacco, Nicotine, and Tobacco Smoke](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2015/10/21/peds.2015-3108.full.pdf+html)—<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2015/10/21/peds.2015-3108.full.pdf+html>
- [AAP Julius B. Richmond Center of Excellence](http://www2.aap.org/richmondcenter/)—[www2.aap.org/richmondcenter/](http://www2.aap.org/richmondcenter/)
- [Tobacco21.org](http://www.tobacco21.org)—[www.tobacco21.org](http://www.tobacco21.org)
- [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org)—[www.tobaccofreekids.org](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org)
- [Institute of Medicine Report—Public Health Implications of Raising the Minimum Age of Legal Access to Tobacco Products](http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2015/)—<http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2015/>