



November 9, 2015

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

We are writing on behalf of CentraCare Health and its Crave the Change initiative. We work tirelessly to reduce tobacco's harm across Central Minnesota. Recently, we have learned of the proposed ordinance that would restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products to adult-only tobacco shops. We commend the City of Saint Paul for working to update the ordinance to keep youth safe and healthy by preventing them from being exposed and accessing flavored tobacco products.

Local governments play an important role in protecting community members, particularly youth, from the health hazards of tobacco use. Therefore, we strongly urge you to support the proposed ordinance because:

- Research shows that youth believe flavored tobacco products are less dangerous and less addictive than non-flavored tobacco.ⁱ However, they are just as dangerous as cigarettes with the same health risks of cancer, heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.ⁱⁱ
- Some chemicals used to flavor tobacco and e-cigarettes, such as diacetyl, are known to cause irreversible damage to the lungs.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Flavored tobacco products are readily accessible to young people. About four fifths (79%) of Saint Paul's 262 tobacco retailers sell flavored tobacco products.^{iv}

We recognize Saint Paul as a longtime leader when it comes to protecting the health and safety of our youth. By taking these products out of stores youth visit daily, Saint Paul will help prevent another generation from becoming lifelong tobacco users. Your vote not only impacts the residents and youth of Saint Paul, but also establishes sound policy that can serve as a model for other communities considering these very same updates.

Thank you,

Alicia Bauman
Program Coordinator
Crave the Change
baumana@centracare.com
320.251.2700 x77527

Katie Gruber
Program Specialist
Crave the Change
katherine.gruber@centracare.com
320.251.2700 x77356

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Bidi use among urban youth--Massachusetts*, March-April 1999. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. 1999;48(36):796-799.

ⁱⁱ Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. *Not Your Grandfather's Cigar. A New Generation of Cheap & Sweet Cigars Threatens a New Generation of Kids*. 2013. http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what_we_do/industry_watch/cigar_report/

ⁱⁱⁱ FDA Center for Tobacco Products. Transcript from ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH: A PUBLIC WORKSHOP. March 9, 2015. http://www.fda.gov/oc/ohrt/electronic_cigarettes_and_the_public_health_a_public_workshop

^{iv} Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota. *Saint Paul Tobacco Retailer Assessment*. 2013.

