

Commercial Tobacco-Free Communities

Overview

The Commercial Tobacco-Free Communities (CTFC) Program is committed to changing policies, systems, and environments to promote a commercial tobacco free, healthy Minneapolis through reducing exposure to commercial tobacco products, reducing secondhand smoke exposure, and connecting people to cessation resources.

Addressing commercial tobacco-related disparities

Use of commercial tobacco products, such as cigarettes, e-cigarettes (vapes), smokeless tobacco, cigars, and other products, is a risk factor for chronic illnesses, including asthma, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and stroke.

The health burden of commercial tobacco use is not equally distributed. The tobacco industry has targeted vulnerable populations such as BIPOC communities, low-income individuals, youth, and those with mental health conditions. This targeting, along with factors like financial stress and inadequate access to health care can increase commercial tobacco use and make health problems worse.

All people deserve the opportunity to live in an environment that supports good health, free from the harm that commercial tobacco can cause. Advancing health equity requires a commitment to build partnerships that collectively support populations with greater commercial tobacco-related health burdens.

Our collaborative efforts focus improving the health of people in Minneapolis through commercial tobacco prevention strategies and promoting empowerment among youth and vulnerable communities.



Commercial Tobacco-Free Communities

Our current focus

To reduce commercial tobacco related health disparities and improve the health of vulnerable communities in Minneapolis, the HLI is focused on:

Reducing access and exposure to commercial tobacco products through policy changes.

Reducing secondhand smoke exposure by increasing availability of Smoke-Free Housing, with an emphasis on affordable housing, and equitable enforcement practices.

Increasing access to and awareness of cessation resources for people who are interested in reducing or quitting use of commercial tobacco products.

Collaboration and partnerships

The Healthy Living Initiative (HLI) partners with individuals and organizations to support community-driven responses to reduce health disparities related to commercial tobacco use among vulnerable groups. By cultivating these partnerships, we become agents of change, for example:

- The HLI in partnership with Live Smoke Free (LSF), a program of the Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota (ANSR), aims to increase the availability of smoke-free, affordable housing in Minneapolis. HLI and LSF provide property owners and managers with free education and technical assistance to implement equitable smoke-free policies. In 2022, 142 properties in Minneapolis received free technical assistance.



- In 2021, the HLI supported Wellshare International, a non-profit organization focusing on East African communities, to work with youth on shifting social norms around vaping. Wellshare implemented a project to create and share culturally relevant vaping prevention messaging, and information about tobacco treatment resources. Through this initiative, youth provided presentations to more than 150 peers, parents, and community leaders; social media was used to amplify messaging about vaping, reaching over 2,800 viewers; and an estimated audience of 30,000 people were reached through messaging on local radio station talk shows.



Driving sustainable changes together

By changing policies, systems, and environments (PSE) we can create settings that support longer and healthier lives for all people in Minneapolis. Our collaborative partnerships focus on implementing PSE changes, through community-level strategies to reduce the use of and exposure to commercial tobacco products and improve access to tobacco treatment resources. For example, HLI supports:

- Policy changes that limit sales of commercial tobacco products.
- Systems level changes to support Minneapolis Public Housing staff on equitable enforcement of its smoke-free policy and connecting residents to commercial tobacco treatment options.
- Environmental changes through social media education campaigns to prevent youth vaping.



A success story

The commercial tobacco industry has a long history of targeting youth and vulnerable communities with flavored tobacco products such as fruit and menthol, which play a key role in youth initiation and continued use of these products.

In 2015, the HLI partnered with youth groups and community-based organizations to support a city ordinance that would restrict the sale of flavored non-cigarette products to adult-only tobacco shops. The 2015 ordinance exempted menthol, mint, and wintergreen tobacco products from the sales restriction.

Through the power of ongoing youth advocacy, the ordinance was amended in 2017 to include limiting the sale of menthol products to tobacco-only shops and liquor stores. When this ordinance was passed in 2017, there were 342 outlets selling menthol tobacco. After the ordinance implementation, there were 82 outlets selling menthol tobacco (2019), a decrease of about 75 percent.

Going forward



Use of commercial tobacco continues to be a leading cause of chronic disease. Reducing commercial tobacco exposure and use is one of our greatest opportunities to help people live longer, healthier lives. Building partnerships and collaboration is crucial to raise awareness of the importance of creating environments free of commercial tobacco, promote cessation and reduce secondhand smoking.

Join us in our journey to advance health equity by lifting community voice and working towards policy, system, and environmental changes to limit the harmful impacts of commercial tobacco products in Minneapolis.

Commercial tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death.

Minnesota youth:

- MN High school students who use e-cigarettes: 19.3%
- MN Youth, (under 18) who try cigarettes for the first time each year: 9,800.¹



A 2016 survey of Minneapolis property managers found that subsidized properties were less likely to have a smoke-free policy (45%) compared to market-rate properties (71%).²



28%: Proportion of cancer deaths in Minnesota attributable to cigarette smoking in adults 35 years of age and older.³

Tobacco industry advertising:
Estimated portion spent in
Minnesota each year:
\$97.3 million.⁴



Annual health costs in Minnesota directly caused by smoking: \$2.92 billion.⁵

Promoting and supporting commercial tobacco-free environments is critical to improve the health and quality of life of everyone in Minneapolis.

Sources

1. *The Toll of Tobacco in Minnesota*. (2023, November 21). [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids]. Tobacco Free Kids. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/minnesota>
2. *Prevalence of Smoke-Free Housing Policies in the Minneapolis Housing Choice Voucher Program* (p. 13). (2021). [Research Brief]. <https://mnsmokefreehousing.org/wp-content/uploads/Prevalence-of-SFH-Policies-in-the-Minneapolis-HCV-Program-Report.pdf>
3. Lortet-Tieulent, J., Sauer, A. G., Siegel, R. L., Miller, K. D., Islami, F., Fedewa, S. A., Jacobs, E. J., & Jemal, A. (2016). *State-Level Cancer Mortality Attributable to Cigarette Smoking in the United States* (p. 7) [Original Investigation, August 24, 2016]. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2571615>
4. *The Toll of Tobacco in Minnesota*. (2023, November 21). [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids]. Tobacco Free Kids. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/minnesota>
5. Ibid.

The health benefits of a commercial tobacco-free life



Within two weeks of quitting, lung capacity is improved



Can add as much as 10 years to life expectancy



Lowers the risk of having a first heart attack or another heart attack



Reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes



Reduces respiratory infections



Reduces the risk of 12 different cancers



Protects family members from secondhand smoke



Reduces the risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)



Reduces the financial burden of commercial tobacco consumption

... helps people live longer healthier lives.

For more information contact:

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We invite you to join us in our efforts to create healthier communities together in Minneapolis.



Building Healthier
Communities



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