



November 10, 2015

St. Paul City Council
City of St. Paul
15 W Kellogg Blvd #310
St Paul, MN 55102

Dear Members of the St. Paul City Council:

On behalf of the Minnesota Medical Association I write to share our support for the proposal to bar the sale of flavored tobacco products outside of adult-only tobacco stores and provide regional uniformity to cigar pricing. The MMA is the professional association of physicians and physicians-in-training, with more than 10,000 members across the state.

Tobacco remains a significant problem in Minnesota. More than 500,000 Minnesotans continue to smoke, and more than 5,000 will die this year because of tobacco use. While good work has been done in preserving clean indoor air and raising the price of tobacco, more can be done. The effort to bar the sale of flavored tobacco products outside of adult-only tobacco stores is one such step. Marketing tobacco products in youth-friendly flavors such as grape or chocolate is an insidious and cynical effort on the part of tobacco manufacturers to build a lifetime of nicotine addiction in Minnesota's young people. The proposal before you will serve to reduce youth access to these dangerous products.

As physicians, the members of the MMA routinely see the devastating effects caused by tobacco on our patients and their families. Though much has been done to reduce tobacco's harm here in Minnesota, more can and should be done. The ordinance under consideration now is a careful step towards reducing nicotine addiction, particularly for Minnesota's young people. Thank you for your support of this smart, thoughtful proposal.

Sincerely,

David Thorson, MD
President, Minnesota Medical Association