



Association for Nonsmokers - Minnesota

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# Give to the Max Day helps ANSR continue helping MN

**Give to the Max Day** is on Thursday, Nov. 19. ANSR is working harder than ever to protect all Minnesotans from the harms of commercial tobacco. The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us all of the importance of lung health and how tobacco use and exposure can compromise it. ANSR relies on grant funding and contributions from lung health heroes like you to carry out our important work. To help us with this endeavor, make plans now to donate on this or any day. This is a great opportunity to help us continue our work on a statewide day of giving. You can mail a check to the address on Page 2, go online at [www.ansrmn.org](http://www.ansrmn.org) and click the donate button up top or go to [www.givemn.org](http://www.givemn.org) and search for ANSR.



ANSR staff photo

ANSR president Jeanne Weigum, along with her dog, Autumn, shares information about Give to the Max Day, which is an annual opportunity for Minnesotans to support their favorite nonprofits.



ANSR staff photo

The Menthol Coalition played a huge role in restricting the sale of menthol-flavored tobacco products in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The group has reconvened to work at the state level.

## Menthol coalition returns to action

ANSR and NorthPoint Health and Wellness relaunched the Menthol Coalition in October. The group was active in initiatives to regulate the sale of menthol tobacco in St. Paul and Minneapolis in 2017 and hopes to be equally influential in state-level work to end the sale of all flavored tobacco, including menthol, throughout Minnesota.

The coalition is composed of health and community organizations in Minnesota committed to reducing

the harm caused by menthol-flavored cigarettes and other tobacco products. Members include churches, youth-serving organizations, health groups and advocacy organizations serving Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

The coalition supports policies that restrict youth access and exposure to menthol cigarettes and other menthol-flavored tobacco. To learn more or join the coalition, contact Emily Anderson ([emily@ansrmn.org](mailto:emily@ansrmn.org)).

## ANSR takes aim at coupon discounting

Price is the single most important factor in encouraging people to quit smoking and discouraging people from starting to smoke.

That is why public health advocates have worked so hard to increase tobacco taxes. As public health works to push the price up, tobacco companies deploy marketing and promotional practices to make people think they are getting a real deal: cheap tobacco.

The industry uses coupons, and in-store discounts like buy-one-get-one to make people think they are getting a bargain.

The people most likely to use coupons are young, low income and people of color. This contributes to health disparities and greater rates of tobacco use and the resulting sickness.

Saint Paul is considering putting a stop to this kind of tobacco industry promotion. Council member Nelsie Yang, with the support of CMs Amy Brendmoen and Dai Thao, is carrying the ordinance. For more information contact Esha Seth or Jeanne Weigum at 651-646-3005.

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For more information, contact ANSR at:

2395 University Ave. West, Ste. 310, St. Paul, MN 55114 or at (651) 646-3005.

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## Fridley restricts flavored tobacco

The Fridley City Council took a major step in September to protect the health of youth and all residents from the harms of tobacco.

The City Council voted 4-1 to restrict the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including menthol, to adult-only tobacco stores. Menthol-, candy- and fruit-flavored tobacco products are attractive to youth, and the tobacco industry uses these flavors to hook a new generation of users, resulting in addiction, disease and death. Eighty percent of youth tobacco users use flavored tobacco.

Additionally, the council voted to update its tobacco ordinance to meet state requirements that raise the tobacco sales age to 21.

Like many local decision makers, Fridley Mayor Scott Lund said he preferred leaving these issues to state legislators but didn't let that stop him and the council from protecting Fridley residents now.

"I would be much happier if the state would take this on as a statewide issue," Lund said. "But, as with most of the things ... in reality, it doesn't happen from the top side down. It ends up at the grassroots. It happens in cities all over the country, just like it is here (tonight) in Fridley.

"I have turned from thinking it's an overreach, but I think we owe it, as council persons, to help our city, and this is a help to our young people. If not now, when?"

Council member Ann Bolkcom said during the meeting it was important to protect youth now.



ANSR staff photo

Youth advocates from North High School talk to senate candidate Erin Murphy about the harms of flavored tobacco, particularly with vaping.

## ANSR receives grant

ANSR received a grant from the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids in July to pursue a statewide policy to end the sale of flavored tobacco in Minnesota. Several partner organizations, including the American Lung Association and Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation, are joining in the effort. For the first few months of the grant, ANSR has

focused on reaching out to candidates for state elected office in the seven-county metro area. The aim is to build relationships with current and future legislators and to educate them about two issues: flavored tobacco and the need for continued funding for tobacco control.

After the election, staff will continue to meet with senators

and representatives on these topics. Staff will also continue to engage advocates to build awareness and support throughout the state on those two topics. Work before the election resulted in 122 candidate questionnaire responses and 155 interactions with candidates. Youth and adult advocates eagerly met with current legislators and candidates.

## New Hope restricts candy, fruit flavors

New Hope city council voted in August to restrict the sale of candy- and fruit-flavored tobacco products and also updated the city's tobacco language to meet state minimums to set the minimum age to purchase

tobacco at 21. The ordinance will cap the total number of tobacco licenses at their current number of 21. The city considered adding menthol to the ordinance but walked it back to the policy that passed.

## CDC's King headlines Live Smoke Free webinar

Dr. Brian King, Deputy Director for Research Translation at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), joined Live Smoke Free and the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) for a webinar on the impact of

COVID-19 on smoke-free public housing on Aug. 12.

Dr. King spoke about the link between smoking, secondhand smoke exposure, and COVID-19.

The webinar drew in 331 registrants and 280 attendees from public housing agencies

and local, state, and federal health departments.

The webinar was part of Live Smoke Free's Clean Air for All project – a partnership between Live Smoke Free, NAHRO, and the Public Health Law Center, supported by funding from the Robert Wood Johnson



King



Special to ANSR

Live Smoke Free, a program of ANSR, was recognized for its work in smoke-free housing in Dakota County.

## National organization recognizes LSF engagement

Live Smoke Free (LSF), Dakota County Public Health (DCPH), Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA) and HealthPartners (HP) were recognized at the Dakota County Board of Commissioners meeting for their achievements in smoke-free housing in August.

Beginning in 2017, LSF, DCPH, and HP collaborated to support the CDA and their residents transition

to smoke-free environments.

This large undertaking required staff training, resident engagement, and smoking cessation support for a population that is disproportionately affected by the negative health impacts of commercial tobacco and exposure to secondhand smoke. This work received an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo) in July 2020.

## Work yields dividends

Over the past several years, in partnership with Hennepin County Public Health, Live Smoke Free developed a Fire Department Toolkit and sought to engage local and state fire departments in smoke-free housing initiatives.

Their work is beginning to pay off. The Minnesota State Fire Marshal's

report "2019 Fire in Minnesota" expressed concern about smoking-related fire deaths and stated a goal to reduce them by 30 percent over the next five years. The Fire Marshal and local fire departments have also added new messaging to their outreach materials encouraging people who smoke to take it outside.

Ramsey County Public Health and Live Smoke Free conducted a resident survey in multi-unit housing that asked questions of adults who live in apartment buildings in Ramsey County. The goal was to gauge Ramsey County residents' interest in adoption of policies that would restrict smoking in MUH buildings.

About 84 percent and 72 percent of respondents living in smoke-free buildings and smoking-permitted buildings, respectively, indicated support for a city-wide smoke-free housing policy or ordinance.



ANSR staff photo

Hundreds of prevention specialists joined the Minnesota Prevention Program Sharing Conference online.

## Program sharing conference goes online

More than 200 prevention professionals from around the state gathered at the virtual Minnesota Prevention Program Sharing Conference in late October. In addition to 21 breakout sessions, presenters heard from two inspiring keynote speakers. Dr. Amit Sood

of the Global Center for Resiliency and Wellbeing presented on Immune Resilience, and Jason Anderson of the Montana Institute presented on the Science of the Positive Approach to Community Conversations.

The Covid-19 pandemic led to the conference shifting to an online

format, but it didn't miss a step. Professionals from across the state wholeheartedly participated in the many breakout sessions, the keynotes, morning coffee outings and even yoga.

Thanks to everyone who joined in for this energizing event.

### ANSR Membership Form

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## ANSR Bulletin

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### ROUNDUP

# ANSR, local youth conduct vaping survey

In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was emerging research regarding COVID-19 and health outcomes for tobacco users. Knowing there are negative health impacts intertwined with COVID-19 and tobacco users, ANSR was curious to find out if youth use had changed due to the pandemic and to learn more about how youths perceived usage by their peers.

With the help of a small group of Mounds View High School students, ANSR created a convenience survey to inform on COVID-19 and youth tobacco use, specifically vaping, that was disseminated via social

media in the spring during the Stay at Home Orders in Minnesota.

There were many successes from this survey. ANSR learned youth who had previously wanted to quit, no longer wanted to and that youth use had increased during the Stay at Home Orders. Youth leadership contributed to the survey's success. It was fully organized and reviewed by youth, and they conducted all of the outreach to get it out to their peers. Thanks to this leadership and outreach, there were more than 360 respondents for this survey. There isn't a lot of research around youth tobacco use during

the COVID-19 pandemic. This survey allowed staff to gather Minnesota-specific information on this topic.

Because of the overwhelming response of the spring survey, ANSR decided to recreate this survey to learn more about summer use among youth during COVID-19. Again, this survey was created and disseminated via social media among youth across Minnesota. ANSR is currently evaluating the results to see if youth usage changed since the last survey.

**ANSR adapts to pandemic**  
 COVID-19 has taken a toll on most businesses, non-profits and families. ANSR

is no different. In response to the virus, most ANSR staff are working remotely from home.

A skeleton crew is holding down the fort at the ANSR office. We are having to work differently, using e-mail, the phone and ZOOM calls instead of in-person meetings. Attending city council meetings means dialing in rather than sitting in the same room making eye contact with council members. Make no mistake, this is hard.

We are adjusting and continuing the work of protecting the health and safety of nonsmokers and preventing youth from becoming users.