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Health Advocates: We Must Build on Wisconsin's Successful Smoke Free Air Law

Wisconsin celebrates nine years of clean indoor air

MADISON, Wis. (July 2, 2019) – Celebrating nine years since Wisconsin implemented its Smoke Free Air law on July 5th, 2010, public health advocates say it's time to take the next step in tobacco prevention policies. As cigarette smoking rates fall in Wisconsin, the next phase of tobacco products threatens the tobacco endgame – the path to ending tobacco use and nicotine addiction in the U.S.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services reports the adult smoking rate has fallen to 16% and the youth smoking rate is below 5%. However, the youth e-cigarette rate skyrocketed 154% from 2014 to 2018. When inhaled, e-cigarettes produce an aerosol that is filled with cancer-causing chemicals, heavy metals, formaldehyde and nicotine. Nicotine is an extremely dangerous and addictive substance that harms adolescent brain development. E-cigarettes are extremely addictive. Some liquid e-cigarette pods contain as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes.

There is so much more work to be done to keep these dangerous products out of youth's hands. Luckily, public health advocates, like the **American Heart Association**, **American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network** and the **American Lung Association**, are working together in Wisconsin on proven strategies that reduce youth e-cigarette use:

- Expand Wisconsin's already successful clean indoor air law to include e-cigarettes.
- Raise the sales age of all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, from 18 to 21 years old.
- Enact a strong excise tax on e-cigarette products that is comparable to Wisconsin's current cigarette and other tobacco products tax.
- Increase funding for Wisconsin's tobacco prevention and control program, which includes the Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line.

"We can and must do better for our Wisconsin youth when it comes to protecting them from a dangerous nicotine addiction," said Nicole Hudzinski, government relations director at the American Heart Association. "Nicotine addiction poses both dangerous short and long-term effects on a teenager's heart, brain and lungs. Let's follow our state's motto and take a step forward in the next stage of tobacco and e-cigarette prevention policies."

"The evidence is clear. When Wisconsin enacted strong legislation on cigarettes, smoking rates went down among adults and youth," said Sara Sahli, government relations director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. "We need that same swift, comprehensive action on e-cigarettes to protect the health and lives of all Wisconsinites."

When the clean indoor air law was passed, Wisconsin's Tobacco Quit Line saw a spike in calls. This free cessation resource is still available to Wisconsin residents. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or if you are on Medicaid, talk to your doctor about the free help provided through the Medicaid Tobacco Cessation Benefit.

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About ACS CAN

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is making cancer a top priority for public officials and candidates at the federal, state and local levels. ACS CAN empowers advocates across the country to make their voices heard and influence evidence-based public policy change as well as legislative and regulatory solutions that will reduce the cancer burden. As the American Cancer Society's nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, ACS CAN is critical to the fight for a world without cancer. For more information, visit www.fightcancer.org.

About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. We are dedicated to ensuring equitable health in all communities. Through collaboration with numerous organizations, and powered by millions of volunteers, we fund innovative research, advocate for the public's health and share lifesaving resources. The Dallas-based organization has been a leading source of health information for nearly a century. Connect with us on heart.org, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.

About the American Lung Association

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through research, education and advocacy. The Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer, to improve the air we breathe, to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families, and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases. For more information about the American Lung Association, call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-685-4872) or visit www.lung.org.