Backpack Tobacco Act Takes Steps to Protect Kids
Bill Closes Loopholes for Candy-Flavored Tobacco Products, Places Kid-Friendly Products Behind the Counter

Keeping new fruit and candy flavored tobacco products out of Wisconsin kids’ backpacks, back pockets, and bodies is the goal of a new bill being considered by the Wisconsin Legislature.

The “Backpack Tobacco Act” authored by Rep. Garey Bies, would close several tobacco tax loopholes that allow new candy-flavored tobacco products to dodge Wisconsin’s cigarette tax and sell at a price meant to target kids.

“Between the price and the flavors it’s clear these products are designed to appeal to those carrying backpacks and hall passes not briefcases and blackberries,” said Dona Wininsky, director of public policy and communications for the American Lung Association in Wisconsin.

One of the most egregious examples of this tax dodge is that of so-called “little cigars.” These “cigars” are essentially just cigarettes wrapped in brown paper, yet due to the state tax loophole they sell for as little as $1.00 rather than the $6.00 to $8.00 per pack for regular cigarettes. They also come in flavors like grape, cherry and chocolate.

In fact, in 2011 for the first time, little cigar use exceeded that of traditional cigarettes among Wisconsin high school school students. Over the last decade, sales of these tobacco products have increased 240 percent in the U.S., due almost entirely to tax discrepancies.

“If we don’t take action now we risk losing the progress we’ve made reducing youth smoking to record lows. What’s more, we risk setting our kids up for a lifetime of addiction and tobacco-related cancer, heart disease and emphysema,” said Allison Miller, government relations director of Wisconsin for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. “These products may be cheaper for kids to buy, but they’re no less deadly, dangerous or addictive to use.”

In addition to closing tobacco tax loopholes, the bill would also require these kid-friendly products to be kept behind the counter rather than at the end of candy aisles or at the check-out counter.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in Wisconsin, resulting in 8,000 deaths and costing more than
The Northwoods Tobacco-Free Coalition (NWTFC) held a community lunch and learn event on June 25, 2013. During the event, the coalition recognized members for their accomplishments in tobacco prevention and control.

More than 40 percent of Middle and High School Students who Smoke use Flavored Little Cigars or Flavored Cigarettes.

More than two out of every five middle and high school students who smoke report using either flavored little cigars or flavored cigarettes, according to a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published in the Journal of Adolescent Health. This article, using data from the 2011 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS), is the first to measure how many American youth are using flavored little cigars and flavored cigarettes.

The study also shows that among youth cigar smokers, almost 60 percent of those who smoke flavored little cigars are not thinking about quitting tobacco use, compared with just over 49 percent among all other cigar smokers.

Little cigars contain the same toxic and cancer-causing ingredients found in cigarettes and are not a safe alternative to cigarettes. Many flavored little cigars appear virtually indistinguishable from cigarettes with similar sizes, shapes, filters and packaging.

In addition to offering a wide variety of flavors that appeal to young people, little cigars are taxed at a lower rate than cigarettes at the state level. Little cigars have become more popular in recent years; sales increased 240 percent from 1997 to 2007, with flavored brands making up almost 80 percent of the market share.
Community Coffee Event

The NWTFC recently held a Community Coffee Event in Park Falls at the Pal Café.

Senator Robert Jauch and Representative Janet Bewley were in attendance along with approximately 25 community members. The event consisted of networking, a presentation on Other Tobacco Products and a Question and Answer session with the legislators.

The event was a great success and both legislators were very supportive of tobacco prevention efforts. It was also a great opportunity to engage community members and generate support and involvement with the NWTFC.

Rhinelander High School CHANGE Group Meets with Senator Tiffany

The Rhinelander High School CHANGE (Creating Healthy Actions for New Growth and Empowerment) met with Senator Tom Tiffany on December 17th. Students gave a brief presentation on Other Tobacco Products and how the Tobacco Companies market their products to youth. The students also discussed all of their recent activities and were able to have a question and answer session with Senator Tiffany. Pictured in the back row from left to right are Gunnar Millot, Haley Sisel, Erica Counter, Nicki Metropulos, Senator Tom Tiffany, Cole Oettinger, Bryce Young, Brevin Persike and Allison Kubeny. In the front row are Gracie Linsmeyer and Kaly Kostrova.
Rhinelander High School CHANGE (Creating Healthy Actions for New Growth and Empowerment) students grabbed attention by chalking the sidewalk in front of RHS with messages that expose the Tobacco Companies for hiding deadly tobacco ingredients in their products by using candy flavors. Pictured from left to right are Haley Sisel, Gunnar Millot, Kaly Kostrova, Nicki Metropulos and Trent Wild.

RHS CHANGE students handed out Big Tobacco Tricks Not Treats candies to JWMS students during Red Ribbon Week. The message was that Big Tobacco Tricks kids into thinking their candy-flavored products are Treats.

Members of the RHS CHANGE (Creating Healthy Actions for New Growth and Empowerment) presented at the Rhinelander Rotary Club Meeting. The group showed all the of community activities they have done throughout the area and presented on New and Existing "Other" Tobacco Products and how the Tobacco Companies market these products to youth. Pictured from left to right are Gracie Linsmeyer, Rotary Club President Tim Thorsen, Haley Sisel, and Payton Hartman.

RHS CHANGE Students created a Human Billboard which displayed a message during the Great American Smokeout.
WI Wins Shows Illegal Tobacco Sales Rates Down from 2012

Beginning in June, Oneida County Health Department has been conducting Wisconsin Wins tobacco compliance checks in a six county area that includes Florence, Forest, Price, Lincoln, Oneida, and Vilas Counties. Results from this year’s checks indicate that illegal tobacco sales rates have decreased across the counties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Total Compliance Checks</th>
<th>Completed Compliance Investigations</th>
<th>Incomplete Checks</th>
<th>Illegal Sales</th>
<th>Illegal Sale Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Florence County</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest County</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln County</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oneida County</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price County</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vilas County</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Wisconsin Wins Program was introduced in 2001 by the state’s Health Departments in an attempt to decrease access of tobacco products to minors. It is estimated that over 90% of tobacco users begin well before the legal age of 18. The campaign uses positive reinforcement to reduce illegal tobacco sales to minors by encouraging retailers to educate their clerks about not selling to youth. Wisconsin Wins control efforts have been very successful in decreasing illegal tobacco sales to minors; in 2001 the illegal sale rate of tobacco products to minors was over 38%, and by 2012 that percentage dropped to 5.4%.
There's Help To Quit Smoking

If you smoke and want to quit, or know someone who does, visit the Wisconsin Quit Line at http://www.WiQuitLine.org or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

You'll talk to a friendly quit coach who will send you a free two-week supply of quit-tobacco medications, plus help you develop strategies on how to quit that are just right for you.

The Quit Line has already helped more than 130,000 callers just like you.

JOIN THE COALITION

The Northwood's Tobacco-Free Coalition is a coalition of individuals and organizations who are dedicated to improving the overall health, wellness, and quality of life of the citizens of our area. Any community member or organization in Oneida, Florence, Forest, Lincoln, Price, or Vilas County who is interested in tobacco prevention and control is invited to join the NWTFC.

For more information please go to www.nwtfc.org or contact Niki Kostrova at nkostrova@co.oneida.wi.us or 715-369-6115.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Northwood's Tobacco-Free Coalition Meetings will be held on

Monday, January 13, 2014
Monday, February 3, 2014
Monday, March 3, 2014

12:00—1:00 PM

at the

Oneida County Health Department
1 S Oneida Ave.
Rhinelander, WI

Live Meeting and Teleconference Available
Email: nkostrova@co.oneida.wi.us for instructions

Call-In Information
1 -712-432-0255
Access Code—441325#