

THE ANSR

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ANSR staff photo

Advocates give a thumbs up after Shoreview City Council voted unanimously to restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products to one adult-only tobacco store.

Shoreview council restricts flavored tobacco sales

The Shoreview City Council showed strong leadership in protecting the health and well-being of its residents on Nov. 21, 2016. The City Council voted unanimously to restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products to one adult-only tobacco store.

“Shoreview is showing leadership, as it has over the years,” Mayor Sandy Martin said in the meeting. “We are (making) a good leadership decision and hopefully

many more communities will follow us.”

Shoreview joins Saint Paul and Minneapolis in restricting the sale of flavored tobacco products. Other places to restrict flavored tobacco sales include Providence, R.I., and New York City. In 2009, the Food and Drug Administration banned flavoring in cigarettes but didn’t extend this to other tobacco products. Shoreview’s action closes that loophole.

The tobacco industry has a long history of targeting young people with flavored tobacco. Katie Engman, program director for the Ramsey Tobacco Coalition, said she is excited to see Shoreview take action.

“Shoreview has proven itself to be a leader willing to stand up to the tobacco industry’s blatant attempts at hooking kids with

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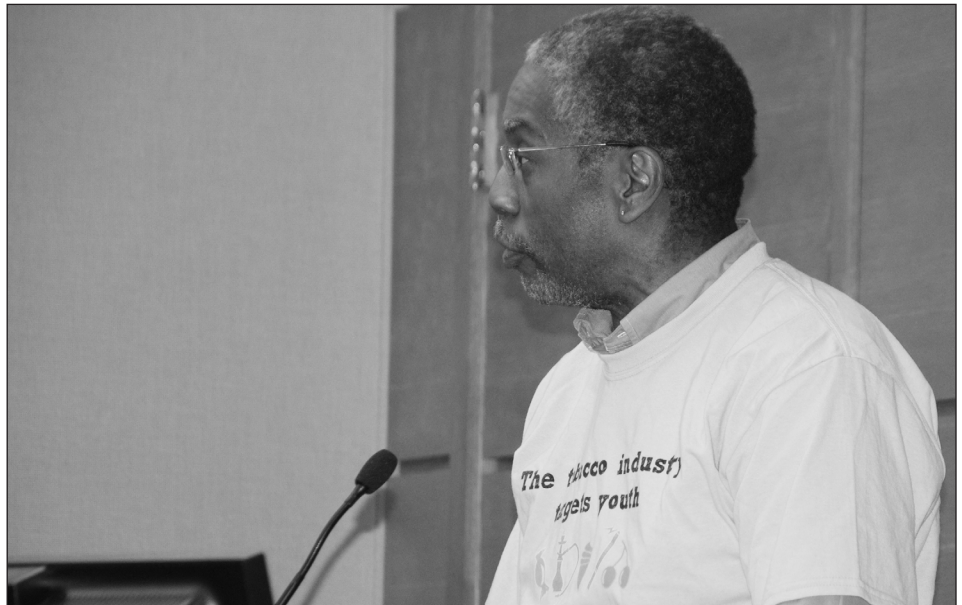
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candy-flavored tobacco,” Engman said. “Shoreview has always shown strong leadership and was one of the first cities to ban the sale of tobacco by vending machines. The city continues to showcase a long-term commitment to creating a healthy community. Shoreview’s leadership and vision make it a great place. We hope this encourages other communities to stand up to the tobacco industry and protect youth.”



ANSR staff photos

A strong lineup of advocates testified in front of the Shoreview City Council. Clockwise, from top, are: Mounds View student Meghan McFarling, resident Eugene Nichols, Dr. Mark Eggen and parent Siobhan Ehle.



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SMOKE-FREE PUBLIC HOUSING: HEALTHIER AND SAFER LIVING FOR MINNESOTANS



PROPERTY MANAGERS &
DIRECTORS



RESIDENTS

LEARN ABOUT THE NEW SMOKE-FREE PUBLIC HOUSING RULE AND FIND FREE

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced a rule requiring all public housing to adopt a smoke-free policy. The Live Smoke Free team at ANSR has already been working hard to help public housing agencies (PHAs) adopt and implement smoke-free policies. Live Smoke Free also played a key role in developing a new website, www.sfpublichousingmn.org, that offers a wide array of information for residents and property managers.

Public housing to go smoke free

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced a rule on Nov. 30, 2016, requiring all public housing to adopt a smoke-free policy. The rule bans the use of prohibited tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, and hookah, inside all public housing and outside within 25 feet of buildings. Public housing agencies (PHAs) will have 18 months to implement this rule.

In a press release from the Minnesota Department of Health, Commissioner Dr. Ed Ehlinger said, “This change will help protect some of the most vulnerable people in our state – children and older adults – and will encourage more

Live Smoke Free



people to quit smoking.”

Minnesota is well positioned to offer smoke-free living to all public housing residents. According to a survey conducted by Live Smoke Free and their partners, about 70 percent of Minnesota PHAs already have some sort of smoke-free policy.

ANSR’s Live Smoke Free team is working with statewide partners to support Minnesota PHAs as they adopt new policies and update existing policies to comply with this rule.

Live Smoke Free will provide assistance to PHAs and their residents, including one-on-one help, sample materials, and quit-smoking resources.

The development of a new collaborative web portal, www.sfpublichousingmn.org, received praise from HUD officials and will serve as a primary resource for public health advocates, PHAs, and residents here in Minnesota and across the country.



ANSR and NorthPoint Health and Wellness are working together to encourage the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to adopt a 100 percent tobacco-free policy for all Minneapolis parks. The Healthier Minneapolis Parks initiative, funded by Blue Cross and Blue Shield's Center for Prevention, is focused on achieving health equity through a tobacco-free parks policy. We know the burden of commercial tobacco use and exposure disproportionately falls on the health of our most marginalized groups: children, people of color, the LGBTQ community and low-income communities. Tobacco-free parks are proven to reduce tobacco use and exposure, thereby reducing the death and disease associated with commercial tobacco. To learn more, visit: www.tobaccofreeparks.org/minneapolis.



ROUNDUP

Legislative landscape looks tough in 2017

Tobacco control and public health in general are looking at the 2017 legislative session with fear and trepidation. With a shift in leadership, some of Minnesota's strongest public health supporters are no longer in a position to promote public policy initiatives. Tax and health funding will likely be key issues.

In the 2015-16 session, the tobacco industry successfully pushed a bill to roll back one of the tax provisions called the 'inflator.'

That provision called for the tobacco tax to increase annually at the rate of inflation with the intent of keeping the real price of tobacco consistent over time regardless of the rate of inflation. Although this provision was approved by the House and the Senate, it did not become law because it was included in the tax bill the governor vetoed. ANSR expects the industry to push this provision again.

Another tax issue that is near and dear to the tobacco industry is to reduce the tax on premium cigars from a maximum tax of \$3.50 to a maximum tax of \$.50, a lower rate than cigarettes.

Prevention programming funding is included in the Governor's proposed budget, but meetings with legislators indicate this type of programming is not a priority for many Republicans, who are in the majority in both bodies.

Proactive legislation, such as proposals to increase the minimum age to purchase tobacco to 21, restrictions on the sale of flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes in the Freedom to Breathe Act, and restrictions on smoking in cars when youth are present will have a difficult time getting much traction this session.

COMPLIANCE RESULTS: In 2015, the North Suburban Tobacco

Compliance Check Program's compliance rate was 95.5 percent, compared to 88.5 percent in 2015, 93.5 percent in 2014 and 95 percent in 2013.

Participation in the project requires a minimum of two rounds of unannounced tobacco compliance checks per year in each city. Program Director Katie Engman encourages additional checks if a vendor fails a check.

Certificates are sent to vendors in participating cities who pass each tobacco compliance check.

There are 19 students trained to assist with tobacco compliance checks in suburban Ramsey County.

GTMD: Give to the Max Day was an amazing event, and it was all thanks to you! ANSR raised \$10,290 on Give to the Max Day. Thank you for your continued support!

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Tobacco industry uses familiar tactics

Minnesotans are working to reduce the harms caused by menthol tobacco, and one tobacco company noticed. One of the most consistent tactics used by the tobacco industry to undermine policy change is to co-opt community leaders. Never was this tactic more obvious than their recent effort to sidetrack the menthol work in Minneapolis.

The Rev. Al Sharpton, a well-known national leader, contacted two Minneapolis churches offering to come to the Twin Cities with four other national speakers to lead a “community Leadership Luncheon” about decriminalizing the Black community. He offered to cover all expenses for the meeting and said he would provide noon meals for up to 200 attendees. One of the churches agreed to host

the meeting without asking any questions about who was picking up the tab for 200 meals plus air fare and lodging for four speakers.

One of ANSR’s partners learned about the meeting, and ANSR staff did some digging. Sharpton had done two similar meetings, including one in Oakland, Calif.

The focus there was exclusively on the risks to the African American community if there were restrictions on menthol tobacco. A news article reported Sharpton and his colleagues claimed menthol restrictions would lead to increased smuggling, increased negative interactions between Black men and the police, and increased incidents of police violence toward Black men.

In the fine print, the flyer advertising the Oakland event said

it was sponsored by RAI, which stands for Reynolds America International, maker of the nation’s leading brand of menthol cigarettes, Newport.

LaTrisha Vetaw of NorthPoint Health & Wellness and other tobacco control advocates attended the Minneapolis event and successfully clarified to the audience how the hosts of the event had a serious financial interest in preventing meaningful menthol regulation. A coalition of Minnesota tobacco control advocates is pushing to include menthol in the list of flavored tobacco products that can only be sold at adult-only tobacco stores.

To see the work being done and to learn more about menthol tobacco, go to www.BeautifulLieUglyTruth.org.