

## **Minnesota Department of Health**

News Release

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### **New law protecting youth from tobacco products takes effect August 1**

A new state law protecting Minnesota youth from the harmful effects of tobacco products takes effect Aug. 1. The Tobacco Modernization and Compliance Act was passed by the 2010 Legislature and signed into law by Governor Pawlenty.

The new law applies existing state tobacco taxes and regulations to new smokeless tobacco products which attract young customers because they are low-cost. Specifically, the law:

- Expands the definition of tobacco products to include any product that contains tobacco and is intended for human consumption.
- Requires all tobacco products and tobacco-related devices to be sold behind the counter so they are not easily accessible to youth.
- Prevents the sale of new tobacco products and e-cigarettes to youth.

"Tobacco use continues to be the leading preventable cause of death in this country," said Minnesota Assistant Commissioner of Health Patricia Adams. "While cigarette smoking among Minnesota youth has declined since 2000, there has been no change in the percentage of students smoking cigars or little cigars or using smokeless tobacco. This new law will help young people avoid the harmful effects of tobacco by decreasing their access to today's new generation of tobacco products."

Adams added that the new law complements work being done through the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) to prevent tobacco use. SHIP was established in 2008 as part of the state's health reform law. Communities across the state are using SHIP grants to reduce chronic disease by decreasing the number of Minnesotans who use or are exposed to tobacco or who are obese or overweight.

"SHIP takes a new approach toward prevention by focusing on creating sustainable, systemic changes that make it easier for individuals to make healthy choices in their daily lives," Adams said. "The new Tobacco Modernization and Compliance Act is an example of the kind of systemic change that can lead to improved health across the state."

Counties and cities are responsible for enforcing the Tobacco Modernization and Compliance Act. For more information about the law, see <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/tpc/legal.html>.

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