

November 16, 2015

Members of the Saint Paul City Council  
15 W Kellogg Blvd #310  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Submitted electronically to [ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

Dear Council President Stark and Members of the Saint Paul City Council:

I am writing on behalf of United Hospital to express our support for the proposed ordinance that would restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products to adult-only tobacco shops. United Hospital and Allina Health have a strong tradition of supporting public policies that reduce the use of tobacco, and in particular, prevent its use among youth.

Allina Health is committed to measurably improving the health of the communities we serve. As we continue to improve the quality of health care services that Minnesotans receive, we must also seek partnership with elected officials to seek systems-level policy change to influence the determinants of health that fall outside the walls of our facilities.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of death and disease in Saint Paul, and flavored tobacco products are no safer than unflavored tobacco products. Unfortunately, flavored products are designed to target youth, since they are available in popular candy and drink products like LifeSavers, Jolly Ranchers and Kool-Aid. The use of tobacco can cause heart disease, cancer, and reduces overall health: annually, smoking costs Minnesota nearly \$3 billion in health care costs.

Saint Paul has been a longtime leader when it comes to protecting the health and safety of our youth. We need to continue to do everything we can to protect the health of our young people. By taking these products out of stores that youth visit daily, Saint Paul will help prevent another generation from becoming lifelong tobacco users. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Tom O'Connor  
President, United Hospital  
Senior Vice President, East Region, Allina Health