



Reducing Youth Smoking in Greater Kansas City

The Problem:

- » 24.1% of Kansas high school students are current tobacco users. (*Nationwide Avg. 22.4%*)
- » 23.1% of Missouri high school students are current tobacco users.
- » 22% of Kansans are current cigarette smokers. (*Nationwide Avg. 21.2% - Ranked 31st*)
- » 25% of Missourians are current cigarette smokers. (*Ranked 43rd*)
- » Approximately 90% of adult smokers start before age 18.
- » The primary cigarette source for underage smokers is their 18 to 20 year old peers.
- » Adolescent brains are still developing and are uniquely sensitive to nicotine addiction.
- » While youth cigarette smoking in our community and across the county is slowly declining, e-cigarette use among youth has more than doubled in recent years.

Our Proposal:

- » **Increase the minimum age of sale and purchase of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vapor products and paraphernalia to 21.**

The Health Impact:

- » A March 2015 Institute of Medicine study estimated that Tobacco 21 would reduce smoking among 15-17 year old by 25% and among 18-20 year olds by 15%.
- » Data from Needham, MA shows a nearly 50% reduction in tobacco use by teens since their Tobacco 21 policy change in 2005. This decrease significantly exceeded reductions in peer communities over the same amount of time.
- » Fewer smokers before 18 lead to fewer long-term smokers reducing overall smoking rates by an estimated 12%.

The Business Impact:

- » A recent study from The Ohio State University estimated that the average smoker costs a private employer \$5,218 per year in excess costs related to their smoking.
- » The American Journal of Public Health - "*Retail Impact of Tobacco Sales Age to 21 Years*" - estimated only a 2% decrease in annual total tobacco sales due to Tobacco 21.

Supporters:

- » 75% of U.S. adults, including 70% of current smokers.
- » 94 cities in seven states and the entire state of Hawaii have passed Tobacco 21.
- » More than 100 organizations throughout the KC metro area.