

Nov. 12, 2015

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

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

I am writing on behalf of the American Heart Association to express our support for the proposed ordinance that would restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products to adult-only tobacco shops. The AHA's mission is to build healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. Reducing tobacco use is a key goal for achieving our mission and this ordinance will make significant headway in helping to achieve that goal. While AHA would also prefer to have menthol included in these restrictions, the ordinance is an important step toward reducing youth tobacco use.

Flavored tobacco is one of the primary ways the tobacco industry is appealing to youth. Cheap cigars and other flavored products serve as a way to get youth addicted and create lifelong customers for the tobacco industry. Some of these products sell for as little as three cigars for \$1. The packaging is bright and colorful and often hardly distinguishable from candy. Many flavored tobacco products contain the same flavorings used to make Kool-Aid and candy. Flavoring masks the harshness of tobacco and serves as a stepping stone to the use of other tobacco products.

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 youth visit daily, Saint Paul will help prevent another generation from becoming lifelong tobacco users. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rachel Callanan
Regional Vice President of Advocacy—Minnesota and Wisconsin