THE TOLL OF TOBACCO IN TEXAS

Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable disease and premature death in Texas.

Over 3 million Texas adults smoke cigarettes\(^1\), and most smokers (95 percent) took their first puff well before age 21.\(^2\) Youth tobacco use increases risk of nicotine addiction, and continued use through adulthood causes lung cancer, coronary heart disease, diabetes, and early death.\(^3\)

TEXAS YOUTH USE TOBACCO

New electronic vapor products such as JUULs, e-cigarettes, and vape pens — with sweet, candy-like flavors — continue to entice youth.

41% of high school students have tried vapor products\(^4\) 30% of high school students have tried cigarettes\(^4\)

Approximately 10,400 youth in Texas under the age of 18 become new smokers annually. Prevention strategies, such as raising the minimum legal age for purchasing tobacco products to 21, will help prevent or delay youth tobacco use by lowering the likelihood of youth being in the same social networks as those who can legally purchase tobacco.\(^5\) Nearly 70 percent of voters favor raising the minimum legal age to 21,\(^6\) and 68 percent want increased funding for tobacco prevention programs in Texas.\(^3\)

TEXANS OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORT RAISING THE TOBACCO AGE TO 21

Source: ACS CAN Texas Cancer Poll, conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, Dec. 16-19, 2018

THE TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH COALITION RECOMMENDS:

1. Support SB 21, and support and sign on as coauthor to HB 749 to raise the age of sale for tobacco products to 21, including all electronic smoking devices and future tobacco-related products.

2. Restore Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) tobacco-use prevention funding to 2016-17 levels, $16.4 million in state funds for the biennium.

3. Support and sign on as coauthor to HJR 12 and HB 39, and support HB 438 to sustain the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas.

4. Eliminate the budget rider prohibiting DSHS from using paid media to combat tobacco industry marketing.
The Texas Public Health Coalition is a coalition of health professional organizations and health-focused organizations dedicated to disease prevention and health promotion.

### MEMBERS

- Alzheimer’s Association
- American Cancer Society
- Cancer Action Network
- American Heart Association
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas
- Children’s Hospital Association of Texas
- The Cooper Institute
- Harris County Public Health
- The Immunization Partnership
- March of Dimes
- Methodist Healthcare Ministries
- Texas Academy of Family Physicians
- Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Texas Academy of Physician Assistants
- Texas Association of City & County Health Officials
- Texas Association of Community Health Centers
- Texas eHealth Alliance
- Texas Health Institute
- Texas Hospital Association
- Texas Medical Association
- Texas Nurses Association
- Texas Oral Health Coalition, Inc.
- Texas Osteopathic Medical Association
- Texas Pediatric Society
- Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Texas Public Health Association
- Texas Renal Coalition
- Texas School Nurses Organization
- Texas State Alliance of YMCAs
- United Ways of Texas

### REFERENCES


### RESOURCES

- CANCER PREVENTION AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS
- MD ANDERSON CANCER CENTER
- MICHAEL AND SUSAN DELL CENTER FOR HEALTHY LIVING
- PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY TEXAS
- TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES