



KENT CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Press Release

From: Kent City Health Department

For Immediate Release: August 10, 2018

NEW TOBACCO 21 LAW TAKES EFFECT IN KENT

Kent City Council recently passed a new ordinance that will affect all local retailers of tobacco, electronic cigarettes, and nicotine products. The new initiative is referred to as Tobacco 21 and will go into effect immediately (Ordinance number 2018-83). These harmful products can no longer be sold to any person under the age of 21.

The sale of cigarettes, other tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, alternative nicotine products, or papers used to roll cigarettes to any person under twenty-one (21) is now prohibited. In addition, all retailers of tobacco and nicotine products are required to post a sign in a conspicuous place stating the new legal purchase age of 21. The required sign is available online at www.kentpublichealth.org. The Kent City Health Department will work with all retailers within Kent City limits to ensure compliance. However, tobacco and nicotine retailers that do not comply with the Tobacco 21 ordinance risk potential fines up to \$1,000.

The goal of Tobacco 21 is to reduce the rates of tobacco and nicotine usage among young people to improve health and save lives. Nearly all adult smokers began smoking by the age of 18 and almost nobody starts smoking after 21. Also, nicotine and e-cigarettes are especially harmful to young people who are more prone to addiction. Youth addicted to nicotine are seven times more likely to have a drug problem. Therefore, young people need to be protected from the harmful effects of tobacco and nicotine products.

Community support is strong for the new Tobacco 21 initiative. Kent surveys show that 76% of residents support Tobacco 21. Nationwide surveys show that 75% of adults favor the age increase to 21. Additionally, over 300 cities across the country have adopted Tobacco 21, including ten in Ohio (Columbus, Cleveland, Akron, etc.). Oregon, California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Maine have already passed state-wide Tobacco 21 laws. Furthermore, raising the legal age to 21 has been shown to reduce high school smoking rates by over 50% by putting access outside the social circle of most high school students.

For more information, please visit www.kentpublichealth.org.