



Clinton County Health Department

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“Working Together for a Healthier Community”

www.clintonhealth.org



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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News Release

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Health Benefits of Proposed Tobacco Legislation Lauded

Plattsburgh, NY. The Clinton County Health Department foresees significant health benefits associated with Governor Cuomo’s proposed legislation to curb the use of tobacco and e-cigarette products.

“Tobacco use remains the number one cause of preventable death in New York State, even after years of education and policy changes,” states Karen Derusha, Supervising Public Health Educator at the Clinton County Health Department. According to Ms. Derusha, the addictive component in tobacco, which is also found in most electronic cigarette products, leads those who smoke or use other nicotine containing products to continue use, even though the harms associated with them are well documented. “That’s why Governor Cuomo’s proposed legislation to raise the age of sale of tobacco products from 18 to 21 is being so well received in the Public Health community” she adds. She cites well known statistics, pointing out that approximately 96% of smokers begin before the age of 21; and that smokers frequently transition from experimentation to addiction between the ages of 18 and 21.

“The news is especially good for our area”, according to Ms. Derusha “While smoking rates in New York State have dropped, Clinton County and the North Country region have some of the highest smoking rates in the state. Added to that, the number of young people who are vaping, here and across the nation has exploded”. Vaping is the term used to describe the use of an electronic device to heat and inhale substances which very often contain nicotine. In New York State, use of e-cigarettes among youth 18 and under doubled between 2014 and 2016 (from 10.5 to 20.6). Statistics from the New York State Health Department’s Bureau of Tobacco Control put the vaping rate in New York State for all ages at twenty-seven percent (27%).

Public Health advocates believe that raising the age of sale will not only protect those between the ages of 18 and 21, but will also have an impact on access to tobacco products for younger teens. Youth often report that they get cigarettes from friends who are old enough to purchase under the current law. “Having friends who are 18 may be common for some younger teens, but they are less likely to associate closely and routinely with people over 21” stated Ms. Derusha.

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“Persons who have any physical mobility or other needs, call the telephone number above to arrange for accommodations”

The Health Department applauds other measures within the Governor’s proposed legislation. “As more and more pharmacies are expanding their role in the delivery of health care in our communities, ending the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies sends a positive health message. Tobacco products have no place in a health promotion setting” states Ms. Derusha. Health advocates have been in favor of the other components of the Governor’s legislation for many years. Tobacco display restrictions, banning flavored products, restricting discount strategies that reduce the effectiveness of high excise taxes, and licensing of sales, are all strategies that the health community has cited as effective in reducing the number of young people who initiate tobacco use. “Fewer tobacco users equates to fewer tobacco related deaths over time and that’s a good thing” stated Ms. Derusha.

About the Clinton County Health Department:

The Health Department is an accredited full service department serving the residents of Clinton County. The Health Department’s Mission is to improve and protect the health, well-being and environment of the people of Clinton County. Visit our website at www.clintonhealth.org or connect with us on Facebook (@clintonhealth), Twitter (@ClintonCountyHD), and Instagram (clintoncountyhealth).

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