

June 7, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
S-230 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tim Kaine
United States Senate
231 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Senator Kaine:

The dental professional organizations listed below, as members of the Organized Dentistry Coalition, are writing to express our strong support of S. 1541, the Tobacco-Free Youth Act.

As you know, this legislation would increase the legal age to purchase tobacco products from 18 to 21 years old and is critical in addressing our current youth tobacco epidemic. About 9 out of 10 people who die from oral and pharyngeal cancers use tobacco, and the risk of developing these cancers is related to how much (and how often) they use.ⁱ On average, 40 percent of those with the disease will not survive more than 5 years.ⁱⁱ Tobacco products are also causally associated with higher rates of gum disease, periodontal disease, mucosal lesions, bone damage, tooth loss, jaw bone loss and more.^{iii,iv}

S. 1541 would help reduce the number of young people who begin smoking before age 21, which represents 95 percent of current adult smokers.^v Moreover, the bill would apply to the more than 3.6 million middle and high school students who are e-cigarette users.^{vi} Research shows that young people who use e-cigarettes are more likely to transition to smoking cigarettes.

On behalf of our member dentists and their patients, we offer our support for S. 1541. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Natalie Hales at 202-898-2404 or halesn@ada.org.

Sincerely,

American Dental Association
Academy of General Dentistry
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
American Academy of Periodontology
American Association for Women Dentists
American Association of Endodontists
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
American Association of Orthodontists
American College of Prosthodontists
American Dental Education Association
American Student Dental Association

-
- ⁱ American Cancer Society, “Detailed Guide: Oral Cavity and Oropharyngeal Cancer (2007),” http://www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI_2_4_2X_What_are_the_risk_factors_for_oral_cavity_and_oropharyngeal_cancer_60.asp, Accessed September 25, 2009.
- ⁱⁱ National Institute for Dental and Craniofacial Research, “Oral cancer,” <http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/OralHealth/Topics/OralCancer/OralCancer.htm>, Accessed September 25, 2009.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Couch ET, Chaffee BW, Gansky SA, Walsh MM. [The changing tobacco landscape: What dental professionals need to know](#). J Am Dent Assoc 2016;147(7):561-9.
- ^{iv} “The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General”, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; Washington, D.C., 2004.
- ^v United States Department of Health and Human Services. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2014. ICPSR36361-v1. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2016-03-22. <http://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR36361.v1>
- ^{vi} Results from 2018 National Youth Tobacco Survey Show Dramatic Increase in E-cigarette Use Among Youth Over Past Year, Office Commissioner - <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/results-2018-national-youth-tobacco-survey-show-dramatic-increase-e-cigarette-use-among-youth-over>