



AG Ellison Sends Warning Letters About Deceptive Vapes Law to Tobacco Retailers

Attorney General Keith Ellison held a press conference on August 29 to announce his office sent warning letters to over 5,000 Minnesota tobacco retailers, urging them to stop selling unauthorized and illegal vapor products. These include vapes and oral nicotine products not approved by the FDA and products that fall under Minnesota’s new deceptive vapor products law (i.e., vapes that resemble school supplies, candy, or other kid-friendly, non-vapor products). In the letter, AG Ellison describes the harms of these products and asks retailers to confirm that they will comply with federal and state laws by only selling FDA-authorized products.



From left: Colleen O’Neil (Mounds View Public Schools), Attorney General Keith Ellison, Molly Schmidtke (ANSR), Mason Schmidt (ANSR Student Action Team).

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Molly Schmidtke, who leads ANSR’s tobacco marketing project, Project WATCH, spoke at the news conference and shared how the industry uses manipulative marketing tactics and flavors to attract kids. Colleen O’Neil, chemical health prevention specialist at Mounds View Public Schools, discussed what the youth vaping crisis looks like in schools and expressed school staff’s concerns about youth access to nicotine. Mason Schultz, ANSR Student Action Team member and senior at Mahtomedi High School, spoke about vaping and nicotine use among his peers and shared he was first offered a vape at age 12.

The goal of the AG’s initiative is voluntary compliance and that his office will step up enforcement, according to Ellison. Retailers found in violation of the law could face \$25,000 fines and civil penalties.

ANSR applauds AG Ellison for holding retailers who sell unauthorized products accountable. Anyone can report retailers who market or sell illegal products to the AG’s Office by emailing vaping@ag.state.mn.us. Read the press release at https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/Communications/2024/08/29_VapingProducts.asp.

Wrapping Up Summer Events, Conferences Ahead

Community events kept ANSR staff and partners busy all summer. Since June, we've tabled at 17 events in eight cities across the Metro to engage community members in our commercial tobacco prevention work and to build support for local policy efforts. Here are a few highlights:

Burnsville Party on the Plaza

With help from our partners at Tobacco-Free Alliance, we tabled at Burnsville's Party on the Plaza to educate community members about the importance of ending the sale of flavored commercial tobacco products.



Imagine Frogtown and Rondo

We teamed up with our partners at Twin Cities Recovery Project to promote Nicotine-Free Generation policy in Saint Paul at Imagine Frogtown and Rondo. The heat wave didn't stop us from showing up for our neighbors!

Shoreview Farmers Market

We stopped by the Shoreview Farmers Market to get the conversation started around price discounting. Saint Paul and Minneapolis have passed price discounting ordinances, and we hope to bring other suburban cities into the mix.



We'll be switching gears this fall as we get ready to present and exhibit at multiple conferences, including MEA, the MN Prevention Program Sharing Conference, and the MN School Counselors Association Conference.

Smoking and Vaping Cannabis is Now Prohibited in Multi-Unit Housing



As of July 1, 2024, the smoking and vaping of adult-use cannabis is prohibited in Minnesota

multifamily housing buildings, including patios and balconies.

The state's adult-use cannabis law originally prohibited the smoking and vaping of cannabis in multifamily housing after March 1, 2025, but the legislature moved the implementation date to July 1, 2024 during this year's session.

According to Minn. Stat. 462C.02 subd. 5, "multifamily housing" includes cooperatives, groups of townhouses with four or more dwelling units or any building with one or more dwelling units intended for residence. The smoking or vaping of medical cannabis flower or medical cannabinoid products is exempt.

As of now, it is still unclear who will enforce this provision and how it will be done. More clarity could come out of the Office of Cannabis Management's ongoing rulemaking process over the coming months.

Live Smoke Free provides resources and assistance to renters and property managers who are concerned about smoke-free policy compliance and are exposed to secondhand smoke in their buildings. For more information about cannabis as it relates to multi-unit housing, visit:

mnsmokefreehousing.org/cannabis.

Student Action Team Looks Forward to Another Year

The 2024-2025 school year is in session, and the Ramsey County Student Action Team is gearing up for another year of commercial tobacco prevention! Over 20 students who participated last year are returning to continue making an impact in their schools and local community.

Students and their guardians attended a back-to-school kick off meeting in August to look back at their accomplishments from last year and set goals and expectations for the year ahead.

The group has its first official meeting in mid-September. Staff are eager to engage students in local policy work, statewide advocacy, peer-to-peer education, and outreach opportunities this school year. These young leaders will make their voices heard and make change!



Ramsey County Student Action Team members at the 2024 EPIC Youth Gathering in June.

Welcoming New ANSR Staff!

Three new staff members joined ANSR this September. We are lucky to have them on our team and wish them a warm welcome as they get started in their new roles.

Kennedy Montgomery will be working with ANSR's point-of-sale and youth engagement teams as a Communications and Outreach Coordinator. She recently graduated from the University of St. Thomas with a public health major and was an ANSR volunteer during her college days.



Sheila Watercott is the Region 7 Regional Prevention Coordinator and will be providing support to prevention coalitions in the seven-county Metro. She has over 15 years of experience as a health educator and was formerly a Drug-Free Communities Grant Coordinator.



Jaclyn Frank will join ANSR's point-of-sale and housing teams as a Community Outreach Coordinator. She recently graduated with her MPH in Public Health Administration and Policy from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.



Last Chance to Register for the MN Prevention Program Sharing Conference

The 50th annual Minnesota Prevention Program Sharing Conference is less than a month away! The conference, hosted by the Minnesota Prevention Resource Center, brings together public health professionals, educators, students, researchers, law enforcement, and others who are engaged in substance misuse prevention across the state to share ideas and learn from each other. ANSR staff will host several presentations during the conference October 15th and 16th at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud.

Register at www.mnprc.org/conference by Friday, September 27th, 2024. Email Madeline Bremel (madeline@ansrmn.org) with questions.



Calling All Renters!

Do you live in a multi-unit housing building? Are you exposed to secondhand tobacco or cannabis smoke at home?



Live Smoke Free is collecting impact statements from renters who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home. Contact info@mnsmokefreehousing.org or scan the QR code above to share your story.

Student's Letter to the Editor Published

ANSR Student Action Team member Lily DeWitt submitted a letter to the editor of the White Bear Press supporting ending the sale of flavored commercial tobacco products and protecting her peers from nicotine addiction.

Scan the QR code to read her letter.



https://www.presspubs.com/whitebear/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article_2ba92890-6553-11ef-a447-b763fca88ed.html

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Donor Spotlight: Why I Support ANSR

Dr. Anne Joseph

Anne Joseph, MD, MPH, is a retired internist who worked at the University of Minnesota Department of Medicine and VA Hospital. She specialized in tobacco use and control, and her research focused on smoking cessation and reduction among populations of smokers who experience barriers to treatment. She was Director of the Applied Clinical Research Program in the Department of Medicine at the University of Minnesota Medical School.

Anne has represented ANSR and our commercial tobacco prevention issues at the Legislature and City of Saint Paul and is a faithful plant and garage sale volunteer. When asked why she supports ANSR, she said: "ANSR has anchored the movement to reduce harm from commercial tobacco in Minnesota for over 50 years. ANSR made key contributions to historic policy initiatives during this time, like the Clean Indoor Air Act, the landmark State of MN and BCBS settlement with the tobacco companies, raising tobacco taxes, supporting smoke-free homes, and restricting flavored tobacco sales. It's easy to forget that these important regulations we take for granted were not in place just a short time ago. There is no doubt that Minnesota is a U.S. leader in preventing harm from commercial tobacco because of ANSR's hard and strategic work. The organization has a unique method of bringing community views and participation to the legislative process that is highly effective."

Final ANSR Garage Sale a Huge Success

After 41 years, ANSR said goodbye to our annual garage sale fundraiser. We estimate the garage sale brought in over \$100,000 over the years.

This year's sale may have been the last, but it certainly wasn't the least. We pushed the date back to July due to bad weather and raised over \$2,000. Thank you to everyone who shopped at the sale and supported our work. We couldn't do what we do without your generosity!

We appreciate everyone who helped make the sale a success year after year. Whether you priced items, staffed the sale, or just spread the word—thank you! The plant sale goes on. Stay tuned for plant sale dates.

2023 Annual Report Out Now



www.ansrmn.org/about-us

Read about last year's policy wins, state and national conferences, program highlights, and more in the 2023 ANSR Annual Report.



The ANSR Bulletin is published quarterly.

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ANSR, MPRC Websites Get New Looks

Have you seen the ANSR or MPRC websites lately? They look brand new!

Staff rebuilt the websites over the past year and updated the pages about our programs, policy initiatives, and resources. The new sites went live in early September. Take a look at www.ansrmn.org and www.mnprc.org.

