

October 12, 2021

Saint Paul City Council  
15 Kellogg Blvd. West, 310 City Hall  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Mayor Carter and members of the Saint Paul City Council:

The Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health Department supports the City of Saint Paul's proposed ordinance to set a minimum price on cigarettes and chew tobacco and to stop the redemption of tobacco coupons and price promotions.

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death and disease in our state. Despite great progress, smoking claims the lives of more than 6,300 Minnesotans each year and costs our state more than \$7 billion every year in excess health care costs and lost productivity. Cheap tobacco is appealing and increases tobacco use, especially among youth, young adults and low-income smokers. Access to cheap tobacco transitions youth and young adults from experimenting with tobacco products to becoming long-term users. In addition, discounts on tobacco products undermine current users' attempts to quit, keeping people addicted and at risk to tobacco-related health diseases.

Keeping the prices of tobacco products high is an effective strategy to prevent youth and young adult tobacco use and help current users quit. A [study](#) showed that a \$10 minimum price per pack of cigarettes and regulating discounts can reduce the prevalence of youth, young adults, and older adults who smoke. Decreased use will also result in healthier communities and less tobacco-related morbidity and mortality.

Saint Paul's action to stop cheap tobacco will prevent our communities and future generations from a lifetime of addiction and poor health outcomes. Thank you for your commitment to this significant public health issue.

Sincerely,



Sara Hollie, MPH  
Director