

# SHIP supports local Tobacco 21 policies, helping to reduce youth commercial tobacco use

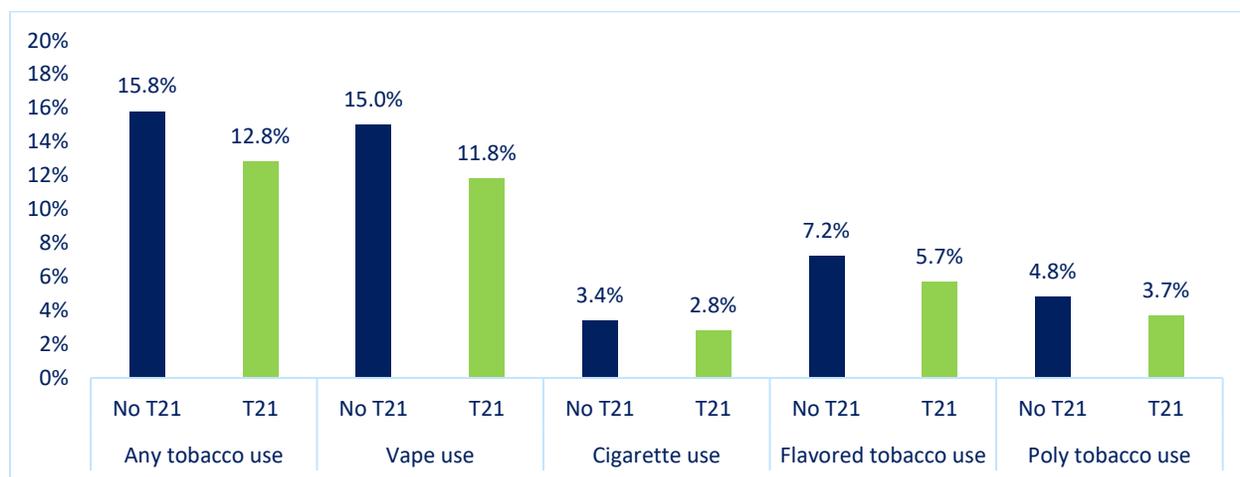
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National data indicate that about 90% of adults who smoke start before age 18, and 99% start before age 26.<sup>1</sup> Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) partners across the state have worked to support the implementation of local Tobacco 21 (T21) policies that raise the tobacco purchase age from 18 to 21. Between July 2017 and January 2019, 17 Minnesota communities implemented a T21 policy, and 14 of these received SHIP support.\* By December 2019, 60 Minnesota communities had implemented local T21 policies prior to the federal version of the law taking effect.



Data from the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) indicate that these policies have been successful at reducing youth commercial tobacco use (**Figure 1**). Minnesota 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders who were protected by T21 policies reported less commercial tobacco use than those living in communities without T21 policies.

Figure 1: Percentage of 8th and 9th graders reporting commercial tobacco use, 2019.



Note: Percentages account for 2016 commercial tobacco use at the school and grade level. MSS. Differences between “No T21” and “T21” groups for each product are statistically significant.

More specifically, among 8th and 9th graders, T21 policies were associated with less use of:

- any commercial tobacco product
- cigarettes
- e-cigarettes

\* Only Tobacco 21 policies that were supported by SHIP partners between 2017 and January 1, 2019 (i.e., the start of data collection for the 2019 MSS) were included in this analysis.

## SHIP SUPPORTS LOCAL TOBACCO 21 POLICIES, HELPING TO REDUCE YOUTH COMMERCIAL TOBACCO USE

- flavored tobacco products
- multiple tobacco products (also known as dual or poly use)

There were no differences in commercial tobacco use for 11th graders based on T21 policy exposure. This may be due to the availability of tobacco products in neighboring communities that had not implemented T21 and the ability of many older adolescents to drive. T21 became federal law in December 2019 which minimized differences in policy implementation between neighboring communities.

### SHIP is helping to reduce youth access to commercial tobacco

Commercial tobacco use, especially vaping, remains a public health priority in Minnesota as 20.5% of high school students reported use of a commercial tobacco product in the past 30 days in 2020.<sup>2</sup> To help address this issue, local public health departments across the state collected community input on T21, conducted store audits of the tobacco retail environment in their communities, and met with decisionmakers to educate them on the benefits of T21 policies. These efforts contributed to local T21 policies that reduced access to and use of commercial tobacco, particularly among younger adolescents. SHIP is continuing its efforts to prevent youth commercial tobacco use by working with communities to update and strengthen local ordinances to include T21 policies, removing purchase, use, and possession (PUP) language that penalizes youth, supporting implementation of flavored tobacco sales restrictions, helping schools incorporate e-cigarettes/vaping prevention into their health curriculum, and providing cessation support to youth who use.

Learn more about the [Statewide Health Improvement Partnership \(SHIP\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ship/index.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ship/index.html>).

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<sup>1</sup> Preventing tobacco use among youth and young adults: A report of the Surgeon General (2012).

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey (2020).